

Confirmation Sponsor Guidebook



St. Thomas More Newman Center
& Sacred Heart Parish
Columbia, MO

Dear Confirmation Sponsors,

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 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.

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. Just a willingness to share – and to continue to grow in your own faith.

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.

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.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call at 573-449-5424 ext. 210 or email me at renee.molner@comonewman.org. I will be glad to help out or give you resources to read. Most importantly, just relax and let the Holy Spirit work through you.

Blessings,

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Director of Youth Ministry

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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. We ask that you meet socially at least twice.
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. It’s harder than it sounds! Just be attentive to their needs, concerns and growth.
5. Be honest and open. A young person won’t tolerate anyone who appears to be the least bit fake.
6. Do a service project together. Visit the Food Bank, Loaves & Fishes, or shovel snow for an elderly person in the neighborhood. Visit a shut-in. You will need to complete a service project lasting four hours together. The organized day of service on Sept. 29 counts for that project.
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, performances, etc. if possible.
10. Send a card on their birthday, at Christmas, the anniversary of their Baptism, or the feast of their Confirmation saint.
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.

Being a Sponsor: What does it mean to be a member in Good Standing?

By agreeing to be a sponsor, you are simply agreeing to share your faith and to walk alongside a young person preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Here are a few basic requirements:

A Sponsor Should...

- Be a Confirmed, practicing Catholic
- Be 18 or older and not the parent of the teen/candidate
- Attend Mass weekly and on Holy Days of Obligation
- If married, your marriage should be blessed by the Catholic Church
- Have a desire to deepen your relationship with the Lord and to share your faith with the young person you are sponsoring
- Be registered at your parish (they basically verify the above. Your parish will appreciate it, they want to be in touch with you.)

If you meet all of these requirements, then congratulations- you are qualified to be a sponsor!

Being a Sponsor: What should I do? As a sponsor, you are asked to attend a few sessions with your candidate (noted on the Confirmation class schedule), participate in a service activity with him or her, and meet with your candidate at least twice outside of class time. This is a minimum requirement; you may meet more often than this if you so choose! What you do during these meetings are for you and your candidate to decide together. Candidates will write a reflection of what was covered/done at each meeting. Here are a few ideas:

- Have lunch or coffee together. Make this a time of inquiring about your candidate's faith journey and sharing about your own, as appropriate. Some questions to discuss might be (but are not limited to):
 - How would you describe your faith life right now?
 - What areas of faith/spirituality are the strongest for you right now?
 - In what areas do you need/desire to grow?
 - Why do you want to be Catholic? What questions or doubts do you have about your faith?
 - Why do you want to be Confirmed? How is your prayer life? What kinds of prayer are the most meaningful to you?
 - What ways are you involved with your parish? How can we find ways to be more involved with the parish and community?
- Attend Mass together. Choose a Mass at a different parish, or a different time than you typically attend. Discuss your experience.
- Attend Adoration together. Discuss your experience.
- Watch a faith-based movie together and discuss the topics. Here are some suggestions:
 - *Karol: A Man who Became Pope*

- *The Way*
- *October Baby*
- *Bella*
- *The Human Experience*
- *St. John Bosco: Mission to Love*
- *Therese*
- Attend a Christian concert together.
- Attend an Advent or Lenten penance service at a local parish together.
Discuss the sacrament.
- Pray the Rosary together
- Read a book together and discuss the topics
- Read through the YouCat (Youth Catechism) together and discuss points of interest, confusion, or questions
- Read blogs from www.lifeteen.com and discuss. Find blogs on topics that are of particular interest to your candidate.

Here are some ideas for your service project:

- Help at the food bank or local soup kitchen
- Serve at a homeless shelter
- Volunteer at a hospital or nursing home
- Prepare, serve, and eat a meal with someone who is homebound, widowed, or maybe just lonely
- Serve the local parish! There are always needs at the church that could easily be filled by volunteers.