

*Guidelines for Preparation for the
Sacrament of Confirmation*

Element One

Reflective Dialogue

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BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF SAINT CLOUD, MINNESOTA

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Reflective Dialogue *Element One*

Significant relationship – candidate with parent(s)/guardian(s) and the confirmation team member

The goals of these dialogues/conversations are:

- to engage the candidate and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) as they continue to live out the promises made at Baptism (Rite of Baptism Intro, para 5.5).

See appendix A.

- to build upon the relationship that began at Baptism and exists within the parish community.
- to enable all involved to invest in the process of preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Reflective dialogue includes parish team members consisting of or a combination of the confirmation coordinator, pastor, DRE, youth minister, catechist, deacon, or other designated person.

1. **Initial Dialogue** – occurs with parish team member(s) and parent(s)/guardian(s) and candidate.

This entails an orientation to the process involved in the preparation of the sacrament. Items to be discussed may include: outlining the Confirmation process, choosing a sponsor, and talking about discipleship in the candidate's life.

2. **Reflective Conversation** – allows for the candidate's reflection on his/her experience and takes place with the parish team member. It may occur before and/or after the Sacrament of Confirmation is celebrated.

- Pre - Reflect on the preparation process, faith journey, intentions of continued discipleship, key learnings, and experiences.
- Post (Mystagogy) - Unpack the experience of the Sacrament and how to sustain his/her faith as a witness of Christ. Guide and direct the candidate to opportunities of ongoing faith formation.

INITIAL DIALOGUE

PRIOR TO THE INITIAL DIALOGUE

Invite potential confirmation candidates and parent(s)/guardian(s) to the initial dialogue via phone, email, www.signupgenius.com, etc.

SAMPLE FORMAT FOR THE INITIAL DIALOGUE

Recommendations:

- Ideally, this process is designed for individual families. Parishes may choose to have groups of 3-5 families at one time. Groups of more than 10 families are not conducive to the goal of the initial dialogue.
- Allow approximately 30-45 minutes for the dialogue.

Process:

1. Welcome and hospitality
2. Prayer
3. Discussion about the candidate's formation up to this point
4. Explanation of expectations for the preparation of the Sacrament of Confirmation
 - lay out elements step by step and hand out necessary materials
5. Sharing of appropriate contact information

Benefits of Initial Dialogue:

- Presence of parent(s)/guardian(s) - everyone is hearing the expectations at the same time
- Reiterating and honoring the role of parents as partnering in the preparation
- Facilitating a faith conversation with the parent(s) and candidates
- Setting goals for the preparation of the Sacrament of Confirmation
- Recognizing what people are already doing in their lives
- Connecting with the families

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR PREPARATION AND CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

Each of the five essential elements (reflective dialogue, sponsoring process, learning centers, retreat, liturgical celebrations) engage the candidate in new and already established relationships with others. Each element of the Confirmation preparation process aids in the strengthening of one or more of these significant relationships. In turn, the relationships help the candidate with a life of knowing and loving God within the Body of Christ.

ELEMENT ONE: REFLECTIVE DIALOGUE

Significant relationship – candidate with parent(s)/guardian(s) and the confirmation team member (i.e. confirmation coordinator, pastor, catechists, etc.)

The goals of these reflective dialogues and conversations are:

- to engage the candidate and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) as they continue to live out the promises made at Baptism (Rite of Baptism Intro, para 5.5).
- to build upon the relationship that began at Baptism and exists within the parish community.
- to enable all involved to invest in the process of preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Reflective dialogue includes parish team members consisting of or a combination of: confirmation coordinator, pastor, DRE, youth minister, catechist, deacon, or other designated person.

1. **Initial Dialogue** – occurs with parish team member(s) and parent(s)/guardian(s) and candidate.

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2. **Reflective Conversation** – allows for the candidate’s reflection on his/her experience and takes place with the parish team member. It may occur before and/or after the Sacrament of Confirmation is celebrated.
- Reflect on the preparation process, faith journey, intentions of continued discipleship, key learnings, and experiences.
 - Post (Mystagogy) - Unpack the experience of the Sacrament and how to sustain his/her faith as a witness of Christ. Guide and direct the candidate to opportunities of ongoing faith formation.

SAMPLE OPENING PRAYER

Send Us Your Spirit!

1. Is there anyone or anything you would like to hold in prayer this day?

2. Read Acts 1:1-8

In the first book, Theophilus, I dealt with all that Jesus did and taught until the day he was taken up, after giving instructions through the holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. He presented himself alive to them by many proofs after he had suffered, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While meeting with them, he enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father about which you have heard me speak; for John baptized me with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the holy Spirit.” When they had gathered together they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” He answered them, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority. But you will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

(quote taken from the New American Bible)

3. Prayer

Leader: *After Jesus was taken up to heaven, the Apostles, Mary and the other women and men gathered to pray together. They knew that they needed the Holy Spirit, promised by Jesus, to begin the difficult task of giving witness to the Reign of God. Today we continue to pray:*

All: *Jesus Christ, send us your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.*

Reader: *You know our gifts and our challenges. Transform us into messengers of your Gospel to use our given gifts for the good of all.*

All: *Jesus Christ, send us your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.*

Reader: *You know our history, with its joyful and painful experiences. Help us to be untiring promoters of a society based on love, justice, and peace.*

All: *Jesus Christ, send us your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.*

Reader: *You know our desire for love and community. Make us instruments of unity and service, especially for those who are poor and vulnerable.*

All: *Amen.*

SAMPLE QUESTIONS - INITIAL DIALOGUE

Confirmation as a Strengthening in Discipleship

Context

The overall goal in confirmation preparation and formation in our faith is to become disciples. Throughout our life we are all trying to become better disciples. "Discipleship" means "a learner" (discere: to learn). A Christian disciple is a person who studies the way of Jesus Christ and commits to following his way. This is more than being a believer.

1. What actions would you say makes a good disciple?

Answers will vary but ought to include a discussion on the following:

- Prayer
- Mass attendance
- Faith Formation
- Family Life
- How you treat others
- Values
- Service

2. What gifts and talents do you recognize that God has given you? In what ways are you using these gifts and talents for the betterment of your family, community, church, school, world?

3. As parents, what gifts and talents do you see in your child? How do you see them using these gifts?

4. How do you participate in our church community?

5. What do you hope for during this time of preparation for Confirmation?

6. Considering the above dialogue, what will you specifically need to work on during this preparation time? Individually and as a family?

Explanation of Parish Expectations

- Sponsor and Sponsor Process

- Learning Centers
- Retreat
- Liturgical Celebrations
- Schedule and Timelines

Additional Questions/Concerns/Needs

REFLECTIVE CONVERSATION

PRIOR TO THE REFLECTIVE CONVERSATION

Invite potential confirmation candidates to the reflective conversation via phone, email, www.signupgenius.com, etc.

SAMPLE FORMAT FOR THE REFLECTIVE CONVERSATION

Recommendations:

- Ideally, this process is designed for the individual candidate and the parish team member. Parishes may choose to have groups of 3-5 candidates at one time. Groups of more than 10 are not conducive of the goal of the reflective conversation.
- Allow approximately 20-30 minutes for the dialogue.

Process:

1. Welcome and hospitality
2. Prayer
3. Discussion of the candidate's experience of the preparation of the Sacrament of Confirmation
4. Discussion of the "What's next?" for the candidate

Benefits of Reflective Conversation:

- Mystagogy for the Sacrament of Confirmation
- Evaluating the format for the preparation for the Sacrament
- Reiterating the role and responsibility of a disciple
- Facilitating a faith conversation with the candidate
- Recognizing what people are already doing in their lives
- Connecting with candidate and reinviting him/her to be full, active participants in parish life and the world as a disciple of Jesus Christ

APPENDIX A

Rite of Baptism for Children

Introduction – para 5.5

After baptism it is the responsibility of the parents, in their gratitude to God and in fidelity to the duty they have undertaken, to assist the child to know God, whose adopted child it has become, to prepare the child to receive confirmation and participate in the holy eucharist. In this duty they are again to be helped by the parish priest (pastor) by suitable means.

For more information, contact:

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