



DIOCESE OF  
Jefferson City

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# QUINCEAÑERA PREPARATION POLICY

*Created by the  
Hispanic & Intercultural Ministries Office*

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## DESCRIPTION

Parishes in the Diocese of Jefferson City welcome and celebrate Quinceañera celebrations, which traditionally take place on the 15th birthday of a young woman, primarily among Hispanics/Latinos.

This celebration is an expression of thanksgiving to God for the gifts of life, family, and faith, and is emphasized by the renewal of baptismal promises and God's blessing for the years to come. It is a unique opportunity for the faith community to be enriched by the significance of this cultural and familial tradition.

Preparation for this celebration is best understood as a moment for catechesis and formation, as well as an opportunity to evangelize youth, families and the whole Christian community. It places special emphasis on the awareness of the *quinceañera* (young woman turning 15), the *damas* (teenage female friends) and the *chambelanes* (teenage male friends) in dealing with life challenges, enlightened by our Catholic faith, values and virtues. Lastly, it invites and encourages Hispanic/Latino youth to become good stewards who contribute to the life, mission and work of the Church by generously sharing their gifts in their parish community.

Prior to hosting a Quinceañera celebration at a parish the following requirements must be completed.

## FIRST STEPS

The family is requested to contact the parish not less than six (6) months prior to the date of the desired Quinceañera celebration.

At that time a meeting with a priest or a trained Quinceañera facilitator will be scheduled to go over the requirements, instruction, and liturgy expectations for the celebration.

## REQUIREMENTS

The quinceañera must have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation.

The quinceañera (or her family) must be a registered parishioner(s) and should strive to become active steward(s) in their parish, or have a letter of good standing from her pastor for the celebration to take place at another parish.

Although there is no fee for the celebration of the Quinceañera, a donation to the parish is highly encouraged.

## INSTRUCTION

The *quinceañera*, *damas* and *chambelanes* are expected to participate in a Quinceañera retreat in her home parish or with the pastor's approval, in another parish in the diocese.

- ▶ If the retreat was attended in another parish in the diocese, a certificate of completion must be submitted to the home parish in prior to the Quinceañera celebration.
- ▶ If a dama or chambelan is not able to participate because of an extraordinary factor, the pastor may consider waiving the instruction requirement for these individuals.

## LITURGICAL CELEBRATION

The quinceañera and her parents should meet with the person responsible for liturgy preparation to discuss parish practices and norms regarding Quinceañera celebrations (e.g., rehearsal, decoration, music, photography/video, etc.).

The ceremony will take place in the form of a Blessing Outside of Mass, led by a priest or deacon, which will be determined by the pastor.

The quinceañera is to be accompanied by her parents, godparents, damas and chambelanes. This should be as simple as possible and approved by the pastor.

It is highly recommended that the quinceañera, parents, godparents, damas and chambelanes celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to the day of the ceremony.

Optional special symbols that can be brought to be blessed during the celebration include:

- ▶ a **rosary** and/or **medal of the Virgin Mary**, representing her consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary;
- ▶ a **crucifix**, as a reminder of Christ's love until death;
- ▶ a **ring** given by her parents or godparents, representing her Christian commitment to keep herself chaste and pure until marriage;
- ▶ a **Bible**, whose reading will enlighten the quinceañera's walk through life;
- ▶ a **candle**, reminding her of the faith given to her in Baptism and that she is willing to renew; and
- ▶ a **bouquet of flowers**, offered to the Virgin Mary at the end of the celebration as a means of consecration to her.

## FOLLOW-UP

The quinceañera, damas and chambelanes will be contacted by a Quinceañera preparation facilitator from their parish to inform them about and invite them to join the different opportunities of faith formation, spiritual growth and service available in their parish.

## NOTES

The diocese will provide trainings for parish teams and facilitators of Quinceañera preparation.

The rituals and presider's instructions to be used by clergy are found in the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) *Order for the Blessing on the Fifteenth Birthday/Bendición al Cumplir Quince Años*. A copy of the PDF can be downloaded in English at <https://fwdioc.org/quince-anos-english.pdf>, or in Spanish at <https://fwdioc.org/quince-anos-spanish.pdf>.

The USCCB acknowledges the Quinceañera celebration and provides information about it both in English and in Spanish on its website at <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/sacramentals-blessings/persons/quinceanera>.