



Diocese of Des Moines

Create Your Confirmation Parish Plan

Goal of this Document:

By the end of this working document, your parish will have an initial formation plan on how you will engage in the new Confirmation process. This plan will be emailed to [Father Trevor Chicoine](#) and [John Gaffney](#) for approval.

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 standards represent the essential diocesan requirements that must be included in every parish Confirmation program. These standards establish a common foundation for sacramental preparation throughout the Diocese of Des Moines and ensure that all confirmandi receive consistent formation leading toward the Sacrament of Confirmation.

While these standards remain constant, there are many effective ways to achieve them. Each parish is encouraged to utilize methodologies, instructional resources, schedules, activities, and delivery models that best reflect their local culture, community, staffing, and pastoral needs. Family-based programs are strongly encouraged. There are also small-group models, retreats, service opportunities, and a variety of approved formation resources can all be used to fulfill the required standards. More resources will be added, including for older adolescents.

The remainder of this document will point to sample structure and planning suggestions that can be adapted to fit the unique needs of your parish. These examples are intended to serve as guides and models, helping parish leaders design a Confirmation journey that is both faithful to diocesan expectations and responsive to the families you serve.

Program Development Steps:

1. Establish and name your leadership. This person collaborates closely with the pastor and will be the one who the Diocese will have as a contact. This person will also be the one who will communicate with families, sponsors, and catechists.
2. Select a delivery model (see Program Guide pages 5-9). Choose the format that best fits your parish.
 - a. Family Based Model (confirmandi and parent together)
 - b. Parent and Confirmandi Model (confirmandi and parent begin and end together, but split in the middle)
 - c. Family Small Group Model (similar to Family Based Model but grouping two or three families together for the entire formation process)
 - d. Select your own model that best fits your community.
3. Select approved resources you will use in your process (see Program Guide pages 13-18 with more resources to follow soon).
 - a. Augustine Institute: Signs of Grace-You Are Sent (younger adolescent)
 - b. R.E.A.L. Formation: Belong and Believe (younger adolescent)
 - c. Pflaum: Gifted with the Spirit (younger adolescent)
 - d. Ascension: Chosen (older adolescent)
 - e. Dynamic Catholic: Decision Point (older adolescent)
 - f. Real + True (older adolescent – same as parent resources)
 - g. Formed (parent resource)
 - h. Real + True (parent resource)
 - i. Select your own resource. Check with [John Gaffney](#) first.
4. Build registration process. You will want to collect the following.
 - a. Parish Registration/Residence Verification (form developed soon)
 - b. Baptismal Records
 - c. Sponsor Information to send out Diocesan in Good Standing Form (see Program Guide page 23)
 - d. Parent Contact Information
 - e. Other processes you find helpful.
5. Recruit and form catechists.
 - a. How many catechists do you feel you will need? (see Program Guide pages 5-9)
 - b. What responsibilities will the catechist have?
 - i. Facilitate a confirmation session.
 - ii. Help coach parents/grandparents for at-home conversations and program requirements.
 - iii. Assist in prayer services, hospitality, service, or retreats.
 - iv. Help support by communicating with sponsors and parents.
 - v. Track paperwork and other administrative tasks.
 - vi. Other responsibilities you typically have catechists assist with.
6. Schedule required components (see Program Guide pages 19-20 for a sample form and pages 10-12 for what a sample year could look like).
 - a. Ideally what month would we like to have our confirmation each year?
 - b. What does the formation session schedule look like?

- c. What number of sponsor chats and what do you want for follow-up from the sponsor (3 or 4 are encouraged)?
 - d. How will you incorporate an exploration of Saints as part of the process?
 - e. What are your expectations of service for the confirmandi? Can you incorporate something the family is already doing?
 - f. Are you tracking Mass participation?
 - g. When is the best time to plan your retreat? Will you be joining others in your deanery or attending a retreat at the St. Thomas More Center?
 - h. When are you planning to offer reconciliation?
 - i. When are you planning the final session to prepare for the Confirmation Mass?
 - j. Are there other components you wish to plan for?
7. How will we track progress so we can be confident the confirmandi are ready to receive the sacrament? (see Program Guide pages 21-22 for an adaptable confirmation program record).

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