



# Diocese of Des Moines Confirmation Sponsor Guide

## Purpose of This Guide

This guide supports Catholic Confirmation sponsors in the Diocese of Des Moines as they accompany their candidate through the Confirmation journey. It explains the sacrament, outlines diocesan expectations, and clarifies the spiritual and practical responsibilities of the sponsor.

## 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 Confirmation Sponsor

A Confirmation sponsor is a spiritual mentor, a witness to the Catholic faith, and a companion on the journey of discipleship. Sponsors:

- model a lived Catholic faith rooted in prayer, sacramental life, and service.
- support the candidate through conversation, encouragement, and presence.
- pray regularly for and with the candidate.
- participate in sponsor chats and the Confirmation Mass.
- help the candidate grow in belonging, identity, encounter, and mission.

Sponsors do not need to be theologians: they need to be faithful, present, and committed to walking with a young disciple.

## 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.

Sponsors help candidates 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 sponsors join them during the Confirmation year to:

- affirm the candidate's Belonging in the Church.
- strengthen their Identity as a beloved child of God.
- foster encounters with Christ through prayer, Scripture, and sacramental life.
- encourage mission, inspiring 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. 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.

Sponsors accompany candidates especially during months with sponsor chats.

## 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, etc.)

#### Parent Responsibilities

- Engage in monthly formation.
- Participate in family conversations
- Support and lead at-home conversations.
- Document family service activities.
- 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)

Sponsors are companions in faith, helping the candidate grow in confidence and love for Christ.

## Letter of Good Standing for the Catholic Sponsor

### Diocesan Sponsor in Good Standing Form

Diocese of Des Moines

Confirmation Sponsor

We would like your recommendation of this potential sponsor:

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Please complete this form by checking any and all of the following phrases that apply to the person being considered as sponsor:

- ☐ is a registered member of my parish
- ☐ attends Mass each Sunday
- ☐ is a confirmed and practicing Catholic in good standing with the Catholic Church
- ☐ is at least 16 years old

Statement of the Sponsor:

I recognize that in accepting the role of sacramental sponsorship I become responsible to be a model and example to my Confirmation recipient as a committed and active Catholic and to be a support to his/her life-long spiritual growth. I am committed to my Catholic faith, that I, myself have received all three sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist), and I am not living in a situation which keeps me from properly receiving the sacraments. I try to lead a life in harmony with the faith and the role I am undertaking, by witnessing to the values of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and by seeking to be of service to others for love of Him.

Sponsor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Sponsor's Pastor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Sponsor Questions for Sponsor Chats**

### **Month 3: Belonging**

**Theme:** Belonging through service and the Works of Mercy

1. When have you felt most welcomed or accepted by a community? What made that experience meaningful?
2. What does "belonging to the Church" mean to you right now?
3. How do you think serving others helps us grow closer to God?
4. What Work of Mercy do you find easiest to live out? Which is most challenging?
5. Have you ever helped someone and been surprised by what you learned from the experience?
6. Who in your life demonstrates Christian service well? What do you admire about her/him?
7. In what ways do you think your gifts could help others in our parish or community?
8. How do you recognize Christ in people who are struggling or in need?
9. What are some needs you see in your school, team, parish, or community?
10. How can serving others help strengthen your faith?

### **Month 5: Encounter with Scripture**

**Theme:** Discovering God's voice through Scripture

1. Do you have a favorite Bible story or passage? Why does it stand out to you?
2. How comfortable do you feel reading Scripture on your own?
3. Have you ever experienced a Bible verse speaking directly to something happening in your life?
4. What do you think God hopes we discover when we spend time with Scripture?
5. Which biblical person do you most relate to and why?
6. What questions do you have about the Bible?
7. How might praying with Scripture be different from simply reading it?
8. When you hear Scripture at Mass, what helps you pay attention and connect with it?
9. If Jesus sat down with you to explain a passage, what would you ask Him?
10. How can Scripture guide decisions you make in everyday life?

### **Month 10: Disciples at Home and at Parish**

**Theme:** Living as a disciple in everyday life

1. What do you think being a disciple of Jesus looks like in today's world?
2. How can you practice your faith more intentionally at home?
3. What role does your parish play in your faith journey?
4. How do you show Christ's love to your family and friends?
5. What challenges make it difficult to live your faith openly?
6. Where do you see opportunities to serve or lead within your parish?
7. How has your understanding of discipleship changed during the Confirmation process?
8. What habits help you stay connected to God throughout the week?
9. How can your family support one another in faith?
10. What gifts has God given you that can be used to strengthen your school, team, or parish community?

11. What kind of Catholic adult do you hope to become in the future?

### **Month 11: Confirmation Preparation**

**Theme:** Readiness to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation

1. As Confirmation approaches, what are you most excited about?
2. What does receiving the Holy Spirit through Confirmation mean to you?
3. How have you changed since beginning this journey?
4. What part of your preparation has had the greatest impact on your faith?
5. In what ways do you feel ready for Confirmation?
6. What questions or concerns do you still have about the sacrament?
7. How do you hope the Holy Spirit will guide your future?
8. Which gift or fruit of the Holy Spirit do you most want to grow in?
9. How do you think Confirmation will influence your relationship with the Church?
10. What commitment are you making to continue growing in faith after Confirmation?

### **Optional Questions for the Weeks after Confirmation**

1. What was the most memorable part of your Confirmation day?
2. What emotions did you experience during the Mass and anointing?
3. What moment from the celebration has stayed with you the most?
4. What did you learn about yourself through this experience?
5. How would you explain Confirmation to a friend who has never received it?
6. What does being "confirmed" mean to you now?
7. How has Confirmation challenged you to live differently?
8. Where do you feel called to serve others?
9. What are you most grateful for from this experience?
10. How do you hope to continue growing as a disciple of Jesus?