2019-2020
Sponsor Guide

Sponsor Reminders

- Have I turned in my sponsor covenant?
- Have I met with my Confirmand? (6 times)
- Have I gone to Mass with my Confirmand?
- Have I done my service project with my Confirmand?
- Have I written a letter of affirmation?
Confirmed by the gift of the Spirit, that they give witness to Christ by lives built on faith and love

General Intercession from the Rite of Confirmation

Congratulations! You have been chosen by a young person for a special role. A wonderful adventure in the spiritual life awaits the two of you. As a Confirmation sponsor, you have accepted a responsibility that is an honor in our Church.

Your role is to spiritually walk with the candidate during the preparation for the sacrament. You will be assisting the young person in being a true witness and disciple of Jesus, and representing the community when you present your candidate to the bishop. Your special role does not end at the Confirmation liturgy; you will help the young person fulfill his or her baptismal promises after Confirmation with the help of the Holy Spirit.

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Confirmation

Phase one
Active Member of Life Teen, or Bible Study

Phase two
Choose a Sponsor

Phase three
Class Retreat
Evening of Reflection
Reconciliation

Phase four
Service and Stewardship

Phase five
Confirmation
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The Sacrament of Confirmation

- It affirms our identity as children of God.
- It unites us more firmly to Christ
- It increases in us the Gifts of the Holy Spirit
- It Strengthens our bond with the Church
- It strengthens us to spread and defend the Faith by our words and actions

A sacrament is part of the way that God loves us and calls us. A Sacrament is God’s love expressed as a free, undeserved gift.

- The Gift within Confirmation is that of strengthening us for discipleship and deepening our belonging to the faith community through the Trinity.

God uses visible signs to communicate invisible love. To communicate God’s love, God uses our senses: eyes, ears, touch, smell, and taste, and elements of our world.

- In Confirmation, the signs we will celebrate include being anointed with oil and the laying on of hands as we remember the water of Baptism and the nourishment of Eucharist.

God calls and invites; we respond. An attitude of openness communicates a "yes" to God’s invitation to a deeper relationship. This "yes" does not mean we know that we will always be faithful or that we are worthy of the gift. "Yes" means we are open to be strengthened by God who calls and loves us.

- In Confirmation, we have the opportunity to say "yes" through the various responses in the prayer. Thus, we complete our Sacraments of Initiation by renewing our baptismal promises and become full members of the Church.

The community witnesses to and celebrates the sacraments. A sacrament is a powerful sign that God is alive and present in the world. As Church, we are called to be sacrament, that is to be God's hand and healing touch in the world. At the same time, we celebrate the sacraments as our most important prayer. This community that celebrates sacraments is global, reaching to other faith communities throughout the world and joined in a common bond. The community is also local as a diocese or archdiocese, as a parish and as a community of faith in families.

- In Confirmation, the community witnesses our celebration and provides a sponsor who represents the love of the community for us.
What Do Sponsors Do?

We may agree that as adults in today’s world we are used to being defined by what we do. In fact, this is a common first question we ask one another on first meeting. It is a comfortable way to initiate the small talk that at some point might evolve into deeper conversation. Yes, as a Confirmation sponsor, you will have particular things “to do.” These may include attending rehearsal, buying a gift, walking with the candidate to the bishop, going to dinner after the liturgy. But you are about to embark on a journey with a young person. What you do is not the primary concern. This is a journey concerned less with what you will do as a sponsor and more with who you are as a person of the Gospel. This journey will take you and a young person to new and exciting places in the life of faith. Faith penetrates the heart of the matter — how has faith penetrated who you are; can a young person read the Good News in the actions of your life?

❖ Called to Relationship with Youth

In your role as a sponsor you are a minister with youth. You are a part of an exercise in building relationships. These relationships allow young people to know adults who care about them and who are willing to walk as fellow pilgrims on a life-long journey of faith. A special young person has called you into deeper relationship. At the center of this relationship is our faith. And in a particular way, your unique ability to share your faith with this person is more important than the Confirmation program itself. This guidebook strives to help you walk with your young person.

❖ Nurturer and Supporter of Faith Growth

You are one of the nurturers and supporters of faith growth for the Confirmation candidate. The integrity with which you live your faith and take care of its growth is as important as the walk in faith you are a part of with the young person. You have been chosen to share that faith, a gift freely given by God. Our response to that gift is the challenge of us all as members of the Body of Christ. Communicating with interest and excitement the challenge of living as Catholics in today’s world is a wonderful gift to share with youth. We hope that this guidebook inspires you in your own spiritual journey.

❖ Being Present

Your presence in the life of the young person who has chosen you as sponsor is essential. You can be present in many ways; look further in this book for some practical ideas. Your relationship has the potential for creating very sacred space between the two of you — holy ground. To walk on holy ground with a young person is indeed a blessing! This guidebook will give you some practical tools for helping a young person grow in faith and at the same time challenge your own faith through the mutuality of the relationship.
Suggestions for Sponsors

Relationship Building

1. Establish a regular time to be with the young person as listener, sharer and co-traveler on the faith journey. Communicate that the friendship between the two of you makes a difference in your life.

2. Encourage the young person to keep a personal journal and share reflections of your own from daily life. Talk about current trends and events.

3. Reach out to the young person with a "good luck on the exam" telephone call or a congratulatory note about a job well done. Try doing "random acts of kindness" for your young person.

Developing Spiritual Depth

1. Be willing to enter into discussion with the young person about the differing values around us and affirm the healthy, life-giving choices of the young person. Model healthy, life-giving choices and relationships in your own life. Share stories of others, both current and of history, who have struggled with issues of personal integrity.

2. Recommend and even give the young person spiritual reading, "reflections for every day," that link faith to life.

3. Talk to your teen about leaders in the church, do they know who they are? Priests, Bishop, Pope

4. Share with the young person the significant moments in your faith life. Ask open-ended questions (why, how, where, when) that encourage the young person to explore how his or her faith is experienced in life.

5. Participate with the young person in a community service activity.

6. Advocate for inclusion of the young person and his or her peers in leadership capacities at the parish, and to become an integral part of the planning process for programs that involve them.

7. Explore with the young person a variety of ways to pray. Send the young person scripture notes every week. Talk with the young person and reflect on the scripture readings for the upcoming Sunday.

8. Find five other adults who are willing to pray for this young person.

9. Create a prayer board, jar, journal, etc. for the young person's bedroom where he or she can put up the names of people who are in need of prayer.
10. Send a card to someone on the prayer list in the church bulletin.

11. Take the young person to the ritual experiences at Church or in the community, e.g. the community's Stations of the Cross, a baptism, weekday morning mass.

12. Share how your faith and experiences of Church have made a difference in your life — including the doubts and struggles you may experience.

13. Pray for the young person, and let him or her know it.

14. Ask the young person to pray for you.
Central to being a Confirmation sponsor is sharing with young people the worthy adventure of living a gospel-centered life. You may not feel equipped for this task, but don't worry; neither did the first disciples of Jesus! In fact, sharing our faith with each other is not a task; it is a way of life. We carry a particular identity with us and into all of our environments because we are Catholic. One writer has said that the walls of her home growing up were Catholic, filled as they were with symbols of belief.

Ask the young person why he or she chose you as a sponsor. You may discover that this particular adolescent has already been reading the Good News through you!

As a sponsor, you are "being church" with a young person. What does this mean? The mission of church is threefold. We proclaim the Good News, namely the saving action of Jesus, we offer ourselves as a group of people transformed by the Spirit into a community of faith, hope and love, and we bring God's justice and love to others through service. In its ministry with young people, of which you are a part, the Church works to foster the total personal and spiritual growth of young people and to draw them to responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the faith community. In addition, we empower young people to become disciples of Jesus Christ who witness to their faith by living and working for justice, peace, and human dignity. (Vision of Youth Ministry 3, 7)

Here are some simple strategies for "being church" with your young person.

**Have Faith Conversations:**
**Witness to God’s Presence in Your Life**

Young people, particularly older adolescents, are exploring their beliefs and values. They are searching for a worthy adventure upon which to embark; an adventure that gospel living surely is. Here are some simple strategies that will help you initiate faith conversations:

- **Share stories with each other.** Stories have a tremendous impact. If all you do as a sponsor is share how God has been moving in and through your life, you have given your young person a gift of tremendous value. Share with each other the significant religious celebrations of your lives — compare “notes” about first communion, etc. Help the young person identify what is uniquely Catholic about his or her life. Share as well significant life experiences in the context of faith.
Affirm the actions of the young person which witness to the Good News. Make direct correlation for the young person between what you see him or her doing and how it is a value and action of Jesus. Break open the Scriptures for the week and share how Jesus’ teachings apply today.

Help the young person explore how the events of his or her life are glimpses of the “vision of the glory of God.” Be comfortable with the young person’s questions and challenges. In order for belief to be meaningful, for God to be meaningful, young people need the space the explore their questions and doubts. They need adults who will stand by them, be faithful to their searching, and not abandon them in their disbelief.

Explore Prayer and Celebration

Our tradition as Catholics is rich with ritual and celebration of God’s presence and action in humankind. Prayer is relationship with God. Young people are exploring the meaning of Catholic ritual, and discovering their own unique spirituality and personal relationship with God. Walk with them on this adventure!

Plant a tree, plant, flowers, seed somewhere special with the young person. Talk about how the seed is now underground in the damp and dark preparing to burst forth new life. Relate each step in the plant’s development to the growth of each of us spiritually.

Challenge yourself and the young person to move beyond mediocrity in your spiritual lives. Have prayer discussions. Share your own struggles with a prayer life and explore praying together. Help the young person establish a regular pattern of prayer. Together commit to a joint effort such as placing a prayer/scripture reflection on your bathroom mirrors and praying it each morning individually.

Invite the young person to join you at the parish mission. Take him or her for ice-cream afterwards and talk about what you heard.

Read and discuss our baptismal vows in this booklet.

Focus prayer with the young person on significant events in his or her life (e.g., driver’s license, death of a friend, finishing the semester).

Give the young person a symbol (poster, icon, picture of Jesus, candles, quotes from role model or saints) that he or she can place in a prayer corner at home.
Encourage the young person to write prayers in the form of poems or journal entries. Give him or her a decorative blank book for this purpose.

Read Scripture aloud.

Have the young person share contemporary music which is meaningful to him or her. Talk about why.

Explore Justice and Service Opportunities

Young people have a tremendous capacity for selflessness. In giving themselves through service and concern for others, they discover more about who they are and about the unique gifts that God has given them. Tap into the idealism of your young person by initiating participation in service opportunities or by expressing interest in what the young person is already involved. Explore together the needs of the world (individual, parish, community and world) and how the gifts of individuals are meant to meet those needs.

Decide together on one meaningful service project in which you will both be involved. Find something that calls forth the unique gifts of the young person. Talk afterwards about how the involvement was a reflection of Jesus’ mission of service.

Discuss options for further direct service or exploring social justice issues.

Assist the young person to find information and resources in expressed areas of interest. Visit local service organizations and Catholic social ministry programs together.

Search scripture with the youth and discover Jesus’ teaching on the social issues of his time. Talk about how they relate to the social issues of our time.
Sponsor Checklist

- Session One: Get Acquainted (Share your faith journey)
- Session Two: Jesus & The Bible
- Session Three: Worship and Prayer (Attend a Mass Together)
- Session Four: Service (Do a service project together)
- Session Five: Saints and Gifts (Share their saint report)
- Session Six: The Faith Journey Continues (after Confirmation)

Write a letter of affirmation:

Please take a few minutes to sit down and write a personal note to your Confirmand. The teens will receive these letters at the Evening of Reflection. Please be as sincere and open as possible. These letters should be affirming, faith filled and full of excitement about the teen’s upcoming leap of faith.

We must have these letters no later than Wednesday, March 25 (the earlier the better to ensure delivery to their classrooms on the Evening of Reflection). Please drop the letters off in the Religious Ed or church offices or address envelopes to:

St. Thomas More Church
Teen’s Name
c/o Confirmation RE Office
10205 N FM 620
Austin, Texas 78726
The following are suggested activities and topics for your meetings/sessions with your confirmand.

✝ Each session will begin with "Sponsor Preparation" which you can locate by looking for the symbol: ✝. The activity is to help you think about and prepare to talk about the session’s topic.

✓ Every session will have a session starter, material for you and your confirmand to use together. It will be designated with the symbol ✓.

✸ For most sessions there will be questions for you and your teen to discuss and explore during your time together denoted with a ✸. Work through each session together and celebrate your discoveries.

Begin each session with a short spontaneous prayer thanking God for the time to be together and share your faith. At the end of each session are suggestions for your closing prayer.

Locate a booklet with "Favorite Catholic Prayers". These can be found in our gift shop, bookstores, in many homes, and can even be homemade!! You and your teen may wish to visit this booklet during the year. Prayers can include: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Apostles' Creed, Confiteor, Act of Contrition, Come Holy Spirit, To My Guardian Angel, Meal Prayers, The Peace Prayer, The Jesus Prayer, Angelus, Morning and Evening Prayer. These prayers are wonderful to know and to pray especially when words fail.

Faith Timeline [Before meeting with your teen]

Use a large sheet of paper and draw a line across the paper about 3 or 4 inches from the top. This will be your date line. Begin at the far left with your birth date. On the far right, today's date. Write the year above each mark in between. On your timeline, put:

a) Faith events. How was your faith being shaped? This can include references to things like church camps, death of someone you loved, sacraments, great "ah-ha!" moments, and high and low points that had faith-shaping power.

b) Refreshing the memories of moments in your journey will aide you in relating to your teen. Take time to reflect and embrace where you're coming from.
Session One:
Get Acquainted

For your first session together, establish as your goal getting to know each other. Your relationship is the most important aspect of your role in this process. Relax and be yourself.

To prepare for your first meeting you will need to:

1. **Send a card or e-mail to your confirmand.** Let the teen know that you are honored to be their sponsor. If you don't know each other well, tell a little bit about yourself. Include a photo of yourself if you have one. Ask your confirmand to bring one of him or her to your first session, if they have one, if not bring a camera and take pictures at the first session. The photos will remind you to pray for one another.

2. **Schedule your first meeting** over the telephone or in person. Meet in a neutral place such as a fast-food restaurant or you can always use the church or Religious Education building if indoor space is needed. (contact the Religious Ed office).

3. **Prepare a list of questions to ask your confirmand.** Your goal is beginning a relationship where you will be an encourager to the student's faith; it's okay to "interview" the confirmand. You might ask questions like: What do you like about school? What don't you like? Tell me a little about your family. Tell me more about your hopes, dreams, interests, goals... Since you have already told about yourself in the letter, this will be safe territory.

4. **Make a commitment to pray for one another, and keep it!** When you exchange pictures you declare an important intention. It should occupy a significant position in the place you pray. Daily prayer for your confirmand is foundational to the sponsor, the most important part of your relationship. Begin by simply naming one another in prayer. In time, your prayers will become more specific. The role of the sponsor in spiritual formation of another is anchored in prayer.
This session is about establishing your relationship. Your confirmand needs to know that being with you is safe and you can be trusted. You will need to show that you are motivated to participate with this younger person in a faith-building experience.

✓ Find out as much as you can about your confirmand. Take notes! Find something out about each other's faith experience.
   - Have you always been a churchgoer?
   - What about going to church is important to you?
   - When did you realize or wonder whether you were really a Christian?
   - Talk about your expectations for the confirmation process.
   - What will happen during this time? Are you excited? nervous? Have you any worries?

★

Draw something to show your earliest memory of how you imagined God to be.
Draw something to show how you imagine God to be now. Look at the two drawings. Are they the same? How are they different? How has your understanding of God changed over the years?

5. Where do you go to experience God?
   - Is there a place in your home?
   - An especially beautiful place you have visited and can return to in your mind's eye?
   - Your church?

6. How do you know when you have experienced God?
   - What does it feel like to you?
   - What does this indicate to you about what God is like?

John 4:24 "God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth."
When you are with your confirmand and preparing to study the material together, consider posing these questions:
What names would we use to address God?
What would we say to God in our prayer?
What beliefs about God are made clearer to us in our names for God and in our conversation with God? Our manner of addressing God and the tone of our conversations with God reveal a lot about our belief in God.
Listen attentively to how your student expresses faith in God.

Read from the following line of the creed. Circle the words or phrases you find interesting.

From the Nicene Creed

I believe in One God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

With which of the references to God are you most comfortable?

Do you ever feel that God is with you in a very real way?
When or where has that happened?
Do you ever feel like God has left you alone?
Talk about when and where that feeling has been with you.

Together, choose a time you will pray for one another. Use the pictures you have exchanged to help you remember.

Close your session with prayer,
using some of the images of God you have shared this session.
Thank God for this time together,
and ask God's blessing for one another in the coming week.
Conclude by praying together the Lord's Prayer.
This session guides you in sharing what you believe about Jesus. It also looks at the presence of Jesus in worship, especially in the Eucharist.

Consider your mental picture of Jesus.

What image of Jesus do you carry with you?
Look around your home or your church for pictures of Jesus.
Does he look friendly, happy, serious?
Why do you think Jesus is portrayed as somber in the vision of so many artists of earlier times?
Have you ever seen a picture of Jesus smiling?

The Bible is not a benign book written with a "take it or leave it" attitude. It is filled with passionate material designed to persuade the reader or hearer to believe and trust in God. John's Gospel says it clearly: "But these [words] are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31).

Bring a Bible to this session

Visit the Stations of the Cross at St. Thomas More and examine the large cross together.
Join your confirmand and research about the size of the cross on which Jesus died.
What would it be like to touch or to carry such a large cross?
What would you learn about Jesus and your relationship with Jesus?

Visit the Labyrinth. It is a time to reflect and think, a quiet time in their busy lives

Together, read aloud the following from the Nicene Creed. Circle the words or phrases that stand out in your mind as interesting, unusual, or unclear. As you look over these sections of the creed that discuss Jesus, what stands out for you?
From the Nicene Creed

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through Him all thanks were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

For exactly one minute, write down every word you can think of to describe Christ.

As one of you reads Philippians 2:1 -11, the other should write down the words Paul uses to describe Jesus.

What questions do you have about the Bible?

Where do you think you might find the answers to your questions?
Why do you think people read the Bible? What makes you want to read the Bible?
What makes it difficult to read the Bible regularly?

John 3:16 is a well-known Bible verse. Why do you think so many people know it? What does it mean to you?

What are five reasons why people might find it difficult to accept the fact that God really loves them and they are precious and important in God's eyes?

If we truly adopt the view of Jesus portrayed in these Scripture passages, how will this thinking affect:

⇒ Our daily actions?
⇒ Our values?
⇒ Our attitudes?

Close your session with prayer,
using some of the images of Jesus that you have shared in this session.
Thank God for this time together, and ask God’s blessing of one another this coming week.
Conclude by praying the Lord’s Prayer together.
Worship is central in the life of the congregation; it is an important community event. As part of this session, you are asked to worship together at a Daily Mass or a Sunday Mass.

It will be helpful to reflect upon your worship life. When singing a hymn brings you back to another moment in your life and you relive it; when the message of the homilist brings you to a deeper insight about God and the life of faith; when the music moves you to tears; when the Body and the Blood of Christ inspires and lifts you to a different place, you have "lost yourself." Considering how self-consciousness often plagues adolescents in uncomfortable situations and can even demoralize adults in new and unfamiliar settings, the experience of forgetting yourself and even losing yourself sounds desirable!

้น Recall peak experiences of worship. When have you had thrilling experiences in worship? Describe a moment in church when you have been deeply touched by what you saw, heard, or generally experienced.

✔ Before you work through this session together, you and your confirmand should attend a daily Mass together. As you reflect with your student about the worship event you have attended together, consider these questions:

✶ 1. Whom do you want to see when you come to church? How is church an experience of "belonging"?

2. What worship experiences help you to feel the most comfortable?

3. Was there ever a time when you forgot about yourself while taking part in worship? What did that feel like? What was happening at the time?

4. What was the difference between the daily Mass and the Sunday Mass?
Review the commitment you made to pray daily for one another, and tell your Confirmand what that has been like for you. Speak about your prayer life (when, where, how, why) and share something about which you have been praying. If your Confirmand is willing, invite him or her to share similar information.

Together, read Psalm 95:1-6. What first comes to your mind when you hear the word worship! If you could pick out the most important part of the mass, what would it be? Why?

How many parts of the mass can you remember? Make a list of everything that happened in the mass that you attended. Use a Worship book or missal to see how well you remembered.

Talk about the mass you attended. How did it focus on Jesus? What was your favorite part of the service?

The church year is divided into different liturgical seasons: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Ordinary time.
How do we observe the various seasons (special decorations, music, and so on)? What is your favorite season of the Christian year?
What does this season mean to you?
What symbols in the church stand out to you. Why? In what ways does worship affect your day-to-day life?

What are some of the similarities and differences between the service you normally attend and the others you attended? (Daily Mass - Sunday Mass)

How might daily prayer affect your attitude toward the events of the day?

When you are together, discuss how it feels to pray. What would make it easier or more comfortable? Is it difficult to maintain the practice of daily prayer? If so, why?

What might need to change for daily prayer and involvement in other spiritual disciplines to be a regular part of your life?

Do you believe that prayer can actually change things in your life and in the world? Give an example of something you hope could be changed through prayer.
Together, create a prayer. This might seem very elementary, but few of us ever receive instruction about prayer. You might be able to pray without writing it first, but the process of writing enables you to learn and pass on a method that could be helpful. Begin by writing your responses to the following questions in the margin of the page:

I like to use this name to address God:

- What I want to say to God is....
- What I want to ask God is:
- What I think God is saying to me is...
- How I want to conclude:

**Close your session with prayer.**
Pray together the prayer you create.
Ask God to be with you in worship, and to help you experience God's love and peace. Conclude by praying the Lord's Prayer.

Creative alternatives:

- During the coming week, keep a prayer journal. Briefly write about things for which you are praying. Beside each petition, record when you have received answers to that prayer. Look back to your prayer journal over the coming months. Be patient and persistent as you wait for answers and guidance.
- Give your Confirmand a book of daily readings and review how to use it. Read aloud the passage from the Bible, read the reflections, ask for comments, and read the prayer.
- If a devotional book was not available, read one of the psalms from the Bible—a familiar-sounding one like Psalm 23. Read it out loud and discuss it together.
This session makes two important points. First, we are all called to be ministers because our gifts and abilities are important to others. Second, ministry happens in a wide variety of settings: some within the church, and some outside its immediate scope. This session will give you an opportunity to be involved in such a community ministry.

The church’s language about ministry refers to service. To serve another in the name and spirit of Jesus is to be in ministry. All of God's people are called to be ministering persons. Here are three suggestions to inform your preparation for this session.

1. The priest in your church is one who ministers to the ministers or serves the servants. During worship, priests wear a piece of fabric called a stole. The stole is a neckpiece that symbolizes being a servant. It is similar in shape to the yoke that harnessed cows, oxen, or other beasts of burden to a plow, and its imagery comes to mind from Jesus' saying, "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me..." (Matthew 11:28-29).

2. Plan a special way to serve your Confirmand. Do a favor. Offer a small gift. Let your Confirmand know that you care and that you are willing to serve.

3. Plan a project that you and your Confirmand might do together to serve another person in the congregation or in the neighborhood. Perhaps this is an activity you could do together with one or more other sponsors and their Confirmands. Additionally, there will be several activities organized in the St. Thomas More Community in which you are welcome to participate.
Read Matthew 25:31-46. What do you think Jesus was saying in these verses? What are the key words and phrases from the passage?

Make a list of the ways Jesus ministered to people.
List at least three ways your church ministers to its members, generally.
List at least three ways your church ministers to those outside of its immediate membership.
List at least three ways your church has ministered to you.
Make a list of ways that you minister to others already. Then add some ideas for new ways you could minister to people.

Prepare to be involved in a ministry outside of your immediate church setting. What ministries are taking place in your community outside of your church (for example, MLF, soup kitchens, shelters, meals on wheels, drop-in centers, food banks, clothing distributions centers, and so on)? Choose one that you will volunteer to work during your confirmation experience. Describe how you feel about going into this activity. Nervous? Excited? Uncomfortable?

After your volunteer experience, reflect on how it felt to be in ministry in this particular situation. Was your experience what you expected? What, if anything, surprised you about the experience? What was the most memorable part of the experience? Do you think you would do this again, even if it were not part of an assignment? What new things did you learn about ministry? How did you think the people you served reacted to your ministry?

Close your session with prayer, asking God to bless you in your ministry to others. Conclude by praying the Lord's Prayer.

A sample Reflections on Service sheet is included in this booklet and should be filled out after each of their service projects.
Saints. What do you imagine when you think of saints? The Bible tells us that all who believe are saints. You will have a chance to talk about the saints you know and to think about how people of all ages are called to be saints.

With a biblical focus on 1 Corinthians 1:1-9, here is an opportunity for the student to come to an appreciation of the church as the communion of saints. The understanding of saints in 1 Corinthians is that saints are all those who call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that those people are called, sanctified, and gifted.

"In this communion the Church on earth looks to the saints not only for their example but also for intercession. At the same time, the Church remembers and intercedes for those who have died." Summary: Catechism of the Catholic Church

"As Catholics we believe …

The lives of the saints are vivid examples of how God calls all of us to holiness. In all walks of life there are heroes, heroines and champions who inspire others to strive for perfection in similar callings. So it is with the saints. Their experiences help us to see that God wants each of us to embark on the life of charity, holiness, perfection, mercy and all the other virtues. They remind us that none of this is accomplished by our efforts alone, but always because of the Holy Spirit's action within our souls."
The Catechism says:

828 By canonizing some of the faithful, i.e., by solemnly proclaiming that they practiced heroic virtue and lived in fidelity to God’s grace, the Church recognizes the power of the Spirit of holiness within her and sustains the hope of believers by proposing the saints to them as models and intercessors. "The saints have always been the source and origin of renewal in the most difficult moments in the Church's history." Indeed, "holiness is the hidden source and infallible measure of her apostolic activity and missionary zeal."

✓ Tell your student that you want to talk about saints, and begin to name members of the church that you mutually know. Name the gifts you see in them. Those with public gifts are obvious. Consider the more subtle gifts. Name those who persevere through suffering and those who affirm others. Lead into an affirmation of the gifts of your Confirmand. What have you seen and heard in this student's life that you would affirm as a gift? Look to your teen's interests, desires, and goals to see signs of gifts.

✱ What does the word saint mean to you? Who are the saints?

Read Hebrews 11:1-12:1. This passage has been called the "great roll call of saints." These people did some extraordinary things. What do you think gave them the power to do those things?

Make a list of some of the people who have been important in your life of faith. After each name on your list, make a brief note as to how that person affected your spiritual life, and include at least one quality in him or her that you admire.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:1-9. Are you a saint? Why, or why not? How does the last part of verse 2 in this passage seem to define a saint?

✱ We know that faith changes over time, just as we change. How has your faith changed? How is your faith different from what it was two years ago, five years ago, when you were a very small child?

✱ Each teen is asked to choose a patron saint as their confirmation name. As a sponsor, share the name you chose and how you decided to do so.

✱ What saint has your teen chosen as a patron saint for Confirmation? Did your parents name you after a particular saint? What might be important to you in choosing your name? Ask them to share or let you read their saint report.

Close your session with prayer.
Give thanks for all the saints you have known, and all those saints who are a part of this, the Communion of Saints.
Ask God to strengthen you in your witness to others as a saint.
Conclude by praying together the Lord's Prayer.
Session Six: The Faith Journey Continues

IMPORTANT: This session is done after the Sacrament of Confirmation is received.

Confirmation is NOT the end. It is not a "graduation" out of the church nor out of faith formation. It IS a door to the future. It is a beginning, a new and exciting part of the journey towards closer union with God through and with the body of Christ. The initiation has ended, but the best is yet to come! This session helps you to think about your hopes for the continuing growth of your faith.

For your sponsor/confirmand time you will need a Bible and a Bible concordance.

(alternative: use a Webster's Dictionary!)

You and your confirmand are now preparing for a change in your relationship. You have been working together for some time. You have been a teacher and companion for your confirmand on a mutual faith journey, and now that this part of the learning experience is concluding, you need to acknowledge the transition.

Whenever a relationship changes or concludes, it is important to have an opportunity to say thank you and goodbye. What do you see in the future for your relationship with your confirmand? How will you continue to support your teen as an active member of the body of Christ?

What have you gained during this time? For what do you wish to thank your student? For what do you wish to thank God? Do you have some blessing words to speak in order to send your confirmand into the next chapter of his or her faith journey? What kind of continuing relationship do you hope for with your confirmand? Consider all these issues before you meet with your student.

As this is the last formal session with your confirmand, write a "Prayer of Blessing for My confirmand". Thank God for this confirmand, for the faith journey you have shared, and for all that is to come.
God bless you for the journey you have taken! May you have been mentored as well as you have mentored/sponsored!

 ✓ Imagine life in your community without a church. What if there had never been any awareness of God? What would our world and this particular community be like? Raise these questions with your confirmand.

 Raise a more pointed question with your confirmand: "What would your life be like if you had never been aware of God, Jesus, or the church?" Work through the session with that kind of awareness of the importance of a life of faith. Then it will be time to talk together about the change in your relationship. As you direct a conversation centering on the words of thank you and good-bye, encourage your confirmand to reflect on those same words. For what will your teen thank you and thank God? Offer your confirmand an opportunity to reflect on the future of your mutual relationship.

 ✹ Read Romans 8:31 -39.

 How does being a follower of Christ give us hope? In your past, what things kept you from having a better relationship with Jesus Christ?

 ✹ St. Thomas More has a written mission statement. Take a look at it:

 We at St. Thomas More parish are a Catholic faith community of people from all walks of life that fosters a sense of family through love, acceptance and mutual support.

 In our celebration of Word and Sacrament, we provide the environment for the meaningful worship of God. We recognize that Jesus calls us through the Gospel to move beyond ourselves and minister to others. In our journey with Christ, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we strive to nurture and sustain spiritual growth.

 What stands out to you? List some of the ways your church gives people an opportunity to grow in their faith. Put a check mark beside those in which you participated in the past. Put a star beside those things you hope to take advantage of in the future.

 List some ways you can help other people in the church to grow or experience God’s hope for the future (for example, teaching Religious Education, being a Faith Sharer, taking Communion to shut-ins). Where do you see yourself in the mission of our parish?
Reflect on what some of your service experiences were like. What does it feel like to help others grow in their faith or find hope to face the future? Together, come up with a plan for the teen’s involvement in the parish next year. Show how their specific gifts can be of use!

Using a Bible concordance, look up the word disciple. Read some of the passages listed. What does being a Christian disciple mean to you? What does it mean to be a member of the church?

How have you seen yourself grow in your understanding of God? How do you feel about your relationship with God at this point in life?

What hopes do you have for your future? How is your faith in God a part of that future?

**Close with the prayer**

Use the prayer that you wrote together,
"A Prayer of Blessing for My Confirmand." Conclude by praying the Lord's Prayer.
The Nicene Creed
This creed originated in the 4th century at the Councils of Nicea and Constantinople. In this public profession of faith, we acknowledge our personal commitment to these foundational Christian beliefs.

I believe in one God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made,
consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit
was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy,
catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one baptism
for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.
My Baptismal Promises

Do you reject sin, so as to live in the freedom of God's children?

Do you reject the glamour of evil, and refuse to be mastered by sin?

Do you reject Satan, father of sin and prince of darkness?

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his own Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sin, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it, in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.
Questions, Suggestions and Support:

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Consider the following questions when meeting with your Confirmation candidate:

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?

E-mail, text or mail your candidate these faith-related, thought provoking fill-in-the-blank statements. Ask them to finish the statements with a word or phrase of their own and tell them you will do the same. You can make up some of your own too. Then share your answers with one another and elaborate on your responses.

I live for __________________________

I was happiest when _______________

God is ___________________________

God isn’t __________________________

I feel close to God when ___________

Jesus is __________________________

The Church is ______________________
Reflections On Service

When did I serve?

Where did I serve?

Who did I serve?

What service did I perform?

What have I done to make other people’s lives more positive?

What gifts/talents from God did I give? Which ones were surprising (if any)?

What difference have I made?

If results were not easily seen, my time was still worth giving because:

PRINT Confirmation Teen NAME ______________________________________________

Confirmation Teen SIGNATURE AND DATE ______________________________________

Feel free to use the back or another sheet if necessary.
For additional service work, make copies of this sheet or pick up additional reflections from the RE office.
Sheets can be turned in during class.
CONFIRMATION SPONSOR COVENANT

As a Confirmation sponsor, your role is to encourage the faith of your candidate and be an “example” to your Confirmation candidate and to reflect with the candidate on the meaning of a life of Catholic discipleship. The Code of Canon Law (Church Law) specifies the requirements for serving as a sponsor at Confirmation (Canon 893) are the same as those for godparents at Baptism (Canon 874): You may not be the parent of the person being confirmed; you must be at least 16 years old; you must be fully initiated (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist); if married, be in valid Catholic marriage; and live a life of active faith in the Catholic Church.

I understand the requirements of being a Confirmation sponsor and I state that I received the Sacrament of Baptism

at ______________________________________________________________ Church in __________________________________________________________ (City and State)

I received the Sacrament of Confirmation

at ______________________________________________________ Catholic Church in __________________________________________________________ (City and State)

(And if married) celebrated the Sacrament of Marriage

at ___________________________________________________________________ in __________________________________________________________ (City and State)

My candidate’s name is:___________________________________________________

Name of parish and city where the Sacrament of Confirmation is to take place:

Parish_______________________________________City________________________

I am active in the Catholic Church, fully initiated into the Catholic Church, regularly attend Mass on Sunday and strive to live my faith.

Please print your

Name______________________________________________________________

Signature____________________________________________________________

Date__________________