



**PARENT
INFORMATION SESSION**

Parent Information Session

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1. Introduction

As a youth educator, you are well aware of the importance of parents in the development of a child's faith life. The *Chosen* program was developed with this reality in mind, providing resources to assist you in the important—and sometimes challenging—job of getting parents engaged and motivated.

As you prepare to lead your teens through *Chosen: Your Journey Toward Confirmation*, it is recommended that you conduct 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 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 prior, 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 be teaching the *Chosen* program would also facilitate (or at least be introduced at) the Parent Information Session. This will provide optimum continuity between the parents and their children.

2. Preparing for the Parent Information Session

1. Plan and schedule your Parent Information Session prior to teaching the program. Allow approximately sixty minutes for the session.
2. Use the sample "Parents Invitation Letter" found at the end of this document to announce your meeting.
3. Ask parents to watch Chris Stefanick's "Parent Invitation Video" prior to the attending the session (which can be viewed at ConfirmationStudy.com/parents). In this powerful, five-minute video,

Chris speaks directly to the hearts of parents in a down-to-earth way, connecting with them and encouraging them to take an active role in their child's Confirmation preparation. He ends with an invitation to attend the Parent Information Session. You can post the link on your parish website as well as include it in your Sunday bulletin, letter to parents, and email communications.

4. Prepare to show the twenty-minute "Chosen Parent's Session" overview video during the Parent Session, which can be found at ConfirmationStudy.com/teachers. This emotionally engaging and inspiring video, featuring Chris Stefanick and Fr. Mike Schmitz, is designed to win over the hearts of parents and make them open to the idea that they have a key role to play in the development of their child's faith. You will need a suitable laptop (or tablet), projector, and screen (or large monitor).
5. Prepare to distribute the *Chosen Parent's Guide*. We recommend that you become familiar with the content of the Parent's and Sponsor's Guides prior to the Information Session. *Note: We recommend that you order one Chosen Student Pack per student. This pack contains the program's three written components (i.e., 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. Familiarize yourself with the *Chosen* "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQs), document (available at ConfirmationStudy.com/faqs), which serves as 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" is included at the end of this document.)

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 be shown a video introducing them to *Chosen*, the program that is going to be used in preparing their child to receive 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 schedule for the year).

II. Opening Prayer (2 minutes)

Open the session with a prayer. If a priest or deacon is available, ask them 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 perhaps ask everyone to join you in a well-known prayer such as the Hail Mary or Our Father.

III. Parent Video (20 minutes)

Play the “Chosen Parent’s Session” – at ConfirmationStudy.com/teachers.

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

Use the following points as a guide to explaining 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 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 our words and actions, 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 or daughter’s spiritual formation but rather the beginning of a deeper life in Christ.
- Confirmation is one of the three “Sacraments of Initiation,” along with Baptism and the Eucharist.
- Confirmation perfects the graces received at Baptism, empowering us to be followers of the Lord and co-workers 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.
- 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.” (see CCC1320)
- 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 four parts of the Guide:

Part 1: An Introduction to Confirmation

Part 2: Chosen Conversation Starters

Explain that this part contains a summary of each lesson as well as a few questions to foster conversation.

Part 3: Top Ten Catholic Questions

Encourage parents to skim through—they don’t need to read everything, or in order.

Part 4: Additional Resources

Point out this features a Catholic Prayers section—in case they may 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) and communicate any logistical details that they will need to know concerning the retreat, rehearsals, etc.
- Ask if they have any questions or comments.
- Assure them 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 this time together and ask for the Holy Spirit to guide and fill all of your hearts as you begin this journey. Consider ending 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*, with a letter of explanation, to those parents who did not attend the Information Session. Use the sample “Letter to Parents Who Did Not Attend the Information Session” at the end of this document, or a modified version.
- Encourage those who did not attend to view the “*Chosen Parent’s Session*” at ConfirmationStudy.com/teachers.

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 introducing an exciting new program called *Chosen: Your Journey Toward 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 child a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith, but will also win over their heart at this critical time in their life. 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 will also offer you ideas and tools to confidently engage and encourage your child during their preparation.

At the Information Session, you will receive a *Chosen Parent's Guide*, which summarizes the program lesson by lesson, allowing you to follow along and play an active role in your child's faith journey. The guide also provides helpful questions and family applications to foster meaningful conversation at home. We will begin teaching *Chosen* on [start date]. We encourage you to follow along in the Parent's Guide.

Finally, we invite you to watch a welcome video to parents from *Chosen's* author, Chris Stefanick, which is available at ConfirmationStudy.com/parents.

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,

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 middle school youth ministry," "our confirmation class," "our eight 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 child a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith, but will also win over their heart at this critical time in their life. 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.

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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 summarizes the program lesson by lesson, allowing you to follow along and play an active role in your child’s faith journey. The guide also provides helpful questions and family applications to foster meaningful conversations at home. We will begin teaching *Chosen* on [start date]. We encourage you to follow along in the Parent’s Guide.

Finally, we invite you to watch a twenty-minute video “Chosen Parent’s Session” that was shown at the Parent Information Session. This powerful and inspiring message to Confirmation parents features *Chosen* author Chris Stefanick and presenter Fr. Mike Schmitz. It is available at ConfirmationStudy.com/teachers.

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

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