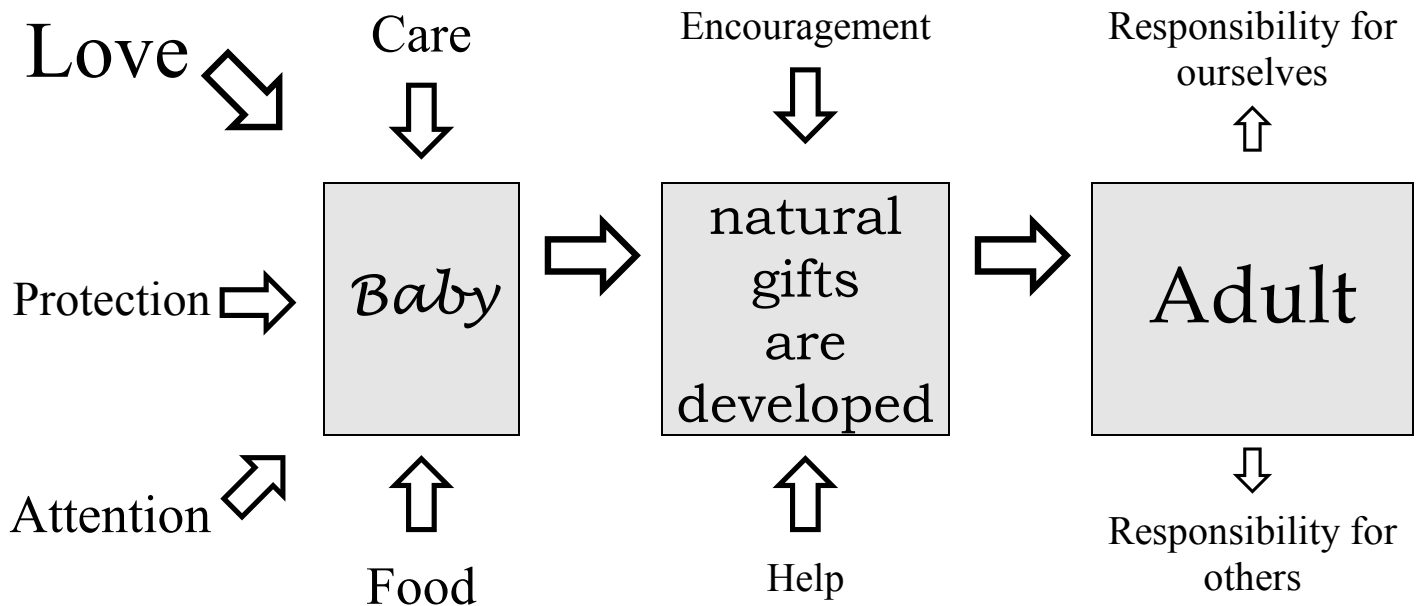


Confirmation Notes

Confirmation is one of three sacraments of INITIATION. The others are Baptism and the Eucharist. Initiation means *'being admitted into membership'*. The sacraments of initiation are there to draw us into a deep relationship with God along with other believers who make up the Church. We become part of a large family and we grow as children in that family.

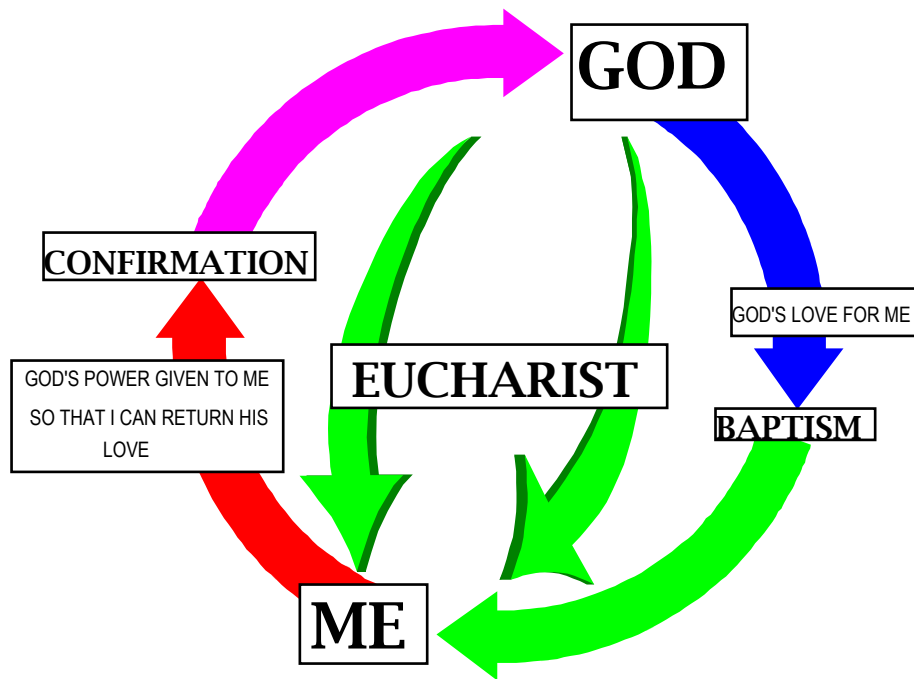
In the early days of the Church, people were initiated as adults and the three sacraments were celebrated in one continuous rite (this still happens when adults are received into the community of the Church today). Now, when it is more usual for Christians to be baptised as infants, the sacraments of initiation have become separated. A Christian may be baptised after a few weeks of life, receive their first Holy Communion at about seven years old, and sometime thereafter be confirmed.

Confirmation, then, marks our maturity in the Christian life. We are required to be 'carriers of Christ' to others, in the vocation we have been given. Let us compare this growing up in the community of the Church to the growth of a child in a family. In the first months the child is extremely 'selfish' - it cries for its needs and its parents provide them. The child grows and his or her gifts develop. Eventually, at maturity, the child becomes an outgoing and unselfish adult.



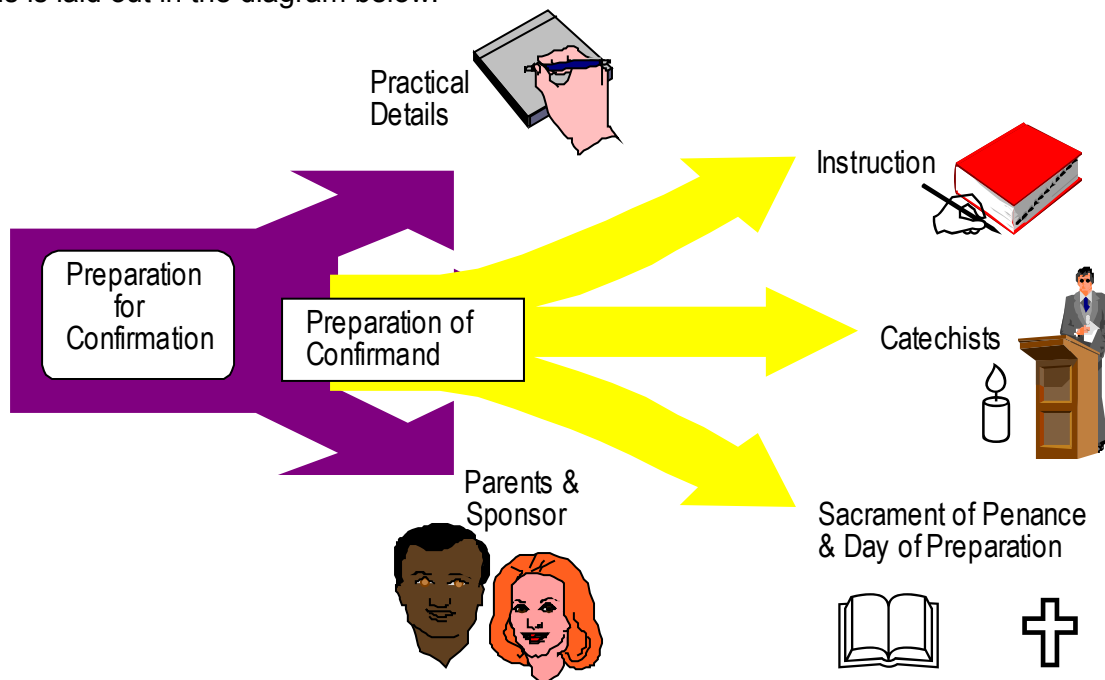
So, too, with Baptism, the Eucharist and Confirmation; we start off needful and selfish. The Holy Spirit is given to us at Baptism. At work within us the Holy Spirit gradually disentangles us from our selfish preoccupations, enabling us to live for God and God's people. Whether before or after Confirmation, Holy Communion is food for the journey started at Baptism. Confirmation celebrates a maturity in our spiritual development, when we can begin to live our lives selflessly, working for our own and others' salvation.

At this special time the Holy Spirit inspires, strengthens and emboldens us so that we may live out our calling in spite of daily difficulties, temptations and obstacles.



Preparation for the Rite of Confirmation

This is laid out in the diagram below.



Now make notes on the preparation for Confirmation, explaining what may be involved, and using the diagram above as a guide.