

TITLE:

**A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE AND PRACTICE OF CONFIRMATION
IN THE CHURCH OF IRELAND**

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Abstract

This dissertation critically analyses the role and practice of confirmation, regarding young people in the Church of Ireland. It is of interest to the wider Church for the simple reason that young people matter. They are the future of the Church, and the Church has a responsibility under God to faithfully nurture the faith of its youngest members.

Chapter One, 'Infant Baptism and Confirmation,' discusses the importance of providing a liturgical setting for the affirmation of baptismal vows.

Chapter Two, 'Confirmation and the Holy Spirit,' examines the bishop's role of laying hands on each candidate with prayer.

Chapter Three, 'Confirmation and Holy Communion,' asks whether confirmation should be a requirement to receive Holy Communion.

Chapter Four, 'The Age of Confirmation,' questions the age at which young people should be confirmed.

Chapter Five, 'Confirmation as Mission,' discusses opportunities for mission, which confirmation presents to the Church.

Chapter Six, 'Post-Confirmation,' discusses how parishes might encourage young people to continue their involvement in parish life after confirmation.

This dissertation concludes that confirmation is an important rite, providing the opportunity for those baptised as infants to publicly affirm their baptismal vows. It is argued that episcopal confirmation is not necessary, and it may be preferable for priests to minister confirmation instead. Admittance to Holy Communion is a right for all the baptised and should no longer be delayed until a person is, or desires to be, confirmed. Confirmation presents the Church with an opportunity to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom, and to teach and disciple new believers. Finally, I argue that confirmation does not need to become a 'passing-out parade' if parishes strategically seek to support their young people after confirmation.