



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 eleven-month Confirmation journey. It explains the sacrament, outlines diocesan expectations, and clarifies the spiritual and practical responsibilities of the sponsor.

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. 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.

Sponsors accompany candidates especially during months with sponsor chats.

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.

Sponsors help ensure the candidate remains engaged and supported.

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.

Sponsors play a key role in the spiritual formation of the candidate.

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.

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

This guide equips sponsors to walk faithfully and confidently with their candidate, supporting their growth as missionary disciples of 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:

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 Chat Months

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 7: Retreat

Theme: Encountering Jesus personally through prayer, reflection, and silence

1. What was the most meaningful part of your retreat experience?
2. Where did you feel closest to God during the retreat?
3. Was there a talk, prayer, scripture passage, or activity that stayed with you? Why?
4. What did you learn about yourself during the retreat?
5. How comfortable are you with silence and personal prayer?
6. Did anything challenge your understanding of faith during the retreat?
7. How do you think Jesus is inviting you to grow after this experience?
8. What distractions make it difficult for you to hear God's voice?
9. What practices from the retreat would you like to continue in your daily life?
10. How has your relationship with Jesus changed, if at all, through this retreat?

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?