

Choosing a Sponsor

The Role of the Sponsor

The most important role of a Confirmation sponsor is to walk with you and guide you as you prepare to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Initiation.

Confirmation sponsors are like spiritual coaches or mentors. They affirm your strength and point out ways you can grow and become better in the practice of faith. You share your faith journey together. A Confirmation sponsor participates in your preparation and presents you to the bishop or the priest during the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

How to Choose a Sponsor

Choosing a sponsor for Confirmation is an important task. You may choose one of your godparents or you may choose another person. When you think about choosing a Confirmation sponsor, think about choosing someone who is an active, practicing Catholic; someone who is enthusiastic about the Catholic faith; and someone who is easy to talk and be around.

Here are some suggestions to help you as you make your choice:

- Think about the qualities you want your sponsor to have.
- Think about people who are good examples for you.
- Ask yourself if one of your godparents would be a good sponsor.
- Talk with your parents, other family members, or your catechist about who would be a good choice.
- Remember, sponsors must be at least sixteen years old. They must be practicing Catholics who have already celebrated Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.
- Pray to the Holy Spirit.
- Talk with the person you select and explain why you chose him or her and what his or her responsibilities will be.

The Ministry of the Sponsor

When you were first asked to be a sponsor for your candidate's Confirmation, you may have felt many things- honored, surprised, nervous, happy. Chances are, however, that it did not immediately occur to you that you were being asked to be an evangelizer. However, that is one way of summing up the role of a sponsor. Hopefully, by now you have come to a much deeper understanding of the many ways that your support and encouragement of your candidate has allowed you to share with them the Good News of Jesus' love.

The word evangelization really means something very simple and basic. It is about the everyday living out of our Christian faith in a way that makes us recognizable as disciples of Jesus. It is about living the Gospel's Great Commandment- love for God and neighbor- in ordinary ways each day so that others can recognize us as people of faith. By allowing your candidate to come to know you more deeply as a person of faith, you have been an evangelizer. Hopefully, that has given you a deeper appreciation for your own Confirmation and for the fact that the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are at work in you, too.

Practical Suggestions

- Have a conversation with your candidate about evangelization in which you share your own experience as a person of Christian faith, living in a way that makes you recognizable as a follower of Jesus.
- You will undoubtedly want to give some sort of gift to your candidate on Confirmation day. Give careful thought to selecting a gift that is connected to the spiritual journey you have shared with your candidate.
- Write a letter to your candidate, expressing all that this experience of sponsorship has meant to you, and your hopes for the future as they live out the effects of being a fully initiated disciple of Jesus Christ. Seal the envelope and write on it that it is not to be opened until the first anniversary of their Confirmation day. Make a note on your own calendar to call your candidate next year on that anniversary day and discuss the letter.
- Adapt one of the above suggestions or use an activity of your own choosing.

Being a Sponsor for Life

The person you sponsored is no longer a candidate. Rather, they are now a fully initiated member of the Body of Christ. But that does not mean that your role as sponsor is over and done, for you are a sponsor for life.

Throughout the weeks and months of the preparation process, you have been deepening a bond that was already in place, adding dimensions and facets to the relationship with a young person preparing for Confirmation. Now, as a result of your interactions during the preparation time and of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation, there is a spiritual bond between the two of you that will last a lifetime.

Because people sometimes experience a “letdown” after an event that has involved intense preparation, you may be needed more than ever in the days ahead. The formal catechetical preparation has ended, but as your newly confirmed seeks to assimilate the meaning of all that has taken place, there is an informal kind of help that you can give as they seek to fully understand the richness of the Holy Spirit’s activity within them.

Practical Suggestions

- Within a week or two, get together in person or by phone and talk through what happened during the actual celebration of Confirmation. Recall the key elements of the ritual that struck you- the music, the homily, what it was like to stand before the bishop during the anointing with Chrism, and so on. Speak of what moved you and why, and encourage the newly confirmed to do the same.
- Over the next month or so, review some of the topics you discussed with your candidate and some of the things you did together during the preparation process. Identify one or two topics discussed or actions taken that now seem to have been particularly important and meaningful. Connect with the newly confirmed and explore how those previous learnings are still relevant and how they have are being incorporated into everyday life.
- Spend five minutes brainstorming how you can keep in touch with the newly confirmed over the next year in a way that fosters the spiritual dimension of your relationship. Write down your five best ideas, assign a date when you will do them, and put the paper in a place where you will refer to it regularly.
- Spend some quiet time in prayer today, simply thanking God for the grace and opportunity to serve as a sponsor.