

Diocese of Des Moines

*A Journey Together
Celebrating Evangelization:
Past, Present and Future*

*John Gaffney
Director
Evangelization & Catechesis*

515/237-5026
jgaffney@dmdiocese.org

*Dr. Cheryl Fournier
Director
Evangelization &
Adult Faith Formation*

515/237-5006
cfournier@dmdiocese.org

*The celebration symbol of
the cross surrounded by
fields and furrowed soil
was created for the
papal visit in 1979.*

Diocese of Des Moines Age for the Conferral of the Sacrament of Confirmation Guiding Principles

December 28, 2010

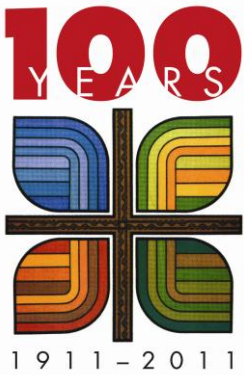
Dear Reverend Fathers, Reverend Deacons, Catechetical Leaders, Youth Ministers, Volunteers and Parents:

In support of Bishop Pates' pastoral initiative rooted in the resolution of the Presbyteral Council to establish the celebration of Confirmation in the sophomore through senior years of high school, the Diocese of Des Moines' Department of Evangelization and Catechesis offers three guiding principles for developing this sacramental process at your local parish:

1. The Confirmation preparation process should always be parish-based and involve the entire parish community.

Formation for Confirmation should move the candidate toward a sense of belonging to the universal Catholic Church as well as the local parish community. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that the entire parish community "bears special responsibility for the preparation of the confirmands." (CCC 1309) This process is pastorally situated within the parish because the confirmandi will experience their lifelong faith relationships in a parish community. The entire Church is called to structurally and personally support a commitment to lifelong faith formation. A solid parish preparatory process will be a bridge for the confirmandi to the larger parish community and help them see that lifelong faith formation includes a connection to a parish.

2. The conferring of the Sacrament of Confirmation should be attentive to the readiness of the candidate and enable their readiness.
3. Confirmation preparation should be seen as a "significant moment" within the process of adolescent catechesis which takes place during the four years of high school and celebrated in the 10th, 11th or 12th grade. This process, as a whole, continues to support a vision of lifelong formation in faith.



Diocese of Des Moines

*A Journey Together
Celebrating Evangelization:
Past, Present and Future*

*John Gaffney
Director
Evangelization & Catechesis*

515/237-5026
jgaffney@dmdiocese.org

*Dr. Cheryl Fournier
Director
Evangelization &
Adult Faith Formation*

515/237-5006
cfournier@dmdiocese.org

The Diocesan Department of Evangelization and Catechesis will collaborate with local parish communities to make sure the sacramental preparatory process is situated within a holistic approach to ministry with youth. The goal of the work of the Church with the young disciple is to develop a deeper awareness of what it means to accept the grace begun at baptism, and put that grace into action.

Confirmation is one important component of a comprehensive model for ministry with our young people. The Department of Evangelization and Catechesis proposes a Confirmation preparation process which includes opportunities to: participate in the prayer life of the Church, the opportunity to walk in Jesus' footsteps in making moral decisions, the opportunity to share their gifts with the larger community, nurturing a sense of justice and service, opportunities for pastoral care, and entering into the broader mission of the Church through evangelization and advocacy. The purpose of this holistic formation is for the confirmandi to have the intention of receiving the sacrament fully. "A candidate for Confirmation... must profess the faith, be in the state of grace, have the intention of receiving the sacrament, and be prepared to assume the role of disciple and witness to Christ, both within the ecclesial community and in temporal affairs." (CCC 1319)

As we enter a new period in the sacramental preparation process for Confirmation, let us pray for the young Catholic Church. Never before have our youth been under such pressure to conform to the materialistic values of the American culture. Our local parish communities have worked hard to bring the voice of the Gospel into a world in desperate need of sacrificial love, humility of spirit, and justice. The Diocesan Department of Evangelization and Catechesis is at the service of every parish community as we work together during this period of transition.

Respectfully in Christ,

John L. Gaffney
Director,
Department of
Evangelization & Catechesis

Dr. Cheryl Fournier
Director,
Evangelization &
Adult Faith Formation