



Chosen

Your Journey to Confirmation

PARENT INFORMATION SESSION

Parent Information Session

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1. Introduction

As a youth educator, you know well the importance of parents in the development of a child's faith life. The *Chosen* program keeps this reality in mind, providing resources to assist you in the important—and sometimes challenging—job of engaging and motivating parents.

As you prepare to lead your teens through *Chosen*, we recommend that you begin with a Parent Information Session. The four goals of the Parent Information Session are to:

1. **Introduce** parents to the *Chosen* program
2. **Educate** them about the Sacrament of Confirmation
3. **Encourage** them to take seriously their role as the primary educators in matters of the Faith
4. **Equip** them with the *Chosen* Parent's Guide and other resources that will help guide them through the journey

The purpose of this guide is to assist you in preparing and conducting a Parent Information Session. Here you will find:

- A checklist of things to consider before, during, and after the Parent Information Session
- A sample framework for a one-hour Parent Information Session
- Sample letters for parents

Ideally, the same instructor(s) who will lead candidates through the *Chosen* program will also facilitate (or at least be introduced at) the Parent Information Session. This will provide optimal continuity between parents and their children.

2. Preparing for the Parent Information Session

1. Plan and schedule your Parent Information Session prior to beginning the candidate program. Allow approximately one hour for the session.
2. Use the sample “Invitation Letter to Parents” on page 7 to announce your meeting.
3. Ask parents to watch Chris Stefanick’s *Parent Invitation* video before attending the session (it can be viewed at ascensionpress.com). In this powerful, 5-minute video, Chris connects to parents’ hearts in a down-to-earth way, encouraging them to take an active role in their children’s Confirmation preparation. He ends with an invitation to attend the Parent Information Session. You can post the video link on your parish website and include it in your Sunday bulletin, letter to parents, email communications, and social media posts.
4. Prepare to show the 20-minute *Parent Information Session* overview video during the Parent Information Session, which is available in the DVD set or through your Online Leader’s Access at ascensionpress.com. This engaging and inspiring video, featuring Chris Stefanick and Fr. Mike Schmitz, is designed to open parents’ hearts to their critical role in the development of their child’s faith. You will need a laptop (or tablet), projector, and screen (or large monitor).
5. Prepare to distribute the *Chosen* Parent’s Guide. Preview the content of the Parent’s Guide and the Sponsor’s Guide before the Parent Information Session. We recommend that you order one *Chosen* Student Pack per student. This pack contains the program’s three written components (i.e., the Student Workbook, Parent’s Guide, and Sponsor’s Guide) designed to ensure the candidate, sponsor, and parents are all involved in the *Chosen* experience. Depending on the logistics of your class and schedule, you can decide how to best distribute the materials.
6. Review the *Chosen* “Frequently Asked Questions” resource (available at ascensionpress.com), which is a great overview of the program and will equip you to answer questions during the information session.
7. Consider offering refreshments and snacks for the session.
8. Keep track of attendance (i.e., have a registration/welcome table). Follow up with parents who do not attend. (A sample “Letter to Parents Who Did Not Attend the Information Session” is included on page 164.)

3. Parent Information Session Outline

I. Introduction (3 minutes)

Introduce yourself and any other leaders who will be facilitating the program. Explain the outline for the session. First, they will view a video introducing them to *Chosen*, their child’s preparation program for the Sacrament of Confirmation. You will then discuss the sacrament and their role as parents in their child’s preparation for receiving it. Finally, you will distribute the *Chosen* Parent’s Guide (and perhaps a program schedule for the year).

II. Opening Prayer (2 minutes)

Open the session with a prayer. If a priest or deacon is available, ask him to offer the prayer and a blessing. If not, you can (in your own words) ask for the Holy Spirit to guide the meeting, and then ask everyone to join in a well-known prayer such as the Hail Mary or Our Father.

III. Parent Video (20 minutes)

Play the *Parent Information Session* video, which is available in the DVD set or through your Online Leader's Access at ascensionpress.com.

IV. Explanation of the Sacrament of Confirmation (15 minutes)

Use the following points as a guide to explain the sacrament in your own words. You can find additional material in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (see CCC 1285–1321) as well as in the *Chosen Parent's Guide* and in Lesson 14 of the Leader's Guide (Why have I been chosen? Sealed and Sent in Confirmation).

- Begin by asking for a show of hands of how many people can remember their own Confirmations.
- Then ask how many remember the experience as a pivotal moment in their life of faith. (Few will likely remember it this way, but the main point is to get them engaged and thinking about the sacrament.)
- Explain that Confirmation is much more than a rite of passage. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* lists five effects of this sacramental outpouring (see CCC 1303):
 1. It affirms our identity as children of God (“divine filiation”).
 2. “It unites us more firmly to Christ.”
 3. “It increases in us the gifts of the Holy Spirit.”
 4. It strengthens our “bond with the Church.”
 5. It strengthens us to “spread and defend the faith by word and action,” to be fearless witnesses to Christ and the power of the Cross.
- Explain that Confirmation is in no way intended to be the end of their son's or daughter's spiritual formation but rather the beginning of a deeper, more mature, personal life in Christ.
- Along with Baptism and Eucharist, Confirmation is one of the three Sacraments of Initiation.
- Confirmation perfects the graces received at Baptism, empowering us to be followers of the Lord and coworkers for the kingdom (see CCC 1316).
- Unlike the other Sacraments of Initiation, the ordinary minister of Confirmation is the bishop, a successor of the apostles, rather than a priest or deacon.
- The bishop extends his hands over those to be confirmed, prays over them, and anoints them with holy oil saying, “Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit” (CCC 1320).
- The word *Christ* means “anointed one.” In union with Jesus, the Sacrament of Confirmation makes us anointed ones as well!

V. Distribute Parent's Guide / Final Instructions (5 minutes)

- Distribute the *Chosen Parent's Guide*.
- Briefly outline the three parts of the guide:

Part 1: An Introduction to Confirmation

Part 2: Four Important Conversations: Explain that this part contains a plan for parent-child prayer and discussion in support of the overall program.

Part 3: Living Out Confirmation: Point out that this part features great tips to help your child prepare for Confirmation, along with a Catholic prayers section—in case parents need a refresher!

- Encourage parents to make a commitment to use the guide and to engage their son or daughter throughout the journey.
- Distribute any additional resources (e.g., schedules, checklists, forms) and communicate any logistical details concerning the retreat, rehearsals, and other requirements.
- Ask if parents have any questions or comments.
- Assure parents that you will be available throughout the program to address any questions or thoughts that they would like to share.

VI. Closing Prayer (2 minutes)

If a priest or deacon is available, ask him to offer a final prayer and blessing. If not, you can thank God in your own words for the time together and ask for the Holy Spirit to guide and fill all of your hearts as you begin this journey. End with a well-known prayer like the Hail Mary or Our Father

4. Following the Parent Information Session

- Send a copy of the *Chosen Parent's Guide*, along with a letter of explanation, to those parents who did not attend the Parent Information Session. Use the sample “Letter to Parents Who Did Not Attend the Information Session” on page 164.
- Encourage parents who did not attend to view the *Parent Information Session* overview video if they have online parent's access (available with purchase of the Student Pack).

5. Sample Letters

Invitation Letter to Parents

To be used to invite parents to the *Chosen* Parent Information Session. We recommend that you print it on the official letterhead of your school, parish, or organization. Please modify as needed.

[Date]

Dear Parents of [customize to fit your situation, e.g., “our youth ministry,” “our Confirmation class,” “our tenth-grade students,” etc.]:

We are thrilled to introduce our Confirmation preparation program, *Chosen: Your Journey to Confirmation*. The goal of the program is to offer your child a powerful, life-changing experience as he or she prepares to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

It is our hope that *Chosen* will not only offer your children a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith but also win over their hearts at this critical time in their lives. The program has been carefully designed to address and answer your child’s fundamental questions about life and to challenge him or her to embrace a life of faith.

Let’s face it—our world is full of distractions and detours that can easily set a young person on the wrong path. Nothing can take the place of a strong faith in God: not friends, money, or education. It is our faith that gives us our identity and our direction in life. The Church recognizes that you, as parents, are the primary educators of your children in matters of faith and morals—and the *Chosen* program offers you a unique opportunity to join your child as he or she journeys through the Catholic Faith.

To learn more about the program and your role in preparing your child for Confirmation, we invite you to attend a Parent Information Session on [add date/time] to be held at [location]. The meeting will not only inform you about the program but also offer you ideas and tools to confidently engage and encourage your child during their preparation.

At the Parent Information Session, you will receive a copy of the *Chosen* Parent’s Guide, which answers questions you may have about Confirmation and provides helpful conversation starters and family activities to help you play an active role in your child’s faith journey. We will begin teaching *Chosen* on [start date].

Finally, we invite you to watch the welcome video to parents from *Chosen* author Chris Stefanick, which is available at ascensionpress.com.

Thank you for your time and interest in this important stage of your child’s spiritual development. We look forward to seeing you at the Parent Information Session.

Sincerely,

[Name]

Letter to Parents Who Did Not Attend the Information Session

To be sent to parents who were unable to attend the Parent Information Session. If you mail this letter, be sure to include a *Chosen* Parent's Guide.

[Date]

Dear Parents of [customize to fit your situation, e.g., "our youth ministry," "our Confirmation class," "our tenth-grade students," etc.]:

We are sorry you were unable to attend the Parent Information Session on [add date/time].

The enclosed *Chosen* Parent's Guide will inform you of the exciting new program we are introducing to your child as he or she prepares to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

It is our hope that *Chosen* will not only offer your children a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith but also win over their hearts at this critical time in their lives. The program has been carefully designed to address and answer your child's fundamental questions about life and to challenge him or her to embrace a life of faith.

Let's face it—our world is full of distractions and detours that can easily set a young person on the wrong path. Nothing can take the place of a strong faith in God: not friends, money, or education. It is our faith that gives us our identity and our direction in life. The Church recognizes that you, as parents, are the primary educators of your children in matters of faith and morals—and *Chosen* offers you a unique opportunity to join your child as he or she journeys through the Catholic faith.

The *Chosen* Parent's Guide answers questions you may have about Confirmation and provides helpful conversation starters and family activities to help you play an active role in your child's faith journey. We will begin teaching *Chosen* on [start date].

Finally, we invite you to watch the 20-minute *Parent Information Session* video that was shown at the Parent Information Session, which is available in the DVD set or online at ascensionpress.com. This powerful and inspiring message to Confirmation parents features *Chosen* author Chris Stefanick and presenter Fr. Mike Schmitz.

Thank you for your time and interest in this important stage of your child's spiritual development.

Sincerely,

[Name]