

Diocesan Manual

Guidelines for Episcopal Visitations

Prior to the visit:

1. After the date and time have been established, please send the Bishop details of the visit on the **Episcopal Visitation Notification Form** available on our web site www.episcopalswfl.org
2. Please provide a chaplain or a person to be assigned to the Bishop while he is visiting. Have the assigned person meet him at the entrance and show him where to be vested.
3. Please provide a marked parking space for the Bishop.
4. If the Bishop is expected to sing parts of the liturgy, please provide the music in advance as well as any additional music for the day.
5. Scripture for a Sunday visitation will normally be the proper for that Sunday unless otherwise preapproved. On a major holy day, the readings will be those for that day. On a ferial day, the proper for Baptism or Confirmation may be used. For a congregation's patronymic festival, the proper for its patron or title may be transferred to a Sunday, except in the seasons of Advent, Lent, or Easter (BCP, p.16). If any proper other than that for the Sunday is to be requested, please notify the Bishop in advance.
6. Undesignated offering: it is customary to dedicate the "non-pledge" part of the offering to the Bishops Discretionary Fund. Individual envelopes will be sent, if requested on the form, prior to the visitation. These may be placed in the bulletin or other means of distribution as may be convenient. Once accounted for, the Treasurer may make the check payable to the *Bishops Discretionary Fund*.
7. Photographs, especially those with flash, are not appropriate in any service of the worship of God. The Bishop will pose with the class or individuals before or after the service.
8. Parish Record Books: The Bishop is required to inspect the records of the parish or mission as the Canons prescribe. Please have current registers open and available for the Bishop to inspect and sign.
9. If you have any questions not answered above, please contact the Bishop's Executive Assistant, Wendy Martucci, at wmartucci@episcopalswfl.org or 941-556-0315 ext. 986

Baptisms:

1. The Bishop's Visitation is one of the appropriate times to celebrate Holy Baptism (BCP, p.312).
2. The Bishop will be the Celebrant.
3. It is expected that the parents and sponsors of infants, and older candidates themselves, will be thoroughly instructed in the meaning of the Sacrament of Baptism.

Confirmations:

1. Theology: "In the course of their Christian development, those baptized at an early age are expected, when they are ready and have been duly prepared, to make a mature public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their Baptism and to

receive the laying on of hands by the Bishop. Those baptized as adults, unless baptized with laying on of hands by a bishop, are also expected to make a public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their Baptism in the presence of a Bishop and to receive the laying on of hands.” (BCP, p.412) Those who have been baptized and made a mature public affirmation of faith in another denomination of the church may be received into the Episcopal Church. Those who have already been confirmed may reaffirm their baptismal vows.

2. Concerning the Service:

- A. Please notify the Office of the Bishop in advance, on the Visitation Notification Form, how many Confirmations, Receptions and Reaffirmations you will have at the service and blank certificates will be mailed to you prior to the Visitation. The Bishop will sign the certificates at the Parish Visitation.
- B. At the service, please provide a comfortable chair with armrests, either the Bishop’s chair or another one, positioned at the top of the chancel steps or wherever it is most visible to the congregation for the Confirmations. Please have bottled water available by the Bishop’s chair.
- C. The color of the altar hangings and vestments for Confirmation will normally be the color of the season.
- D. If the Rite of Confirmation is on a feast day, the proper for the feast day is used. If it is on a ferial day, the proper for confirmation is used. The collect is found in the BCP, p.254; the suggested readings are found in the BCP, p.924.
- E. Each candidate is presented by his or her Christian name (without surname).
- F. Please print clearly the Christian name of each candidate on a name tag, and at the bottom indicate “C” for Confirmation, “R” for Reception, or “RA” for Reaffirmation. Remind all candidates that the nametags are there for the Bishop to read, so be sure that clothing or hair does not obstruct them. The presenting priest stands with the Bishop in order to assist with pronunciation of names, kneeling, standing etc.

The Bishop’s Visitation schedule will be posted on the Diocese web site by August for the following fall and spring season.

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