



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.

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 Catechism of the Catholic Church #1285 teaches that Confirmation, together with Baptism and the Eucharist, completes Christian initiation. Through Confirmation, the faithful receive:

- A special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, strengthening them like the Apostles at Pentecost.
- An indelible spiritual mark, signifying their full belonging to Christ.
- A mission, obliging them to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.

Catechists help families understand that Confirmation is not graduation: it is empowerment for lifelong discipleship.

Confirmation Overview

Confirmation completes the initiation begun at Baptism. Parents nurture their child's faith from infancy, and catechists partner with them during the Confirmation year to:

- deepen the child's sense of Belonging in the Church.
- strengthen their identity as a beloved child of God.
- foster encounters with Christ through Scripture, prayer, and sacramental life.
- inspire mission, encouraging service and witness.

The program includes monthly sessions, at-home conversations, sponsor chats, service activities, and a retreat.

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. Preparation – 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.

Diocese of Des Moines Confirmation Standards

Families must meet the following standards:

- Registered in a parish within the Diocese.
- Confirmandi must be a baptized Catholic Christian.
- Enrollment in Faith Formation, Catholic School, or Home School.
- Participation in monthly Confirmation sessions.
- Selection of a saint (if part of parish culture).
- Selection of a sponsor in good standing.
- Completion of At-Home Conversations.
- Completion of Sponsor Chats.
- Attendance at a retreat.
- Completion of family service activities.

Catechists help families understand and fulfill these expectations.

Defining Standards

Registered and Baptized: Families must be registered; proof of baptism provided if needed.

Enrollment in Formation: Confirmandi must participate in parish Faith Formation, Catholic School, or Home School.

Saint Selection: If part of parish culture, confirmandi choose a saint whose life inspires their own discipleship.

Sponsor Selection: Sponsor must be a practicing Catholic in good standing, at least 16 years old, and able to model a faithful Catholic life.

At-Home Conversations: Monthly guided conversations completed with parents.

Sponsor Chats: Five required conversations with the sponsor.

Instructional Program: Attendance at monthly parish sessions.

Family Service Hours: Three service activities completed as a family.

Catechists ensure accountability while offering pastoral support.

Statement of Understanding of Roles

Confirmandi Responsibilities

- Attend parish formation sessions.
- Complete monthly at-home formation with parents.
- Engage in Scripture, prayer, and service activities.
- Participate in Sponsor Chats.
- Attend a retreat.
- Participate in parish life (Mass, Reconciliation).

Parent Responsibilities

- Attend monthly formation sessions.
- Lead and support at-home conversations.
- Document family service activities.
- Model prayer and discipleship.
- Engage in parish life.

Sponsor Responsibilities

- Complete Sponsor Chats.
- Attend the Confirmation Mass.
- Support the candidate's ongoing discipleship.
- Complete the Diocesan Sponsor in Good Standing Form.

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

This guide provides catechists with the foundational structure, theological grounding, and pastoral clarity needed to accompany families through a fruitful and mission-centered Confirmation year.