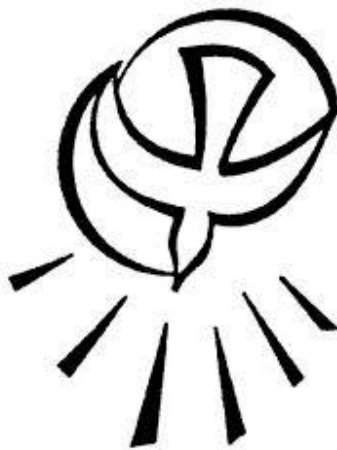




# CONFIRMATION



**Sponsor Guide**

2020

## What is Confirmation?

Confirmation is a sacramental outpouring of the Holy Spirit that leaves a permanent imprint on the soul, completes Christian initiation, and empowers us to be witnesses to Christ (CCC 1302-05)

Many people mistakenly see Confirmation as a teen's graduation from religious education, as merely a cultural passage into maturity, or as an opportunity to choose whether or not to remain Catholic. None of these views is consistent with the teaching of the church on this powerful sacrament. Confirmation is not merely a symbolic ceremony or a rite of passage. While it is true that a candidate chooses whether to receive the sacrament of Confirmation and, with the reception of the sacrament, takes a step toward maturity, none of these facts captures the heart of the meaning of the sacrament of Confirmation.

## What happens at Confirmation?

As with every sacrament, Confirmation does not merely symbolize a spiritual reality – it actually affects what it signifies. In Confirmation, our senses are fully engaged: we see the bishop's hand raised in the anointing. The candidate feels and smells the chrism, or sacramental oil, and hears the bishop proclaim, "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit."

What we physically see, hear, feel, and smell at Confirmation is an anointing, a sealing with the Holy Spirit. These visible elements associated with the sacrament are not merely symbolic: they simultaneously bring about a permanent change to those receiving the sacrament.

When the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles as they prayed together at Pentecost, the effects of this miracle were immediately apparent. Emboldened by the workings of the Spirit, the overjoyed apostles couldn't stop talking about Jesus. They proclaim their faith fearlessly. The sacramental presence of the Holy Spirit in their souls emboldened them to speak the truth.

Confirmation empowers us with the very same Holy Spirit. Working through what is visible and sensory; the same Holy Spirit who was poured out on the apostles at Pentecost makes a home in each Confirmation candidate's soul. The Catechism of the Catholic Church lists five effects of this outpouring:

- affirms our identity as children of God
- unites us more firmly to Christ
- increases in us the gifts of the Holy Spirit
- strengthens our bond with the church
- 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.

## What is the relationship between Confirmation and Baptism?

Confirmation completes and adds to the graces we received at baptism, when we became adopted sons and daughters of God. Confirmation confirms that we are part of God's family and leads us to focus on what we have been called to do as children of God: to be living witnesses of God's love in the world.

In Confirmation, we receive the power to make a stand for Christ and his Church, as well as special gifts to help us serve God and the church in particular ways. Through the sacraments, we are also "sealed" for God; our bond with him, as well as with the whole family of God, is strengthened. All these graces help us to shift our focus from interior formation to exterior proclamation, giving us courage to witness to the faith in our words and actions. Confirmation is sometimes called "the sacrament of the martyrs" because the word martyr derived from the Greek word meaning "witness." They witnessed for the truth of the gospel – no matter what the cost.

## What is my primary role as a Confirmation sponsor?

A sponsor has three primary roles:-to assist the candidate in preparing for Confirmation, to present the candidate for Confirmation, and along with the parents, to help the confirmed person to live out his or her Christian life faithfully.

There are several ways you can help your candidate.

- Share your own experiences. Lead him or her closer to Christ by telling your candidate about your own spiritual journey.
- Spend time talking and listening. Help your candidate grow in understanding and acceptance of Christ and the teachings of his church
- Pray for your candidate regularly. Pray that he or she will not only come to know about the faith but also will encounter Christ while preparing to receive the sacrament. As a sponsor, committed to lifting your candidate up in prayer every day

- Encourage him or her to grow in virtue and to set aside any habits that would prevent his or her soul from being fully open and ready to receive all the gifts that God wants to give through the sacrament of Confirmation.

## What is a sponsor?

What was your reaction when you were asked to become a Confirmation sponsor?

Were you excited?

Nervous?

Did you wonder if you had what it takes to do the job well?

Do not be afraid. You do not need a doctorate in theology for this job, though you may want to take this opportunity to access the catechism and other Catholic resources to refresh your own knowledge of the faith. As you find answers to your own questions, you will be better able to guide your candidate to legitimate resources of Catholic teaching.

In a real sense, it is easier now than at any other time in history to know precisely what the church teaches and why. The catechism of the Catholic Church is a great treasury of Catholic teachings. In addition, there are many reliable resources to help you.

## What qualifies someone to be a Confirmation sponsor?

A sponsor must have the following qualifications:

- Be a Catholic who is at least 16 years old
- have received the sacrament of Confirmation
- Be a person who leads "a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on."
- not the candidate's parent

In short, a sponsor should be a fully initiated Catholic who is faithful to Christ and his church.

## Have any photos of your Confirmation?

If so, consider sharing them with your candidate as a way of starting a personal conversation with him or her about the sacrament.

## What if I am not sure I have what it takes to be a good sponsor?

If you feel spiritually inadequate to be a Confirmation sponsor, consider this as an invitation from God to grow in your own faith. He loves you, after all. If something glaring has been separating you from God, maybe now is the time to bring that to Confession. Your candidate sees something spiritually admirable in you – something in you that inspires him or her in the Catholic faith. Set aside any self-doubt, and consider that God may be calling you to this role for the sake of examining your own heart as well as guiding your candidate.

Nothing promotes personal growth like forgetting ourselves and turning toward another. The best way to be a good sponsor is to pray often for your candidate and to keep your own eyes fixed on Jesus. Do not be afraid if you aren't perfect. It is often said, "The church is not a museum of saints, but a hospital for sinners."

## What role do I play before, during, and after the sacramental rite?

Your most important job as a sponsor is to be "a spiritual help" to your candidate. "The sponsor is to take care that the confirmed person behaves as a true witness of Christ and faithfully fulfill the obligations inherent in the sacrament." So your primary mission is to ensure that your candidate is genuinely ready to receive the sacrament of Confirmation and to live out the mission that comes with it.

## Start praying now!

Beginning today, commit to some small daily act of prayer, service, or sacrifice for your candidate, and record what you do each day in a journal. At Confirmation, give the journal to your candidate as a keepsake.

## Make a date!

If possible, invite your candidate to go to Confession with you. Even if it has been a while, you can give yourself a "Faith lift" by going to Confession this week.

Confession at Lumen Christi: Thursdays from 4 PM – 5 PM and Saturdays from 9 AM – 10 AM, or by appointment.

- Discuss with your candidate the content of the Catholic faith
- Provide a "sounding board" for your candidate to talk about his or her spiritual life, habits, hopes, fears, and struggles
- Be a good example of the Christian life to your candidate
- Pray with and for your candidate

## What if I am unable to spend time with my candidate before his or her Confirmation day?

Technology can actually be very helpful for connecting with your candidate. As a young person, your candidate probably carries a smart phone, sends text messages, and uses social media on a daily basis. Take advantage of these media sources to communicate with him or her, even if your schedule requires such contacts to be brief. A simple "I am praying for you today" text message can be a powerful reminder that you take your sponsorship seriously. This signals your candidate that you take him or her seriously, which is the key to communicating with teenagers.

Post a link to the upcoming Sunday's readings in a private message on your candidate's social media account, along with a thought-provoking question about the readings or a few words of your own reflection on them. Do not overlook more traditional but very meaningful communication methods – a short written letter or postcard with an inspirational or encouraging message is a rare enough to make a big impact.

## Why do these things?

Such simple acts are both personal and targeted specifically at your candidate. Many teenagers sorely need this kind of personalized care, and they will eagerly respond to it because you are the candidate's chosen sponsor and your candidate is less likely to resist or shrug off is kind of outreach from you. You have a special relationship with a significant potential for impact at this particular time in your candidate's life.

## Follow the Pope!

For some Papal commentary to share and discuss with your candidate, follow the Holy Father on Twitter. His handle is @pontifex. He is currently re-tweeted more than any other world leader.

## What do I need to do after my candidate has been confirmed?

After your candidate has received the sacrament of Confirmation, your role as an encouraging mentor of faith continues. Obviously, each situation allows for different levels of ongoing contact, but it is fitting to check in often with your candidate. Continue encouraging him or her in the life of faith. As best you can, send a clear message that Confirmation was not a "graduation" from religious education, but a fuller initiation into the Christian faith. Developing consistent communication prior to Confirmation will be helpful in continuing the relationship with your candidate

Two of the most important things you can do to help your Confirmation candidate prepare for the sacrament are:

- be personally committed to prayer
- impress upon your candidate, by word and example, the importance of participating in the sacramental life of the church.

The principal way we participate in the church's Sacramental Life is through regular reception of the Eucharist and the sacrament of reconciliation. Sadly, many Catholics do not attend Sunday mass, which is the most vital, basic element in the life of faith. The regular commitment to weekly Sunday mass has many serious consequences for one's "spiritual health." By your own example, you can help to ensure that these two sacraments become an active and habitual part of your candidate's Catholic life.

A key goal of sponsorship is to energize and encourage your candidate's participation in mass. Invite your candidate to attend mass with you. If this is not possible, take advantage of texting and social media to encourage your candidate to attend mass and to share your thoughts about the homily or weekly scripture readings.

## How do I talk to a teenager about faith, Jesus, and moral issues?

First, take heart. Your candidate has chosen you because he or she admires and holds you in regard. As a sponsor, you have a distinct advantage over any other kind of authority figure – you were personally chosen by your candidate. Any communication with teenagers must be honest above all else. Despite the fact that their own behavior is often

unpredictable and inconsistent, teenagers have a keen sense of whether or not adults believe what they say. They want to be treated as increasingly mature and independent young adults, not as children.

Pray for the gift of faith for your candidate, and share the life of faith with your candidate – praying, encouraging, and engaging in ask of service with him or her. Christianity is not a science to figure out, but a life to live. When we lived well, many questions disappear. Good answers to theological questions do not necessarily translate to faith. Faith is about building a relationship with God.

Questions can be very important in helping your candid to develop a genuine mature faith. When our faith is stirred up, we naturally ask questions and want to know more.

Share a personal testimony:

What has Jesus done for you?

The faith is most effectively spread not by experts, but by witnesses. Sharing the good things God is doing in your personal life will encourage your candidate to do the same.

## More ideas

- Text a daily or weekly scripture verse for your candidate to reflect upon
- Post spiritually encouraging notes and/or links on your candidate social media accounts
- Send brief postcards or E – cards to your candidate before a big game or important test
- Become "pen-pals" via email or Facebook messages. Ask you candidate about his or her struggles, curiosities, questions, anxieties, worries, or hopes, and respond in writing

## Conversations to have with your candidate

Break the ice –

To open any discussion with your candidate, start with simple conversation. Spend a few moments chatting about your candidate's interests, such as sports, music, hobbies, or about life in general. Sharing some of yourself can help the conversation flow more naturally.

Choose from the following, or make up your own. Take turns sharing your answers.

- What makes you happy?
- What was the happiest day of your life?
- What makes you unhappy or gets in the way of your happiness?
- What are some ways you could "prove" that God exists?
- When have you felt close to God?
- Have you ever felt disconnected, or even abandoned, by God?
- What are some of the questions you have about God?
- How would you describe Jesus to someone who has never heard of him?
- How has your understanding of Jesus and your relationship with him changed as you've gotten older?
- What are some misconceptions you think people have about Jesus?
- What makes the Catholic Church different and unique compared to other churches?
- What are some good reasons to be Catholic?

Complete the sentence:

- I live for: \_\_\_\_\_
- I was happiest when: \_\_\_\_\_
- God is: \_\_\_\_\_
- God isn't: \_\_\_\_\_
- I feel close to God when: \_\_\_\_\_
- Jesus is: \_\_\_\_\_
- The church is: \_\_\_\_\_

Have a heart-to-heart conversation with your candidate about the sacrament of reconciliation. Then go to Confession together. Share about your experience over coffee, etc.

Service suggestion:

Invite your candidate to a donation challenge. Choose a charitable cause, such as a local food bank or crisis pregnancy center and commit to match the amount of money your candidate donates.

## Conversations after Confirmation

For a few months, call or text your newly confirmed young Catholic every week with a reminder to attend Sunday mass, Possibly with you.

Encourage your candidate to go to Confession at least once a month, if possible, with you.

Make a date to meet one month after Confirmation for a deeper discussion of the life of faith:

- How is your prayer life developing? What are you doing to keep in contact with God on a daily basis?
- How will you continue to deepen your knowledge of the faith?
- What areas of the Catholic faith do you want to learn more about?
- How are you staying connected to the parish community?
- What are you doing to witness for Christ at your school?

Celebrate a feast day:

Look up the feast day of your candidates chosen patron saint. Use the state as an anniversary to do something special with your candidate.

# Confirmation Information - IMPORTANT!

**Sponsor Information Form** (in sponsor packet) – **please turn in at the March 15<sup>th</sup> Sponsor meeting.**

**Confirmation name** – You should be able to explain the reasoning behind your choice. What is significant about the saint you chose? The Bishop will likely ask you about this.

***\*SPONSOR SHOULD ATTEND\**** **Mass of Enrollment and Lunch Meeting** - Candidate/Sponsor/Parent Session: **Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup>**. 11:00am Mass followed by a meeting over lunch in St. Cecilia Hall.

**Letter of Intent to the Bishop** – **Please have this completed at the March 15<sup>th</sup> Sponsor Meeting.**

**Confirmation interviews** – Sign-up will be available at the March 15<sup>th</sup> meeting

**Confirmation rehearsal** – **Wednesday, May 13 at 7:00 pm in the church**

All candidates and sponsors, or proxies, are required to attend the rehearsal. If a candidate is absolutely unable to attend, a parent must attend and his or her stead

**Confirmation celebration** – **Thursday, May 14 at 7:00pm in the church**

All candidates and their sponsors must be seated in church by 6:45pm – a seating chart will be assigned at the rehearsal the night before, and cards will hold their places in the pews. Mass begins at 7:00pm and a reception will be held in St. Cecilia Hall after mass

**What to do after confirmation**– Stay grounded in your faith! The newly confirmed are encouraged to live their faith actively:

- Students: Be a Peer Leader! – Make the program greater by co-leading a small group as a Senior
- Attend a weekday Mass – these Masses are usually 45 minutes or less and are a great way to start the day!
- Visit another cultural Parish for Mass on Sunday (Church of the Great Spirit or All Saints in Milwaukee)
- Visit Holy Hill (a good place for Confession, praying the stations, quiet meditation, and attending Mass)
- Take a trip as a family to the Marion Shrine in Champion, WI. Stop for lunch in Green Bay on the way home!
- Purchase and read a spiritual book, or borrow one from Catholic Formation (There are excellent spiritual reading books at the Marian Center in Milwaukee, for sale at Holy Hill, or online. Contact Fr. Dan or the Catholic Formation department for suggestions)
- Pray the Rosary (as a family or alone – hint: road trips are great excuses to pray rosary together... the kids aren't going anywhere)
- Spend a whole day in reflection – turn off the TV and media and plan activities that foster silence (a long walk or bike ride, for example). Journal, read a spiritual book, reflect on God.
- Make a Holy Hour; Adoration
- Practice a Corporal or Spiritual work of Mercy
- Volunteer:
  - St. Ben's Meal Program, Milwaukee
  - St. Hyacinth's Food Pantry
  - Riverwest Food Pantry

Contact Amy Kroll for local service opportunities (262-512-8989)

## Discussion questions

Sponsor answers:

- 1- Share with the candidate any memories you have of your Confirmation.
  - a. How old were you?
  - b. Who confirmed you?
  - c. Who was your sponsor? Why?
  - d. Are you still in touch with them?
- 2- Share with the candidate why faith is important to you
  - a. In what ways do you strengthen it?
  - b. What are some difficulties?
- 3- What did you enjoy most about preparing for Confirmation?
- 4- Describe how your faith has developed through the years
- 5- What gift of the Holy Spirit would you most like to receive?
  - a. **Wonder and Awe**
  - b. **Understanding**
  - c. **Reverence**
  - d. **Knowledge**
  - e. **Courage**
  - f. **Right Judgment**
  - g. **Wisdom**
- 6- What gifts and talents did God give you?
- 7- How can you use these gifts as a disciple of God?
- 8- Do you feel you are ready to be confirmed?
- 9- Are there areas of your faith you feel weak in?
- 10- Have candidate share why he or she chose sponsor
  - a. ask your candidate what Saint name he or she plans to choose for Confirmation, and why
  - b. Did the sponsor choose a saint name?

11- Talk about your vocation.

Everyone is called by God to a particular state in life – to marriage, religious life, holy orders, or the single life. We need to discern this calling with serious reflection and prayer. As a sponsor, you can be deeply influential in establishing a healthy vision of discernment and openness to God's calling. You are also in a position to guide your candidate as his or her process of discernment continues in the future. A few suggestions to open the conversation:

- a. Talk about your own state in life and how you discern God was calling you to it.  
If you are still in the process of discernment yourself, talk about how it is going and where you feel God is calling you.
- b. Ask your candidate about any role models he or she has for each stage of life. Share a few of your own.
- c. Ask your candidate if he or she has any fears or apprehensions about discernment. Be aware that this may be a sensitive topic because of personal history – divorced parents, a fear of religious life, a doubtful attitude about the future, or other issues. Listen thoughtfully to your candidate on these matters.
- d. Pray together for discernment. A simple way of entrusting the future to God is to ask the Blessed mother for her intercession with a Hail Mary.







## 2020 Confirmation Sponsor Certification

Please

- Fill out the top portion of this form.
- Carefully read the affirmations.
- Have your parish priest witness your signature and sign his (*please note: if you are a member of Lumen Christi Parish, you may return this form unsigned/unsealed*).
- **Return this form to Lumen Christi Catholic Formation at address below by Sunday, March 15, 2020.**

**CONFIRMATION DATE IS THURSDAY, MAY 14 AT 7:00PM**

Name of the Candidate to be Confirmed Lumen Christi \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Sponsor \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I am a registered and participating member of \_\_\_\_\_ Catholic Church

In (city) \_\_\_\_\_ (state) \_\_\_\_\_

**I affirm that:**

- **I have received the 3 Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.**
- **I regularly participate in the Sunday Mass and give witness to my faith in Jesus Christ.**
- **I will support the person I am sponsoring through prayer and by offering guidance during this time of preparation.**

Sponsor \_\_\_\_\_

*(signature required)*

Parish Priest or  
Administrator \_\_\_\_\_

*(signature required)*

Parish \_\_\_\_\_

(Apply Parish Seal Below)

**Sponsor or candidate: Please return this form by  
Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**Lumen Christi Catholic Formation**  
Attn: Karen Bersch  
2750 W. Mequon Road  
Mequon, WI 53092

