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Confirmation Sponsor Guide

2018-2019

The church of st. Therese of deephaveN

# A Sponsor’s Prayer

God of all ages, You send out your Spirit to touch the hearts of Your people so that they may believe in you and in Jesus, whom You sent.

Loving, gracious God, send your Holy Spirit upon me.

Make me an instrument of your love.

Make me more aware of the many ways You are present to me.

Teach me to reverence Your holiness in others.

Help me to be patient with what I do not understand, and deepen my faith in the Gospel. Help me to pass it on by good example.

With those who are hesitant or afraid, let me be a source of encouragement!

And with those who are weak, let me be a pillar of strength.

I humbly accept the ministry of being a Confirmation sponsor, and I pray that You will continue to guide and sustain me in this important role.

Bless me and my candidate on our journey.

Open our ears to always listen, our mouths to always share honestly and vulnerably with each other, our hands to reach out to love Your Son in others, and our hearts to grow closer to you and all the people in Your family.

Lord, send Your Holy Spirit and renew the face of the earth!

I praise and thank you through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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# Welcome

## You’ve Been Chosen!

You are beginning an adventure with your Confirmation candidate who **chose you** to walk with them on their Confirmation journey. By accepting their invitation, you’ll be helping them to grow in their relationship with Jesus through His Church.

It will be a time of spiritual renewal and transformation for both of you! In this guide, we intend to provide you with the information you need to make that happen.

As you set out together, your Candidate needs you to…

* Be a companion on their journey of faith
* Support them as they move through the challenges of being a teen, including experiencing doubts about their own faith
* Share in their hurts, hurdles, and spiritual hunger
* Be a Christian example to them in your words and deeds
* Be willing to share in their Christian service requirements
* Challenge them to walk by Christian values—in both their words and actions
* Care deeply and take their journey of faith seriously

## Important Dates:

* **Blessing Mass**: Sunday, April 7, 10:00 AM Mass. The congregation extends their blessings to you as, together, you begin the final part of your Confirmation journey.
* **Pew Pauses**: beginning in September, weekly chats with your candidate (**see pg.7**)
* **Required Attendance for Sponsors**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* **Letter of Recommendation**: May 6th (**see pg. 8**)
* **Mass of Sending**: May 12, 10:00 am Mass—final blessing with rehearsal following Mass
* **Confirmation Ceremony** : May 15th at the Basilica of St. Mary at 7:00 pm

**You can also count on OUR prayers for you and your candidate.**

**Remember, the Holy Spirit is always with you!**

# General Information on Confirmation

Confirmation is a sacrament in which those who have been baptized receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit, whom the Lord sent upon His apostles at Pentecost. It is a sacrament that celebrates God’s special strengths and gifts in those who have been baptized and prepares us to witness for Christ.

In 1972, the church published The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). The RCIA stresses the importance and connections between the three sacraments of Initiation—Baptism, Holy Eucharist, and Confirmation.

Baptism, the first and fundamental sacrament and the gate to the other sacraments, is the purifying and sanctifying sacrament of rebirth. One becomes a Christian, receiving the grace and life of the Holy Spirit.

The Eucharist is the most celebrated sacrament, in which Christ himself is contained, offered and received, and by which the Church constantly lives and grows. The Eucharistic Sacrifice, the memorial of the death and resurrection of the Lord, is the summit and source of all Christian life and worship. In the Eucharist the faithful are nourished and strengthened—a great sign of Christian unity. We are transformed into a more united, loving community of believers.

Confirmation is a parish community celebration. By a signing with the gift of the Spirit, Confirmation enriches the baptized with the Holy Spirit, binding them more perfectly to the Church, and strengthening them in their witness to Christ by word and deed and in their work to bring to its fullness the Body of Christ. Confirmation is conferred through anointing with Chrism oil and the laying on of hands.

# The Role of a Sponsor

## What is a sponsor?

The role of a Confirmation sponsor is an ancient sacramental role deeply rooted in the history of the Church. Anointing with oil is an ancient Biblical tradition originating in the Old Testament with the Jewish people. The Jews had a messiah (Hebrew for “anointed one”) and it was usually their king at the time. The sign of his appointment by God and his royal installation was this anointing with oil. Even still, the ancient Jewish people were awaiting a greater messiah, one that would deliver them and raise them up. This messiah was Jesus. This tradition of anointing with oil is carried on in Christianity with the teaching of the sharing in Christ’s kingship, his prophetic role, and his priesthood. In fact, the first example of Catholic Confirmation can be found in Acts 8:14-17.

In this context, sponsors are called to be representatives of the church. In this role you have a few key responsibilities:

* To bring the candidate to celebrate the sacrament,
* To present them to the archbishop for the anointing
* To help them fulfill their baptismal promises.
* To apprentice your candidate for a life in Christ and the Church
* To be a lifelong resource to your candidate in your relationship with Jesus

# Reflect for a moment on your own Confirmation.

* When did you receive the Sacrament of Confirmation? Age? Grade?
* What was your experience like? Preparation? Reception of the sacrament?
* What was your relationship with your sponsor like?
* Do you still have a relationship with your sponsor?

## What are the responsibilities of a Sponsor?

Sponsors do not have to have a degree in theology! What a sponsor needs is their life experiences of knowing and living a Catholic lifestyle. In this role you must also know the candidate and be willing to serve as a strong and life-long Christian influence. You will serve as a **companion**, a **model**, and a **witness** to your candidate.

**Companion—As a companion you will need to be available for them when and where they need you. Have a willingness to support, comfort and understand them in their own personal journey. You will be**

**someone they can have an important relationship with, who will be attentive to them as a person. They should be comfortable to freely share their faith, their relationship with God, and their life in the Church! Be there for them to share their questions, doubts and worries in confidence.**

**Model—Give examples of your own faith life. How have you sought out your relationship with God? As you do so, you will hopefully inspire them to dig deeper in practicing their own faith through the Church, their family, their community, their moral development and their service.**

**Ask yourself these questions (be prepared to share your answers during the Confirmation preparation sessions):**

* **What meaning does the Holy Spirit have for me in my life today?**
* **How am I called to holiness and to personal renewal with the Holy Spirit?**
* **How might I prepare myself to be a good and helpful sponsor?**
* **How have I lived up to my baptismal promises?**
* **How have I called upon the Holy Spirit in my life and used the natural and supernatural gifts that I have been given?**

**Witness—This is by far the most challenging task of sponsorship! Spend time with the candidate, outside of scheduled class sessions. Help them to keep moving closer to the Holy Spirit. Be a *witness to their spiritual progress*. The primary responsibility of this role is to help the candidate and their parents to discern the candidate’s motives and progress of their spiritual journey and their readiness for the reception of the Sacrament of confirmation.**

# **Traits of a Good Sponsor**

**To fulfill this role a Sponsor should be a praying person, a good listener, and a respectful human being.**

**Praying person—You are an instrument that God uses to touch your candidate. This experience should touch your lives, as well as deepen your faith. This models for the candidate how ongoing formation and conversion is a part of our Catholic life. Your healthy prayer life, if shared, will be “caught” by the candidate.** Besides the spiritual benefits, people are encouraged by knowing that their sponsor is praying for them.

**Looking into sources of prayer that we may have neglected in the past can help us grow in this area. For example…**

* **Sacred Scripture (using *Lectio Divina* as a way to engage it)**
* **Quiet time spent “listening” for God’s “still, small voice”**
* **Finding the time for private prayer, as well as participating in group prayer**
* **Weekly Mass**
* **Praying the Rosary**
* **Expressive praise and worship**

**Listener—Listening is not just the absence of talk. Be in the “presence” of the speaker. Allow God to intervene in your responses to your candidate.**

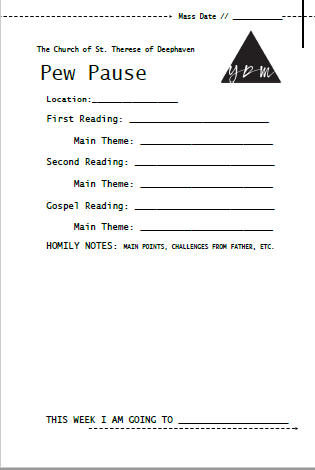
**Respectful—Have reverence for what you hear. Allow God to help you to try and understand the candidate’s point of view. When you need to discuss differences or challenge the candidate, this is easier if respect and trust has already been established.**

**Trust your intuition about what will work well with your candidate, particularly as you get to know each other. If you are already close to your candidate, this is an opportunity to add another layer to an already good relationship! Most importantly, relax and enjoy the time together. Do what you can and let God do what you can’t!**

# Assignments

# **Pew Pause**

**Throughout this year, your Confirmation candidate** will be taking notes weekly during Mass on a Pew Pause (see below). We invite you to join them in taking notes! The forms will be located on the kiosk in the gathering space and one copy has been included in your folder. Their job is to discuss with you weekly what they heard, important points that stood out to them, any impact it will have going forward, and questions on what they heard. This is meant to foster weekly contact with you (whether over the phone or in person), and does NOT mean that you need to have all the answers! Your job is simply to have a discussion based on their takeaway from the Mass.



# Sponsor Letter of Recommendation

After you and your Candidate have met weekly (on the phone or in person) to discuss their journey and their Pew Pauses, and once you have observed a desire and preparedness in your Candidate to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, please write a letter of recommendation to Addy Diaz or Luke Gion. We ask for your letters by May 6th. These letters will be shared with Father Andrie and will assist in the discernment process for the candidate’s Confirmation.

The letter should include:

* Your Candidate’s name.
* A brief statement affirming your Candidate’s readiness to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.
* A description of your weekly Gospel discussions. Did this stimulate deeper discussion of the Gospel message?
* Have they made their desire known that they wish to be confirmed/not confirmed?
* Are they committed to continuing the faithful practice and study of their religion?
* Jesus came “*not to be served, but to serve*.” (Matthew 20:28). Do they understand that the Church is a servant community and all those accepting full membership in the Church are also accepting the responsibility to serve? Give your observation of their volunteer ministry.
* In closing, share your observations on your candidate’s spiritual growth, etc.

Please send your correspondence to:

Luke Gion // [lgion@st-therese.org](mailto:lgion@st-therese.org)

Addy Diaz // [adiaz@st-therese.org](mailto:adiaz@st-therese.org)

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# A Short Review of the Sacraments of Initiation

**Sacraments are not simply human-made symbols or rituals. Sacraments point to something beyond the words and symbolic actions. In a Sacrament, Jesus Himself acts in and through the ritual, offering new life, forgiving sins, giving His own Body and Blood, healing, uniting, and consecrating. Sacraments effect not only a change in us but also in the world because of God’s power.**

**“The Sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the Sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each Sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions. “ (Catechism of the Catholic Church No.1131)**

**When we celebrate any sacrament, we do it as a community. This reminds us that God loves *us*, not merely that God loves *me*. There are no ‘personal’ or ‘private’ sacraments. One person alone never celebrates a sacrament.**

**Baptism** is the first of seven [sacraments](http://www.aboutcatholics.com/tag/sacraments/) and the way in which a person becomes a member of the Catholic Church. It is the gate to the other sacraments and is the purifying and sanctifying sacrament of rebirth. It is the means by which its recipients are incorporated into the church in a sacramental bond of unity.

It forgives all sins and we are given the grace to fight future temptation. This includes Original sin as well as our personal sins. Through Baptism we die and rise with Christ. It turns the baptized into a newly adopted son of God, a member of Christ, and incorporates them into the Church—the body of Christ. It brings them into the fold of the faithful and to share in the royal priesthood of Christ (1Peter 2:9-10). It is here that we first receive the Holy Spirit into our lives. Baptism leaves an indelible (permanent) spiritual mark on the soul. We call this mark a *sacramental character*, and it marks a person as belonging to Christ. One will always carry this mark of a Christian on their soul.

**Eucharist comes from a Greek word meaning “thanksgiving.” In this sacrament we give God thanks and praise for all that He has given us: creation, family, friends, life, love, and most important, Jesus’ sacrifice of love on the cross and the promise of Resurrection. The Eucharist nourishes and strengthens us—the faithful. We remember Christ’s life, death and resurrection when we join together as a body of believers.**

As children reach the age of reason, generally around age seven, the Church extends to them an invitation to celebrate the sacrament of Eucharist. The initiation into the Christian community that took place at baptism is further extended by inviting children to enter fully into the heart of Christian faith through participation in the Eucharist.

**Confirmation is a sacrament in which those who have been baptized receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit whom the Lord sent upon His apostles at Pentecost. It is therefore often called the Sacrament of the Holy Spirit. It is one of the three sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation). Through an outpouring of special gifts of the Holy Spirit, the *Catechism* explains, “The reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of Baptismal grace.” (CCC No. 1285) Confirmation builds on the gifts already received and brings us closely into God’s Church.**

**Confirmation is all about God. We are celebrating His actions and love for us. He promises to be with us always and confirms this by pouring out the gift of the Holy Spirit on us. In the Old Testament, even before the Holy Spirit was known to be part of the Trinity, it was understood that the Spirit came upon select individuals. We hear the Prophet Isaiah say:**

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,

because the Lord has anointed me;

He has sent me to bring good news to

the oppressed,

to bind up the brokenhearted,

To proclaim liberty to the captives,

and release to the prisoners;

To proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Isaiah 61:1-2

At Pentecost the Apostles received the Holy Spirit in an awesome and profound way. The Holy Spirit empowered them with courage to go out and preach about Jesus. With this event, the Apostles understood that receiving the Holy Spirit was a necessary part of being a follower of Jesus Christ.

# Beyond Confirmation

Here are some ideas for what you can (and hopefully will!) do as a sponsor after the celebration of Confirmation:

* Maintain contact for the rest of your lives!
* Celebrate life events together!
* Remember your candidate’s Confirmation anniversary with a special meal, a small gift, or a note telling them how you have seen them grow, especially in their faith!
* Invite them to accompany you to Mass or various prayer services—Stations of the Cross, perpetual adoration, Holy Week services, Life in the Spirit retreats, etc.
* Remember things they told you that are important to them. Events coming up, friends, fears, etc. Remember and ask about them!
* Pass on interesting articles, inspirational writing, or prayers!
* Continue to be an example of a grace-filled Catholic!
* As you continue to be service-minded in the community, invite them to accompany you (soup kitchen, visiting seniors, taking Holy Eucharist to a shut-in, etc.) Ask what they are interested in and how they’d like to reach out in the community!

# Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come Holy Spirit,

fill the hearts of your faithful

and kindle in them the

fire of your love.

Send forth your Spirit and

they shall be created.

And You shall renew the face of the earth.

O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit,

did instruct the hearts of the faithful,

grant that by the same

Holy Spirit

we may be truly wise and

ever enjoy His consolations,

Through Christ Our Lord,

# Amen