

CONFIRMATION SPONSOR PACKET

Tips on supporting your Confirmation candidate

Thank you for accepting the invitation to be a Confirmation sponsor for your candidate this year. By agreeing to be a role model and guide to a young Catholic, you are performing a huge service for our Church, and making a life-long difference in the life of your candidate.

Because Confirmation can be seen as the beginning of a candidate's life as an "adult" Catholic, your role is to act as a vibrant, concrete example of how an adult Catholic lives out their faith. Your candidate will be able to look at you as a model for how they could live as Catholics after their Confirmation.

Those principles might sound a bit abstract, so we wanted to take this opportunity to give you some concrete suggestions for what you can do to support your candidate.

Our first suggestion might be obvious, but it is also the most important: pray for your candidate. Say a small prayer every day (such as an Our Father or a Hail Mary) for your candidate, and when you are able, consider offering other devotions as well, such as a Rosary, a Divine Mercy Chaplet, or a Holy Hour or Half-Hour in Adoration. You could also offer small sacrifices (such as giving up TV, social media, certain foods, etc., for a short amount of time), like we do during Lent. Know that God cares for your candidate and loves them even more than you do, and will be delighted to answer any prayer offered on their behalf.

The second most important thing you can do is stay in touch with your candidate and remain involved in their preparation throughout the year. This is a fantastic time to grow in your relationship with your candidate, and a great opportunity for both of you to grow closer to God together.

Over the course of the year, we will give candidates 4 check-in activities to complete with their sponsors. These will consist of guided conversations where candidates can share their progress and you can respond with encouragement and advice from your own experience. These check-ins will be assigned in November, January, March, and April. Candidates should take the initiative in scheduling them, but feel free to remind them if you think it would be helpful.

Finally, remember that your role as sponsor will continue even after the ceremony. We hope that you will be able to not only keep praying for your candidate, but also stay in touch with them to continue your conversation of faith.

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We hope the tips provided in the following pages are helpful. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if we can be of more service to you.

How to Talk to Your Candidate about Religion

It can sometimes be daunting to open up a conversation about religion. But one of our hopes for this year is for our candidates to learn that discussing their faith life with other Christians can be not only helpful, but also fun! Here are some tips to help these conversations go smoothly:

1. **Be open** – When having more personal conversations with anyone, it's very important to be open to others' ideas and make sure they feel that their thoughts have been heard. You don't have to agree with those ideas, but they can't be shut down right away, or your conversation will be shut down with it.
2. **Reduce distractions** – Conversations about personal faith journeys cannot share space with a phone, the TV, etc. Set everything aside and focus on truly hearing your candidate with good eye contact and an open heart.
3. **Remember that everyone is still learning** – If you find that you and your candidate are not agreeing on something in a conversation, the odds are you are probably not going to change their minds in that moment. We often best learn by experience and through acts of compassion. Do your best to listen to your teen in the moment, and over time, work to learn more together about the topic you are disagreeing on.
4. **Emotions play a huge part** – Everyone has wounds or past experiences that can play into how they understand and react to the world. For example, sometimes our personal wounds can cause us to have intense negative reactions to something that another person might not see as a big deal. Remember this if you ever hit a block in your conversation that you struggle to understand. Try to listen to your candidate and see if you can empathize with what might be going on under the surface.

What can I talk to my candidate about?

We encourage sponsors to stay in regular touch with their candidates, even after the ceremony. Here are some suggestions for concrete topics you can suggest or experiences you can share together in order to make your interactions more meaningful:

1. **Ask about their prayer** – During this year, candidates will be working with their small group leaders to practice new types of prayer and set personal prayer goals. Ask your candidates how their prayer is going – maybe you can even set the same goals and check in on each other's progress.

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2. **Ask about their ministry**– We are asking every candidate to engage in a parish ministry this year, which may be an ongoing experience (such as serving as a catechist) or several unique service opportunities. Ask them what they have been doing since you last talked, and perhaps describe some ministries or parish activities that have been important to you. You could even agree to take part in a service project or ministry together!
3. **Choose a book, podcast, etc. to discuss together** – One way to engage in regular conversation is to choose a book to read together and discuss on a monthly basis — or, you could follow the same podcast, YouTube channel, etc. Here are some suggestions for great books for teens:
- *Why We're Catholic*, by Trent Horn
 - *Life of Christ*, by Fulton Sheen
 - *Your Life Is Worth Living*, by Fulton Sheen
 - *Theology for Beginners*, by Frank Sheed
 - *Saint John Paul the Great: His Five Loves*, by Jason Evert
 - *How to Find Your Soulmate without Losing Your Soul*, by Jason Evert
 - *Saint of the Day: The Definitive Guide to the Saints*, by Leonard Foley

Here are some great podcasts/video series that you could also check out:

- Fr. Mike Schmitz videos: quick, weekly videos on Catholic living and spirituality. Fr. Mike is also the host of the "Bible in a Year" and "Catechism in a Year" podcasts.
- The Ascension Presents YouTube Channel features weekly videos from several Catholic speakers about a wide range of topics, from dating & relationships to Catholic living to spirituality.
- Catholic Answers Focus: a weekly podcast featuring interviews about Catholic apologetics and teaching.
- The Word on Fire Show: twice-a-month interviews with Bishop Robert Barron about Catholic thought and current events.
- Jimmy Akin's Mysterious World: a weekly podcast that investigates supernatural and natural mysteries (everything to science to conspiracy theories to ghosts) from a Catholic perspective.

Prayers (adapted from Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Washington, D.C.)

- For Your Candidate: Come Holy Spirit, enlighten _____. Open his/her heart to see the gift of your presence in all of life. Give _____ wisdom to make good choices, courage to stand up for the right things, and perseverance and fortitude to live as a disciple. Amen.
- For Yourself: Spirit of Wisdom, guide me on this journey that I may be a true witness to the Gospel of Jesus and the mission of the Church. Put your thoughts in my heart and your words in my mouth that I will fulfill this ministry with goodness, generosity, and grace. Amen.