
'God has called you by name and made you his own.'

In the Church of England, the bishop says these words to everyone being confirmed. In other parts of the Anglican Communion the words may be different, but the basic idea is the same. God is calling you and making you his own. Confirmation is a moving experience for both bishop and confirmand. But what is it all about?

Here are some of the meanings – or we might say *intentions* – associated with Confirmation.

Confirmation is

- A special way of receiving God's grace: the presence of God's gift of the Holy Spirit is *confirmed* in you through prayer and the laying on of the bishop's hands for the life of Christian faithfulness, service, and witness.
- A step of personal faith: you *confirm* that you take on for yourself that which was taken on for you at your baptism as a child, confirming your faith and your membership of the body of Christ.
- Admission to Holy Communion: you *confirm* your full membership of the community of faith as it is expressed in the Eucharist.
- A rite of passage: an act symbolising the movement from childhood to adulthood in which the church community *confirms* your intention to assume the privileges and responsibilities of being an adult member of the community.

'If Confirmation is first and foremost about what God is doing for us and in us and with us and through us, what is needed from us?'

All of this means that Confirmation is a sacrament. And because it is a sacrament it is a way to recognise, allow, welcome, and celebrate what God is doing, giving, and promising in your life.

A sacrament can be helpfully understood in terms of the tradition of the prophets of the Old Testament who would act out the message God had given them to communicate. They would manifest or live out the truth God wanted them to convey, and the acting out, the demonstration, would help to bring the message into effect.

Some of the messages, the truths communicated and made real in Confirmation are:

- God confirms the promise of his presence and power in us and through us.
- God welcomes us to the feast of his kingdom and invites us to eat the food of eternal life.
- God reminds us that he is with us at every stage of our journey, his faithfulness always calling forth our faith.
- God calls each of us to participate in the ministry of the Church and gives the gifts we need for this.



If Confirmation is first and foremost about what God is doing for us and in us and with us and through us, what is needed from us?

We need to be prepared: to expect to receive, to be open to God's calling, to be ready for his embrace, to want to experience his presence and power. We need to want and desire God, to long and thirst for him.

Candidates are usually expected to take several weeks or months to prepare for Confirmation and explore what this might mean for them.

It isn't just the people being confirmed who need to be prepared; it is also the community to which they belong. It is good

for congregations to reflect on how they will welcome and uphold those who are being confirmed. How they do this can make a lot of difference to whether those confirmed stick around, grow in faith lived out in the world, exercise a ministry, become faithful communicants.

Confirmation is all down to God, but it is also all up to us – and that doesn't mean just the people being confirmed. It means the whole people of God!

Called **by**
God has called you by
name and
made **YOU** his **own.**

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Confirmation

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