

SPONSOR INFORMATION

Stated most simply, this aspect of the candidate's preparation for Confirmation involves a series of meetings with you, the sponsor. During these meetings, you are to serve as a kind of mentor (coach) in helping the candidate grow in those skills, knowledge, attitudes, and practices that are considered essential to being a mature, responsible, committed (that is, confirmed) member of the Church, a professed follower of Jesus.

This program of apprenticeship is modeled after elements of a longer and more arduous period of preparation converts in the early Church experienced prior to their baptism/confirmation into the Church. That program was called a catechumenate.

If you are like most persons who have been asked to serve as sponsors, you feel both flattered and a little inadequate. You would probably be the last one to hold yourself up as fully informed, totally dedicated Catholic and a suitable person for guiding others.

Keep two things in mind here. First, your candidate freely chose you, so he or she must feel you have some basic qualities and experiences that can help the candidate grow. Second, you are asked to be somewhat more mature, more informed and experienced than the candidate. No one, least of all the candidate, expects perfection of you. A willingness to share and to continue to grow in your own faith are all that are necessary.

Also, it is important to be realistic toward the candidate as you are toward yourself. The goal of this program is growth, not perfection, for the candidate. Readiness for confirmation requires that the candidate demonstrate willingness and a capacity to continue to grow toward mature and committed faith. The actual goal of perfected faith and total imitation of Jesus remains a lifelong quest. Your task is to help the candidate take the next step in that quest, not the final step.

If you properly understand the purpose of this apprenticeship, you will realize that you have all the necessary qualities for assisting your candidate.

That confidence, coupled with the personal investment of your time – and humble prayer for Jesus' assistance – will insure that this program will be a successful and rewarding experience for both the candidate and you.

12 TIPS FOR SPONSORS

1. Pray for your candidate daily and ask them to do the same for you.
2. Arrange a definite schedule of meeting dates. This will benefit both your busy lifestyle and theirs. Take them to lunch, dinner, a ballgame, or some other “fun” event occasionally.
3. Take them to Mass. Arrange to meet them at church in a specific pew or pick them up for church. Go out for breakfast afterward or to coffee and donuts.
4. Be a good listener. Be attentive to their needs, growth, and concerns. Don’t impose your ideas on them, voice old complaints, or get bogged down with old “nun” stories.
5. Be honest and open. A young person won’t tolerate anyone who appears to be the least bit “phony.”
6. Do a service project together. Rake leaves, paint a fence, clean a garage, or shovel snow for an elderly person in the neighborhood. Visit a shut-in. Let them do something for you - - baby-sit, wash a car, etc.
7. Proudly introduce them to other members of the parish. This makes them feel like important members of the community as well as exposes them to various aspects of parish life.
8. Be sensitive to family situations.
9. Ask them about their schoolwork or achievements in sports. Attend their games, if possible.
10. Send a card on their birthday, at Christmas, or the anniversary of their Baptism.
11. Be accurate. You are there to be a role model, not a catechist. But if some question comes up, try to answer it. If you don’t know, don’t hesitate to say, “Let’s ask.”
12. Pray for guidance.