

The Role of the *Sponsor*

Choosing a Sponsor...

Each candidate, with the help of his or her parents, is responsible for choosing a sponsor. At Baptism, parents chose two sponsors (godparents) for their child – people who made a commitment to be an example of the faith and help raise them in the Catholic way of life. For Confirmation, the candidate again invites someone to serve as a sponsor to help him or her live out their Baptismal promises.

The responsibilities of the sponsor include:

- *Guiding* the candidate to understand and appreciate the Sacrament of Confirmation and have the right intentions for receiving it;
- *Mentoring* the candidate throughout the preparation process by encouraging him or her to pray and participate in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and to become actively involved in the life of their parish community;
- *Engaging* in the candidate's spiritual journey through periodic meetings for the purpose of faith-sharing;
- *Presenting* the candidate for Confirmation and continuing to assist the confirmed person in living a Christian life.

Sponsors are to be chosen because of their ability to “**apprentice**” others into the Catholic way of life, which involves prayer, celebration of the sacraments, living the Gospel, turning to other Catholics for support and guidance, and studying the faith. The role of the sponsor for Confirmation involves much more than simply standing behind a Confirmation candidate as the bishop confirms. It is to be the beginning, or the continuation, of a lasting relationship of mentoring and apprenticeship.

The Church suggests that, to express more clearly the relationship between Confirmation and Baptism, the baptismal sponsor (godparent) also be the Confirmation sponsor. (However, the candidate may choose an individual other than the baptismal sponsor.)

There is no regulation determining that men must be sponsors for boys and women must be sponsors for girls.

Canon Law states that a sponsor must:

- Be at least sixteen years of age;
- Be a confirmed Catholic;
- Be living according to, and an active member of, the Catholic faith;
- Be an individual other than the candidate's parent.

Sponsor Involvement in the Confirmation Preparation Process...

Saints Faith, Hope and Charity Parish is committed to involving the sponsor throughout the journey to Confirmation. During the time of preparation, they are expected to take an active role in the life of the candidate. This demands time, commitment and willingness to share their faith with the candidate, but also presents a unique and valuable opportunity to deepen both their relationship with a young person and their own faith life.

The sponsor will:

- **Engage in faith-sharing conversation** with the candidate throughout the preparation process, using the “Candidate/Sponsor Sheets.” The purpose of the faith-sharing component is to promote a dialogue between candidates and sponsors. Explanation and instructions for this faith-sharing component follow below.

- **If sponsor lives locally, sponsor should plan to attend a candidate/sponsor session at the parish in November** (otherwise parent may attend in sponsor's place):
 - Wed., Nov. 2, 7:00-8:15 p.m. Candidate/Sponsor Gathering, last names A-K
 - Thurs., Nov. 3, 7:00-8:15 p.m. Candidate/Sponsor Gathering, last names L-Z
- **Write a letter to the pastor of Ss. Faith, Hope & Charity Parish** affirming that the candidate has engaged in the process of preparation and is ready to be confirmed. Guidelines for this letter and due date follow below.
- **Attend Mass with the candidate** whenever possible and perhaps celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with them prior to the celebration of Confirmation, if possible.
- **Be present for the celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation on Saturday, February 4, 2012.**
- **Remain engaged in the faith life of the newly confirmed**, continuing to share prayer, insights, and support as the young person continues his or her journey of faith beyond Confirmation.

Instructions for Faith-Sharing Component for Sponsors (or Parents) and Candidates

- Candidates should arrange to meet with their sponsor for at least TWO faith-sharing conversations.
- An hour of sharing is recommended. Choosing dates and times in advance may help ensure regular communication.
- The candidates and sponsors may download the faith-sharing sheets (called "Candidate/Sponsor Sheets") from the parish website. Go to: www.faithhope.org. Follow the links: Education...Sacrament Preparation Information...Confirmation Preparation.
- These sheets are to be used as guides for the sharing sessions. The sheets are divided into three sections: Prayer, Knowing My Faith, and Christian Service. The reflections on these three sections can be recorded on the My Reflections pages in the candidate's journal (or any other notebook/journal). Candidates and sponsors should share the respective topics together, using as much of the sheet as time allows. At the bottom of each faith-sharing sheet is a suggested My Mementos activity. This can make the Confirmation journal special for the candidates. It recommends that the candidates, their families, and their sponsors gather reminders of the special events during the preparation process.
- SEVEN "Candidate/Sponsor Sheets" are available: numbers 1-6, and *Advent*. **We are asking candidates to discuss, and turn in reflections for at least TWO of these sheets, but would encourage the use of all.**
- Throughout this time of preparation, sponsors should seek to support candidates and their families. They should help the candidates become aware of their reasons for wanting to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation. Candidates will grow in their acceptance of the responsibility of being confirmed in the Catholic Church.
- *Parents* may also wish to use some or all of these sheets for their own conversations with their child.

Guidelines for Sponsor's Letter of Affirmation to the Pastor

- This letter is due on: **January 8, 2012.**
- Please mail your letter to the attention of:
 Religious Education Office
 Saints Faith, Hope & Charity Parish
 200 Ridge Avenue, Winnetka, IL 60093
 (We will collect the letters and present all to the Pastor at the same time.)
 To FAX the letter: 847-446-2145.
 To EMAIL the letter: sdoubet@faithhope.org
- The letter should be written TO: Fr. Marty O'Donovan.
- Your letter of affirmation should include: a statement of your belief that the candidate has an understanding and appreciation of the Sacrament of Confirmation and that the candidate has a deep personal commitment to Christian values; a brief description of Christian qualities or traits that you have observed in the candidate; any other comments you wish to share.
- Questions: (847)446-1828 or sdoubet@faithhope.org (Susan Doubet)