

## Religious Education Office

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## Confirmation Overview of Parent Guide

Inside this guide, you will find many helpful answers to some questions you may be having as a parent of a Confirmation candidate. Here is an overview of what questions and topics are addressed inside:

- What is my role as a parent in Confirmation?
- Why do we need to attend Mass every week?
- How can I encourage my child to grow in faith at home?
- Why is going to Confession important? What if I have not gone in a long time?
- How should I respond if my child does not want to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation? · What if I don't know how to answer a question?
- How do I pray with and for my child?
- How can I communicate with my son or daughter about Jesus, faith, and moral issues?
- What is a Confirmation sponsor?
- What qualifications must a Confirmation sponsor have? **Please see additional attachment for [Choosing a Sponsor](#)**
- Celebration of Confirmation
- What should we do with our newly confirmed son or daughter?

### Additional Attachments

\*Choosing a Sponsor

\*Letter to Rector

\*Frequently Asked Questions

\*Saint Name Essay

\*Service Hr. Information

\*Registration Form

## Parent Guide

### **What is my role as a parent in Confirmation?**

- Your role is indispensable. While your child's sponsor will help him or her prepare for Confirmation and offer encouragement to continue to grow in faith, as parents you are your child's primary educators in the faith. This role began at your child's Baptism, and it continues throughout his or her adolescence and young adult life. The Catechism calls the family "the domestic Church" because it is primarily within the family that your child will learn how to live the teachings of Jesus, which lead to eternal life. The two most important ways you can help form your child in the faith are to practice your faith and pray. Regardless of your faith practice up to this point, God is calling you now to a deeper relationship with him and the Church. It has been said, "The Church is not a museum of saints, but is a hospital for sinners." So, do not be afraid if you do not feel up to the task of leading your child closer to Christ. If necessary, renew your commitment to participate more fully in the life of the Church, through attending Mass every Sunday, going to Confession regularly, engaging in some form of service, and praying consistently for an increase of God's grace in your life and the life of your family.
- Your role as a parent in your child's faith formation does not end with his or her Confirmation. Your prayers and personal example can exert a powerful impact on your child for his or her whole life. Accept the challenge — and it is a challenge — to establish a family habit of discussing faith, morals, and spiritual growth. Consider furthering your own religious education during your son or daughter's sacramental preparation. Attend an adult faith-formation event or program at your parish, go on a retreat, or seek some solid reading material about Catholic life and faith.

### **Why do we need to attend Mass every week?**

- Having a parent who is personally committed to prayer and is participating in the sacramental life of the Church can have a profound effect on a teenager and can provide an important example that will stay with him or her for life. For this reason, and for your own spiritual well-being, make weekly Mass and regular Confession a priority in your family. Sadly, many Catholics do not attend Mass every Sunday, missing out on the most vital, basic element in the life of faith. A lack of commitment to Sunday mass has many serious consequences. Failure to attend Sunday Mass disregards the third commandment to "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day" as well as Jesus' command to "do this in remembrance of me." These are not merely suggestions, but commandments that call us to full, conscious, and active participation in Mass every Sunday.
- When we do not attend Mass, we miss receiving Jesus in the Eucharist, which is the source and summit of our Catholic faith. We miss out on the immeasurable grace given to us when we receive Holy Communion. At Mass, Jesus offers himself to us. God humbles himself and gathers our works, joys, and sufferings and transforms them. We are united to God's love in the most powerful way. What could possibly be more important?

- What can you do to make attendance at Sunday mass more of a focal point of your family life? If you have not been attending regularly, make a fresh start by going to Confession and Mass together, followed by a special meal at home or in a restaurant. If you already attend church on a weekly basis, think about what you can do to help your family get more out of the experience. Go online and find the Mass readings for that week at USCCB.org and read them together at dinner or before bedtime. Encourage your child to share his or her thoughts about the homily or weekly Scripture readings

### **How can I encourage my child to grow in faith at home?**

- Regular family prayer time is important. Simple family prayers, such as grace before meals and weekly Rosary, can have a powerful impact on your child's faith formation. Sometimes, though, getting your child to do the "basics" can be challenging. One effective way to encourage your child's faith is to appeal to his or her natural desire for independence and social connection. Suggest that your son or daughter become involved in youth ministry; this will place him or her in a spiritually uplifting environment and help deepen his or her life of faith.

### **Why is going to Confession important? What if I have not gone in a long time?**

- In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we confess our sins to God through the priest, who has been given the authority to act with the very authority of Christ himself. In Confession, the priest lends his whole being to Christ so that we may have the powerful experience of seeing and hearing, in the words of absolution, that our sins have been forgiven, and that our relationship with Christ and the Church has been restored. By requiring us to confess any serious sins to a priest, the Church is simply fulfilling the task Jesus gave to the apostles to forgive sins. Reassure your son or daughter that the seal of Confession is absolute. The Church binds the priest to absolute secrecy about any sins revealed to him in the Sacrament of Reconciliation even under the threat of imprisonment, physical injury, or death. A priest who breaks the sacramental seal incurs an automatic excommunication. So, don't be afraid—you can return this week, even today, and experience for yourself how going to Confession will strengthen your own personal commitment to Christ. Again, consider your child's Confirmation preparation as an invitation for you to grow spiritually. If possible, make a regular habit of going to Confession as a family. This will help you grow closer spiritually.

### **How should I respond if my child does not want to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation?**

- First, bear in mind that for most teens, going along with the faith of mom and dad until it is internalized in an almost unnoticed, gentle way, is a perfectly acceptable path to holiness. So there is no need to over-emphasize the fact that your child needs to choose the sacrament (and is free to reject it) on his or her own. Telling a child, "You do not have to be confirmed," might lead him or her to have thoughts of rejecting Confirmation—or the faith—that were not previously there. It might also lead your teenager to think Confirmation is "the sacrament of me choosing God." The reality is that every sacrament is about

God's choice of us, because he loves us. But if your child becomes resistant to the idea of being confirmed for some reason, do not be alarmed. Be open to your son or daughter's questions about the faith, as these can be instrumental in helping him or her to develop a genuine and mature faith. Many canonized saints wrestled with questions of faith in their youth; a few even rejected the faith for a time. God will provide the grace for your son or daughter to find him if he or she genuinely seeks the truth. Your child's spiritual life matters deeply to God, and he will never cease to invite him or her to a life of grace.

### **What if I don't know how to answer a question?**

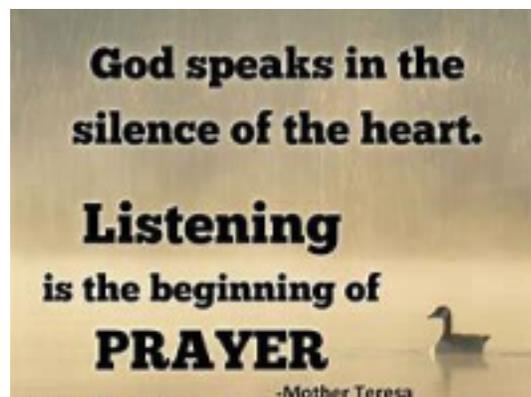
- In the midst of our increasingly secular culture, raising children in the Catholic faith can be a daunting and intimidating task. If you feel inadequate in your own faith life, see your child's Confirmation as an opportunity for deeper conversion—to become who God has called you to be. Consider that God may be calling you to examine your own heart as you assist your son or daughter in preparation for this sacrament. Do not feel that you need a theology degree or that you need a spotless past to fulfill your parental mission. No one is as equipped as you are to be the spiritual leader of your child, simply by virtue of the fact that you are his or her parent. If you are authentic, your son or daughter will see your efforts and the importance you place on living the faith—thought imperfectly (as we all do)—and that will impact him or her more deeply than a lot of well-spoken theology.
- That said, it's important to take your child's questions seriously, and you should know that it is relatively easy to discover what the Church teaches on any particular topic today. The Internet is a wonderful tool. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, as well as other sources, will help you to deepen your knowledge of the faith, to answer questions you have, and to recommend ways you can guide your child to legitimate sources of Catholic teaching. Pray often for your children, and keep your own eyes fixed on Jesus. Don't be afraid if you are not perfect. As you research the answers you need for your son or daughter, prayerfully ask God to enlighten the minds and hearts of your entire family. You are all on the same journey toward heaven, and it's important to slow down and help one another over the bumps in the road.

### **How do I pray with and for my child?**

- Praying for your children is a vital responsibility of a Christian parent. But, you may ask, "How do I pray for them?" There are as many ways to pray as there are people in the Church. Perhaps the best insight is that of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, who taught that prayer is a simple look turned toward heaven. Many traditional prayers and devotions can turn your heart toward heaven, both on your own and with your family. Consider starting a family prayer time featuring a specific devotion, such as the Rosary, a novena to your child's chosen patron saint, or regular Eucharistic Adoration.
- Make your own prayer life a reference point for your son or daughter. Frequently ask your child what he or she would like you to pray for. This gives your child a powerful example of an established prayer life, as well as the security of knowing that when you pray, you are praying especially for him or her.

## How can I communicate with my son or daughter about Jesus, faith, and moral issues?

- Listen. Whether your child has simple questions about the faith or loud objections to it, you need to listen genuinely to his or her concerns before you can answer them effectively. The best doctors devote a lot of time to observing and listening to their patients before they make a diagnosis or prescribe a treatment; parents should do the same with their children's questions. As you may know from experience, conversations with teenagers can easily become impassioned. When this happens, neither side hears the other or feels heard. Resolve to listen without interrupting, and allow your son or daughter to ask questions openly. Teens sometimes ask questions that may seem crude or silly to adults, but you should assume every question is sincere and that your child may not yet have learned how to express questions about particular issues in a mature way. Your gestures of respect will foster real conversation. Avoid conversation-ending statements such as, "That's just how it is," or "You just have to believe it because that's what the Church teaches." • Witness. As Pope Paul VI observed, "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses." This is especially true between parents and children. Witnessing God's work in your personal life is more powerful than an "academic" lesson. Share your own experience in the life of faith. Be honest. Avoid presenting yourself as an expert, as a know-it-all, or as someone who never makes mistakes. Teenagers, despite their own often inconsistent behavior, are keen observers of others and will know whether you believe and live what you say.
- Point to Christ and the Church. Remind your child that the Catholic faith is not your personal opinion, but the divinely revealed truth. Encourage your son or daughter to examine this truth by directing him or her to Scripture, the Catechism, and the lives of the saints.
- Pray. Again, prayer is essential. Christ himself, the highest authority of all, attested to the power of prayer: "Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7). Jesus does not promise every prayer will be answered instantly or even quickly, nor does he say that every prayer will be answered in accordance with our hopes or expectations. We need to remember that God's ways are not our ways, and that he answers every prayer in his time and in accord with his will.



## **What is a Confirmation sponsor?**

- As part of his or her Confirmation preparation, your child will need to choose a sponsor. A Confirmation sponsor has three primary roles: 1) to assist the candidate in preparing to receive the sacrament, 2) to present the candidate for Confirmation, and 3) along with the parents, to help the confirmed person to live out his or her Christian life faithfully. Encourage your son or daughter to consider someone with a vibrant faith life who would serve as a good role model in the faith. A good sponsor can do wonders for your child's Confirmation preparation. Communicate with your son or daughter about this very important decision. As a parent, you have the role of ensuring that the prospective sponsor is a genuinely faithful Catholic suited to the position.

## **What qualifications must a Confirmation sponsor have?**

- A sponsor must have the following qualifications: 1) be a practicing Catholic; 2) be at least 14 years old; 3) have received the Sacrament of Confirmation; 4) be a person who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on; 5) not be the parent of the candidate. In short, a sponsor should be a fully initiated Catholic who is faithful to Christ and his Church.

## **Can one of the child's godparents be his or her Confirmation sponsor?**

- Yes. Because of the deep connection between the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, the Church highly recommends that one of the candidate's godparents be considered as a Confirmation sponsor.

## **The Celebration of Confirmation**

Confirmation is scheduled for

Group 1: Friday, May 19th at 4:30pm

Group 2: Saturday, May 20th at 11:00am

## **What should we do with our newly confirmed son or daughter?**

- After your son or daughter has received the Sacrament of Confirmation, your role as your child's primary educator in the faith should continue. By attending Mass every Sunday as a family, going to Confession regularly, and participating in parish activities, you will emphasize to your teen that Confirmation really is a fuller initiation into the Christian faith and not some sort of "spiritual graduation" from faith-formation classes. Consider integrating faith-based activities into your family life to provide opportunities for everyone to deepen their spiritual lives:
  - Go on a family retreat.
  - Go on a family mission trip. Many parishes or diocesan offices can connect you with pre-planned missions that make the process easy.
  - Plan a family day of service at a local food bank, crisis pregnancy center, homeless shelter, or other community outreach. Afterward, discuss your experiences over a special family dinner.
  - As a family, commit to supporting a charity that is meaningful to you. Alternatively, have each family member choose a different charity.
  - Discuss the Sunday Mass readings in advance as a family, so you can prepare to participate fully in the liturgy. The Mass readings are available at USCCB.org.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## *Sponsors who cannot attend practice...*

A parent or guardian may fill in for the practice. It is the responsibility of the person filling in for a sponsor to get **all** the information to the sponsor.

## *Candidates dress for the day of Confirmation...*

Candidates should dress in their Sunday best with dress shoes (**NO SNEAKERS**). We do not advise boys to wear suit jackets, as it gets warm under the Confirmation Robes.

*All Candidates will receive robes; they are to be worn during the Confirmation Service and while taking pictures with the Bishop.*

## *Confirmation name tags....*

Confirmation name tags should be placed on **left upper chest seam** below Dove

## *Time the Candidates and Sponsors arrive on the day of Confirmation...*

**No later than 30 minutes before scheduled time.**