

FOR CONFIRMATION CANDIDATES

How to choose a sponsor

Confirmation can be a great experience, and hopefully you've thought a lot about what this sacrament means, and how the Holy Spirit will affect your life. You'll be required to have a sponsor—someone who will guide you and share the story of faith with you. A good sponsor will make this process a little easier and even more fun.

If all has gone as planned, the best person will be one of your baptismal godparents. The *Catechism* (#1311) and canon law (#892-893) both tell us that you need a sponsor. Having one of your godparents helps us to see how Baptism and Confirmation are connected. Sadly, by the time they get to Confirmation, many young people no longer know their godparents, or they're no longer good role models. Or maybe they just live too far away. These young people will need to choose a new sponsor.

Some advice to the candidates: You're looking for someone you trust, whose faith you admire and who will be there for you. The requirements for sponsors include: that they be *confirmed Catholics, at least 18 years old* (for maturity) and *practicing members of the Church, while not being your parents*. This means you can choose a relative, friend or someone from your parish as your sponsor. If your sponsor is from a parish other than St. John's or Immaculate Conception, they must have a letter of eligibility signed by their own pastor.

FOR SPONSORS

Be at your best

If you have been chosen to be a Confirmation sponsor, congratulations! This person sees in you a profound faith commitment, finds trust and knows you are someone who will care about them and their faith. Sounds impressive, doesn't it? It's not all that complicated, but it does take time, a caring heart and a listening ear. If you're a practicing, mature Catholic, don't get too worried. Here are a few suggestions on how to be the best possible sponsor for your candidate:

- **Be a living model of faith.** At least a part of what this young person admires in you is your faith! If the way you practice your faith is not what it should be, "get it together," so to speak! If you honestly can't, this is understandable, but maybe you should decline the invitation to be a sponsor. Your life doesn't have to become artificially saintly, but your faith should be authentic and sincere.
- **Pray for your candidate and yourself.** As candidates decide to be confirmed, they need spiritual strength. Your prayers for them are important, but don't forget to pray for yourself also, that you can share why you value and practice your Catholicism. Attend Mass together, or even have the courage to come to Reconciliation together.
- **Give of your time and share your gifts.** You'll be asked to spend time together on various activities. This may mean preparing lessons or even working on a Christian service project. You could also share your own experiences or write a letter of encouragement. Let your unique God-given talents and gifts shine! Offer a gift of spiritual significance—a new Bible, rosary or book about our faith or about the saint the candidate has chosen for a Confirmation name—but *be creative and relevant!*
- **Don't miss the ceremony.** Participating in the ceremony is the easiest part of being a sponsor. Your basic job will be to place your hand on your candidate's shoulder, and tell the bishop your candidate's Confirmation name. You're there to be a support, but your role on Confirmation day is only beginning.
- **Don't forget this newly confirmed Catholic.** After Confirmation day, remember birthdays and this anniversary. Send a card or make a phone call. Continue to worship together, or from time to time do some Christian service. Put those "Gifts of the Spirit" into practice.