



# Diocese of Des Moines

## Confirmation Catechist Guide

### Purpose of This Guide

This guide equips catechists to lead, support, and accompany families and confirmandi through the Diocese of Des Moines eleven-month Confirmation journey. It provides theological foundations, program structure, diocesan standards, and clarity on the shared roles within the Confirmation process.

### Diocese of Des Moines Confirmation Standards:

- Family registered in a parish, or in residence, within the Diocese of Des Moines.
- Baptized Catholic Christian or already received into the Catholic Church. Baptized Protestant Christians go through an adapted Becoming Catholic process for children.
- Enrollment in a parish Faith Formation Program, Catholic School, or Home School.
- Enrollment and participation in the parish Sacrament of Confirmation Program Instructional Formation Sessions with a standard of nine formation sessions within eleven months. (The eleven-month process anticipates a parent/confirmandi meeting at the beginning of the process and ends with Confirmation.)
- Selection of a Saint for the Confirmation preparation process and liturgy.
- Selection of a Sponsor for the Confirmation preparation and beyond.
- Completion of At Home Conversations for the Confirmation Program.
- Completion of Sponsor Chats.
- Attending a Retreat that is substantive and appropriate in duration during the Confirmation Program Year.

### The Role of the Catholic Catechist

Catholic catechists serve as witnesses, teachers, and companions in faith. Their mission is to:

- Proclaim the Gospel with joy and fidelity.
- Teach the truths of the Catholic faith in harmony with the Church.
- Model a life of prayer, discipleship, and service.
- Support parents as the primary educators of their children in the faith.
- Foster belonging, identity, encounter, and mission within the Confirmation process.

Catechists help confirmandi grow in relationship with Christ, understand the sacrament, and embrace their call to missionary discipleship.

### Sacrament of Confirmation Defined by the Catechism of the Catholic Church

#### THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

**CCC1285:** Baptism, the Eucharist, and the Sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the “sacraments of Christian initiation,” whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For “by the Sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.”

*Spiritual Strengthening:* It provides a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, like that given to the Apostles at Pentecost, to empower the faithful to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.

*Indelible Mark:* Like Baptism, it imprints a permanent spiritual character on the soul. It can only be received once, empowering the confirmed person to officially profess their faith publicly.

### **Confirmation Overview**

Confirmation completes baptismal grace, strengthening young people through the Holy Spirit for deeper participation in the life and mission of the Church. Parents are the primary formators of their children in faith, nurturing that faith from their earliest years. During preparation for Confirmation, catechists and sponsors partner with parents to help young people:

- deepen their sense of belonging in the Church;
- grow in their identity as beloved children of God;
- encounter Jesus Christ through Scripture, prayer, and the sacramental life of the Church; and,
- respond to the Holy Spirit's call to mission, service, and witness.

Preparation includes formational gatherings, conversations at home, sponsor conversations, opportunities for service, and a retreat, all designed to support the young person's ongoing life of faith and discipleship.

### **A Message from Bishop William Joensen**

"Confirmation is a sacrament that's meant to strengthen baptismal grace and anchor a young person's identity in Christ. By celebrating the sacrament in sixth grade, we continue to build a solid faith foundation upon which our young people will sow God's spirit as they enter adolescence. It is our firm belief and hope that they will be emboldened with the gifts of wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, courage, and a devoted love for Jesus and his father, along with all God's saints. We infer that earlier confirmation better serves families and equips young people to see themselves as on mission to live as Jesus did and to share his love with others."

### **Diocese of Des Moines Confirmation Monthly Program Structure Overview**

The Confirmation journey follows eleven monthly movements:

1. Parent/Confirmandi Meeting – Orientation, expectations, baptismal identity.
2. Identity – Rediscovering one's identity as a beloved child of God.
3. Belonging – Living belonging through service and Works of Mercy.
4. Encounter with Jesus – Recognizing Christ in Scripture, Eucharist, and daily life.
5. Encounter with Scripture – Learning to pray with Scripture.
6. Encounter with the Holy Spirit – Understanding gifts and fruits of the Spirit.
7. Retreat – Deep personal encounter with Jesus through prayer and reflection.
8. Called to Mission – Making Works of Mercy part of daily life.
9. Life in the Spirit – Living as missionary disciples.
10. Disciples at Home and Parish – Practicing discipleship in daily life.
11. Confirmation – Completing initiation through the sacrament.

Catechists guide families through each movement with clarity, hospitality, and pastoral care.

### **Statement of Understanding of Roles**

#### **Confirmandi Responsibilities**

- Attend parish formation sessions
- Monthly at-home formation with parent(s), or another family member
- Selection of a saint
- Scripture engagement
- Prayer practices
- Service activities
- Sponsor conversations in months with sponsor chats
- Retreat participation

#### **Participation in parish life (Mass, Reconciliation) Parent Responsibilities**

- Engage in monthly formation
- Participate in family conversations
- Support and lead at-home programming
- Help document family service to share about it at the next parish session
- Model prayer and discipleship
- Engage in parish life

#### **Sponsor Responsibilities**

- Complete Sponsor Chats.
- Participate in the Confirmation Mass.
- Support the candidate's ongoing discipleship.
- Complete the Diocesan Sponsor in Good Standing Form (provided by Confirmation coordinator)

Catechists reinforce these roles and help families live them with confidence.