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## Confirmation Service, Vellore

### Questions

What do you think is happening here?

Who is the most important person in this photograph (and why do you think that?)

How is this church the same as churches you know, and how is it different?

In Vellore people speak Tamil, so why do you think all the services in this church are in English? (Clue—people come from all over the world to work and train at the Christian Medical College in Vellore.)

Use the St John's church website to find out about how Indian churches are organised e.g. <http://www.stjohnschurchvellore.org/officebear.htm> and read the bulletins to see what happens at different times of the year.

St John's Church is inside the Fort at Vellore— use the internet to find out more about Vellore Fort and what other famous religious building is there e.g. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vellore>

If you have looked at Angelina's story on the CD, can you spot her father Jared in this photograph?

### Background

In St John's church in Vellore a confirmation service is taking place. The four people in the centre of the photograph are:

- Bishop William (seated)
- Bishop William's chaplain holding the bishop's crook or staff for him (Jared)
- The pastor or vicar of the church (holding the Bible)
- The girl being confirmed (kneeling)

In the Church of South India, and in the Church of England, most Christians are baptised as babies or children. When someone is baptised they become a member of the Church, but they do not receive the bread and wine in the Holy Communion service until they have been confirmed. People can be confirmed when they are old enough to understand the promises they make and why they want to do it.

In the confirmation the bishop places his hands on the person's head and prays for them. His prayer is that the gifts of the Holy Spirit will be given to them.

Most confirmation services like this one will be followed straightaway by a communion service for the whole church.

St John's Church is the only church in the Diocese of Vellore where services are in English. Its website is <http://www.stjohnschurchvellore.org/>



