



Road to Confirmation – Initial conversation guide

The decision to make the Confirmation vow and to receive the Confirmation blessing is a very important milestone in a youth's journey of faith. When making this decision, age, maturity level, and understanding of faith need to be considered. Because of this, there is flexibility as to when a youth can make their Confirmation Vow.

Since Confirmation is a young person confirming the baptismal and sealing vows that their parents made on their behalf, it is important to ensure that the youth has been baptized and sealed. If the New Apostolic Church USA has record of these sacraments taking place, they would be included in the youth's NACStat profile. If a baptism and/or sealing record is missing, and the parents know that those sacraments took place, please work with the parents and member.services@nac-usa.org to determine when/where these events took place and to properly document them. If the student wasn't baptized and/or sealed, an additional discussion with the Apostle is needed in order to determine the appropriate options for the student.

Who is responsible for the Initial Conversation?

- The rector and youth leader should work together so that one, if not both of them, are involved in the Initial Conversation. The rector and/or youth leader has the Initial Conversation with the student together with the parent(s) and/or guardian(s).

Scheduling the Initial Conversation

- If you have more than one student that is eligible for Confirmation, ideally each conversation happens individually, rather than as a group. This helps emphasize that it is the student's decision to pursue Confirmation, and that they are not overly influenced or pressured by a group.
- It is important that the student, parents/guardians, rector, and youth leader know ahead of time that the conversation will take place. This reduces the student from feeling surprised or pressured to make a decision.
- The conversation may be anytime and anywhere, as long as those involved know ahead of time that it is happening.

Content of the Initial Conversation

- **Before** a student is asked whether they would like to pursue Confirmation or not, please ensure that the student is aware of the following points:
 - Confirmation is someone making a vow to renounce Satan and surrender to God, and then receiving a blessing on that vow. When someone is confirmed, they are taking responsibility for the development of their faith. At the time of baptism and sealing, the child's parents vowed to raise the child according to the teachings of Jesus Christ until the child is of an age of spiritual maturity to decide for itself. Confirmation isn't declaring that someone knows it all, but rather that someone is making a promise to God and committing to a lifelong journey of faith and strengthening their relationship with Him.
 - Because it is a vow, it is important that it is the student's decision and it is not something that they feel forced to do. If the student doesn't feel ready when they are in 10th grade, the next opportunity to be confirmed is when they are in 11th grade. If that is the case, a similar conversation to this one will take place the following year, in the fall of their 11th grade.

- When a student turns 18 years old, they are considered an adult legally, culturally, and societally. As an adult, they absorb the personal responsibility for the development of their faith, whether they want it or not. In the New Apostolic Church USA, we provide the opportunity for students to take on this responsibility and receive a blessing on that commitment during their 10th or 11th grade year. If they do not make the Confirmation vow before they're 18, then they will automatically take personal responsibility for their faith and thus forgo Confirmation.
- By the fall of their 10th or 11th grade year, the student has hopefully been involved in the IGNITE youth group, and they have been learning the Youth THRIVE Small Group curriculum for 2 or 3 years now. Whether a student decides to pursue Confirmation or not, they are still expected to attend and participate in the Youth THRIVE Small Group curriculum discussions that meet regularly.
- If the student chooses to pursue Confirmation, the following would then take place:
 - The student needs to complete the "Road to Confirmation" online courses (6 online courses that take an *estimated total time* of 2 hours and 20 minutes to complete). The sooner that the initial conversation occurs, the more time the student will have to complete their online courses. These are self-paced courses on the [NAC-USA Development Institute \(NDI\)](#) that the student can complete at their leisure during the months leading up to Confirmation. Most of the topics in the "Road to Confirmation" online courses have been developed from the Youth THRIVE Small Group content, and therefore, may seem redundant. However, this repetition is intentional in order to ensure that someone pursuing Confirmation knows the core competencies of the Christian faith and New Apostolic Church doctrine.
 - Throughout the "Road to Confirmation" process, the student would engage in three "Checkpoint Conversations" at specific times once certain online courses are completed. The parents/guardians, youth leader, and rector each have one "Checkpoint Conversation" to strategically engage in.
 - After the "Road to Confirmation" online courses are completed, all of the "Checkpoint Conversations" have taken place, and shortly before the student's Confirmation day, a final conversation will take place. This ideally would be with the ordained minister that will conduct the Confirmation service. The student can decide to invite any combination of parents/guardians, rector, and/or youth leader to this final conversation. This will be a conversation to ensure the youth has an understanding of the Christian faith, the New Apostolic Church doctrine, and is ready to make their Confirmation vow and receive their Confirmation blessing.
- The student is not walking this road alone, but should feel the love, prayers, and support of their family, rector, youth leader, and congregation. It is important that if a student has questions along the "Road to Confirmation" process that they know they have permission to ask those questions.
- **Ask** the student if they have any questions about the "Road to Confirmation" process and what would be expected of them in the months leading up to Confirmation if they were to choose to pursue Confirmation for the upcoming Spring.
- **Ask** the student if they would like to pursue Confirmation for the upcoming spring.
 - If **no**, remind the student that, if they are in 10th grade, a similar conversation will take place next year in the fall of their 11th grade year. Ask the student's permission to 'check-in' with them over the next year so that they understand they have a place to ask questions and are still supported by their parents/guardians, rector, and youth leader during this season of discovering their faith.
 - If **yes**, remind the student that they are supported by their parents/guardians, rector, and youth leader during this season of discovering their faith and that you look forward to walking this "Road to Confirmation" over the next months together with them.
 - Confirmation services take place in Eastertide, the time between Easter and Pentecost. For 2024, the first Sunday of Eastertide is April 7th, and the last Sunday of Eastertide is May 12th.

After the Initial Conversation

- Whether the student decides to pursue Confirmation or not, the conversation needs to be documented using the “Road to Confirmation” form in NACStat. See the [Road to Confirmation - Process](#) page on NDI for screenshots of the form.
 - After the conversation is documented using the "Road to Confirmation" form in NACStat, an email is sent to the student, parent(s), rector, and youth leaders of their congregation to notify them that the student is, or is not, pursuing Confirmation for the upcoming spring. This email will also have important next steps and links.
 - The email is generated using the names, email addresses, and relationships (parent/rector, youth leader) that are setup in NACStat.
 - If the youth leader is not a member of the "Youth Leader" committee for that congregation, they will not receive any of this information.
 - If, after the "Road to Confirmation" form has been completed, the student, parent(s), rector, and youth leaders do not receive an email indicating that the initial conversation took place, they should check their "spam" folder and/or ensure the correct email address is associated with their profile in NACStat.
- The rector or youth leader should provide a copy of the “[Road to Confirmation Checkpoint Conversation guides](#)” to those youth pursuing Confirmation and to their parents/guardians, and/or ensure they know where to find the information on NDI.