

Guidelines for Confirmation Preparation

St. Joesph, DeWitt Iowa

2026-2027

Definition of Confirmation

In Confirmation, we receive the power and strength to defend the faith and be a true witness of Jesus. It gives us an increase of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, completing the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation). Confirmation helps us become more mature in our bond with the Church.

Eligibility and Expectations for Confirmation Candidates at St. Joseph, DeWitt

Any baptized young person belonging to St. Joseph in at least the 9th grade, meeting the following criteria, may be enrolled as a Candidate in the preparation program for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Criteria and expectations...

- **SPONSORS**

Each Confirmation Candidate is required to have a sponsor who will participate in the process and present the Candidate to the Bishop at the celebration of Confirmation. **You must have a sponsor (with completed form) by the first session.** The sponsor form can be found on *page 5*. Ideally, one of the baptismal godparents would serve as sponsor, but this is not always possible. A fellow parishioner of St. Joe's would be an ideal choice. Any sponsor the Candidate chooses must satisfy these requirements:

- Be at least 17 years old.
- Be a fully initiated, practicing Catholic who has celebrated the Catholic Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation, is in good standing with the Church,
- Be a good role model to the Candidate and someone the candidate feels comfortable discussing their faith with.
- Parents may NOT be sponsors to their own children.

A sponsor is expected to be present at the five Sunday meetings and to be an active part of the Candidate's preparation. Sponsorship is a lifetime commitment to help guide the Candidate in his/her faith through prayer, discussion, and positive examples. The preparation program will provide opportunities for discussion between Candidate and sponsor, but ideally this relationship will continue outside the classes and throughout life.

- **Full Participation in Parish Life and Faith Formation**

In addition to attending the five Sunday Confirmation preparation meetings, candidates are expected to participate in continued faith formation regularly (attending Wednesday youth

nights at least once a month). Candidates are also expected, like all faithful Catholics are, to attend Mass consistently and weekly.

- **Baptismal Record**

A copy of the Candidate's Baptismal Record/Certificate must be on file at St. Joe's prior to the Rite of Welcome, September 20th. If you were baptized or received your First Communion at St. Joe's, this should already be on file. If you are unsure, check with the parish.

- **Confirmation Preparation Meetings**

Candidates and their sponsors are expected to attend and participate in all five scheduled Sunday meetings, which typically begin at 10:30AM and go until 11:45AM.

Parents/guardians are invited to attend, as well, and a parent/guardian *must* attend as a proxy if the Candidate's sponsor is unable to be at one of the meetings.

If a meeting is missed, there is no way to recapture or "make up" the experience of learning and working together in community. However, a Candidate who misses a meeting *will* need to make up the content missed and should contact Jasmin to receive the assignments.

- **Rite of Welcome**

The Rite of Welcome will occur during the 9:30AM Mass on September 20th. There will be a parent and candidate meeting after Mass (10:30AM-11:00AM).

- **Confirmation Retreat**

The Diocesan guidelines require a Retreat before receiving the Sacrament. This will be held **November 1st** starting with Mass at 9:30 AM and ending at 3:30 PM.

- **Patron Saint**

Each candidate shall choose the name of a specific saint for Confirmation. You will find a guideline to help you with this on *page 13* of this booklet. Candidates may use previously written papers as long as it states why they are choosing the saint as their patron/role model.

We ask the candidate to choose his/her saint and turn in their paper at the final class.

- **Service Opportunities**

Service is the way that we express our commitment to living out Jesus' way of life.

Ministering to people in need within our families, schools, our own community and the world is part of our Baptismal call strengthened by our active participation in the Eucharist. Although we don't require a certain number of *hours* of service, we do expect each candidate to write **4 service reflections** about opportunities they took part in. One of these

opportunities needs to be through the church and one in the community. The other two can be anywhere. Please use *pages 7 – 12* to help select projects and write your reflections.

- **Letter to Fr. Mike**

Each candidate is required to write a one page letter to Father Mike on why they are completing the Sacraments of Initiation. This should include how their religious formation and sacrament prep has helped them understand what they are entering into and how they will become more involved in Parish life and community or how they have become involved throughout this year. Ultimately, it is the parish pastor's responsibility to declare the readiness of the Candidates to the Bishop.

Parent/Guardian's Role

The role of a parent/guardian is to encourage, support, pray for/with, and affirm the Candidate's involvement in the Confirmation process. As mentioned above, parents/guardians are invited to attend the confirmation preparation meetings, and a parent *must* attend as a proxy if the Candidate's sponsor is unable to be at a session.

Date of Confirmation

Confirmation is TBD by the diocese. It will be hosted at Sts. Philip & James in Grand Mound.

Confirmation Preparation 2024-2025 Important Dates to Remember

September 20th	9:30AM-10:30AM	Rite of Welcome at Mass
	10:30AM-11:00AM	Meeting with Parents & Candidates
October 4 th	10:30AM-11:45AM	Preparation Session I: What is a Sacrament? (due <i>Sponsor form</i>)
November 1 st	9:30AM-3:30PM	Retreat
December 6 th	10:30AM-11:45AM	Preparation Session II: Called to Sainthood
January 10 th	10:30AM-11:45AM	Preparation Session III: Source & Summit
February 21 st	10:30AM-11:45AM	Preparation Session IV: Right or Wrong? How Will I Know?
March 21 st	10:30AM-11:45AM	Preparation Session V: Fruits & Gifts (due <i>Letter to Fr. Page, Service Reflections, & Saint Paper</i>)
TBD based on Confirmation date		Confirmation Rehearsal
TBD by the Diocese		Sacrament of Confirmation

Confirmation Sponsor Form

You have been asked to be a Confirmation sponsor. This is a great privilege!

As a sponsor, you will extend in a personal way our Catholic Community's welcome and support. The sponsor has an important and active role both in the sacrament and the spiritual life of the candidate and are expected to attend the five preparation meetings while having a continuous dialogue with their candidate about this sacrament throughout this year. Canon 892 states: "... the sponsor is to take care that the confirmed person behaves as a true witness of Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations inherent in this sacrament."

If the sponsor is not a member of Saint Joseph Parish, this form must be stamped with the official Parish seal where they belong for this document to be valid. A letter from the sponsor's Pastor is also an official proof of attendance.

Candidates Name _____

Sponsor Information:

Name: _____ **Age** _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip code** _____

Parish of Sponsor _____

City _____ **State** _____

I understand the responsibilities that I am undertaking and have both the desire and intention to fulfill them

Signature of Sponsor _____ **Date** _____

Ideas of Service Opportunities

Being the hands and feet of Christ is what we are called to do as a Baptized, Confirmed Christian. In order to prepare ourselves for our true call you are asked to experience being of service to others. We do not ask you to complete a certain number of hours nor do we ask the Confirmation Class to do a specific project since it is the call of all Baptized, Confirmed Catholics to do service. We ask that you investigate what service is available and participate in projects and activities that your gifts can be of help to. Below is a list of some ideas and the gifts that would be beneficial for that task. There is also a space to brainstorm your own ideas. **Four total reflections are due:** *One from a church experience, one from a community experience, and the others from whichever.*

List of ideas

- Yard work
(Gifts: Able to do physical tasks)
- Read to elderly or younger children
(Gifts: Patience, reading ability, social)
- Helps with projects at home
(Gifts: various gifts, depends on the project)
- Help with scouts or younger sports teams
(Gifts: patience, social, listening, following instructions)
- Volunteer in K-8 Religious Education
(Gifts: social, following instructions, patience)
- Fall Festival
(Gifts: various gifts, depends on your role)
- Church Cleaning
(Gifts: Able to do physical tasks)

Brainstorm other tasks

What gifts/talents do I have?

What can I do with these gifts/talents?

What is a service opportunity that uses these gifts/talents?

Service Reflection

What type of service did you perform?

What gifts and/or talents did it require and/or did you use?

Was it what you expected?

What did you like most about your service experience?

What challenged you the most in your service?

How did you benefit from your service?

Besides yourself, whom did this service benefit?

What did you learn from this experience?

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Besides yourself, whom did this service benefit?

What did you learn from this experience?

Patron Saint

Each Confirmation candidate selects a Saint that they feel a connection to by the way they lived their life and the virtues they represent. The candidate then will write an essay and explain why the young person looks to them as a role model for their life.

This should be one page double spaced. It is due by the final class.

Use this page to keep track of possible names and why you might choose them.

Letter to Father Mike

Each candidate is required to write a one page letter to Father Mike on why they are completing the Sacraments of Initiation. This should include how their religious formation and sacrament prep has helped them understand what they are entering into and how they will become more involved in Parish life and community or how they have become involved throughout this year. Ultimately, it is the parish pastor's responsibility to declare the readiness of the Candidates to the Bishop.

For brainstorming:

Why am I complete the Sacraments of Initiation?

How has my religious formation and sacrament prep helped me understand what I am entering into?

How will I become more involved in Parish life and community? How have I become involved more throughout this year?