

# The Responsibilities of Sponsors of Confirmation

\*Please give this to your sponsor.

As sponsor, you represent the parish community to the one you are sponsoring. You are a friend, guide, mentor, and companion on the journey of faith for this individual. Always be on time when you promise to meet with him while being patient and flexible with him. Be prudent and keep confidentiality. Try to answer his questions as best as you can. You are welcome to attend Confirmation classes. **You are expected to be present at the Rite of Confirmation to stand beside the person you are sponsoring with your hand on his shoulder as the bishop asks you to attest to his moral character, faith, and intention.** Therefore, you must be familiar with him. Intending to receive the sacrament means that the person you are sponsoring is trying to turn away from serious sin and to follow Christ. It means that he understands all that he was taught in confirmation classes so that he understands what it is he is receiving in the sacrament and that he is prepared to fully live the Catholic faith after being confirmed. He must see in you a love for the Church and a desire for doing good. You are to love him as Jesus loves him to the best of your ability.

- As sponsor:
- (1) Will you help the confirmand to become more involved in parish life?
  - (2) Will you listen to him share his faith journey with you?
  - (3) Are you comfortable sharing your interior life and struggles with him? Can you sustain him in his moments of hesitancy/anxiety? Can you help him gently deal with family and personal problems in a Christian way?
  - (4) Can you say, "I don't understand," rather than "I've never understood why..." when it comes to Church teachings with which you struggle?
  - (5) Are you willing to say, "I don't know" and try to find an answer when he asks you questions for which you don't know the answer?
  - (6) Will you help the confirmand get involved in some form of outreach or service to others (*e.g.*, the corporal works of mercy)?
  - (7) Will you pray daily for the person you are asked to sponsor? Can you show him how to pray and receive the sacraments?
  - (8) Will you daily ask God to help you serve the person to the best of your ability? Will you find someone to pray for you in your role as sponsor?
  - (9) Are you open to gently challenging and seeking to redirect beliefs and behaviors of your confirmand that are different from Church teaching?
  - (10) Can you encourage your confirmand to use different prayer styles and provide him with aids to prayer?
  - (11) Can you help your confirmand understand and appropriate Catholic culture in the local parish while showing him how to share it with others?
  - (12) Can you help your confirmand choose a patron saint's name if he has difficulty doing so?
  - (13) Will you keep regular contact with this person now and periodically contact him for the rest of your life? (See the back of this sheet)

## **Tips for Sustaining a Relationship With the Person You Sponsor**

- (1) Exchange telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.
- (2) If he fails to show up to something when he has agreed to meet another person, find out why.
- (3) Extend an invitation to him to join you for Mass, for prayer, *etc.*
- (4) Invite him to attend a Catholic baptism, wedding, funeral, parish confession service, or other liturgical event with you. Invite him to other parish activities/ministries with you. Discuss these experiences with him beforehand or afterwards.
- (5) Introduce him to other parishioners, especially regularly practicing Catholics who attend Mass every Sunday.
- (6) Share good Catholic resources (books, magazines, tapes), or go to a Catholic bookstore together to browse.
- (7) Suggest having a casual lunch or coffee or dessert together sometime.
- (8) Send a Christmas card or give a small gift.
- (9) When he is asked to choose the name of a patron saint—assist him by praying for guidance, discussing your favorite saints, and by helping him think about how to decide and to look for resources on saints.
- (10) Give an appropriate gift at the time of the person's Confirmation (patron saint medal, book on the chosen patron saint, rosary, subscription to a good Catholic periodical, *etc.*).
- (11) Remember the anniversary of the person's Confirmation (card, note, phone call, *etc.*).

### **The Heart of this Ministry of Service**

*“We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us” (1 Thessalonians 2:8)*

### **St. John Chrysostom, 4<sup>th</sup> Century Bishop of Constantinople**

“They should not consider that what they are doing is a routine action. Rather, they should be fully aware that they will share the credit if they guide their charges to the path of virtue by their advice, but if they are negligent, then grave condemnation will fall upon them. For this reason it is the custom to call them ‘spiritual fathers’ in order that they may learn from their office the affection they owe to their charges in giving them spiritual instruction. For if it is a noble thing to lead those who are in no way connected with us to desire virtue, we have a much greater duty to fulfill this obligation to one whom we have received to the position of spiritual son. To sum up, negligence brings no small danger to those of you who are acting as sponsors.”