

This Journal Belongs to: _____

Confirmation Sponsor Booklet



St. Michael the Archangel Parish
Canton, Ohio

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St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Canton, Ohio



Welcome

Congratulations! You have been chosen by a young person for a very special role. As you embark on this year together, you will discover an adventure in the spiritual life. As a Confirmation sponsor, you have accepted a responsibility that is an honor in the Catholic Church.

Throughout this year, you will guide your Confirmation candidate through the preparation process for the sacrament. You will teach, inspire, and lead the young person to become a true witness and disciple of Jesus Christ. Your special role as Confirmation sponsor does not end at Confirmation; rather you will continue to guide the candidate as they continue to grow in the church.

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Confirmation

“When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues of fire, which parted and came to rest on each of them.”

Acts 2:1-3

For a Catholic, Confirmation is a sacrament of initiation—the beginning of accepting new responsibilities in the Catholic Church. The other two Sacraments of Initiation are Baptism and Eucharist. Although it is the last Sacrament of Initiation to be celebrated, Confirmation does not mark the end of a person’s formal religious education; rather, it is the beginning of a deeper belief, a fuller involvement, and a strong service to the Church.



To be confirmed is not necessarily that you be a saint. You do not need to have all your questions about faith and God worked out in your mind and heart. Confirmation is a beginning. In Confirmation, you accept the responsibility of being a member of the Catholic Church.

Confirmation also can be understood as a mutual promise between God, the Holy Spirit, and the individual person. In Confirmation we make a commitment. We renew the promise that was made for us at Baptism. We promise to be faithful to certain beliefs, we promise to behave in a certain manner, and we promise to participate in the life of the community.



The profession of faith that we pray together at Sunday Mass expresses what we as Catholics believe. It expresses the essential parts of our faith.

Our mutual promise with God also demands that we live in a certain way. The guidelines for our Christian way of living are the Ten Commandments, Jesus’ law of love, and the Beatitudes. The Ten Commandments are those basic guidelines for behavior that have been passed onto Christians from the Jews. Those guidelines, however, are completed and fulfilled by Jesus with a more demanding requirement—Jesus asks us to love as he loved.



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The final element in our relationship with God is our participation in the community. For us, as Catholics, this means, in part, being present for Sunday Mass. There, we affirm our belief by praying and celebrating together the presence of Christ in our lives at the Eucharist. We cannot fulfill our part of our agreement with God unless we involve ourselves and participate actively in the sacramental life of the Church.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Wisdom

Helps us recognize and response to God’s presence in our lives

Understanding

Brings us beyond an intellectual knowledge of faith to a deeper experience of it.

Right Judgement

Guides us to make decisions and choices that are true to our faith.

Courage

Empowers us to stand up for the values and beliefs of the Gospel message regardless of personal difficulty or suffering.

Knowledge

Enables us to be certain of God’s love for us as well as to share that love with others.

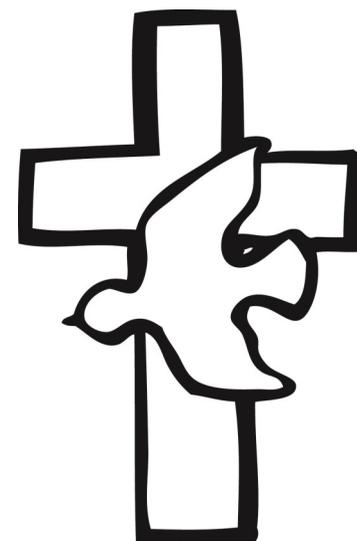
Reverence

Leads us to honor God as the source of all life and to see all people as our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Wonder and Awe

Encourages us to respect, recognize, and trust God’s divine role in unfolding human history and in creation.

The Fruits of the Holy Spirit



Charity

Joy

Peace

Patience

Kindness

Goodness

Long-Suffering

Humility

Fidelity

Modesty

Continenence

Chastity



**Come Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of us, your faithful,
and enkindle in us the fire of your divine love.
God our Creator and Redeemer,
send forth Your sanctifying Spirit
and we shall be created.
And you shall review the face of the earth.
Let us pray.
O God,
by the light of the Holy Spirit,
you instruct the hearts of your loved ones.
Grant that by the same Holy Spirit,
we may be truly wise,
and rejoice always in Your goodness.
We ask this in the name of Jesus.
Amen.**

What Do Sponsors Do?

We may agree that as adults in today's world we are used to being defined by what we do. In fact, this is a common first question we ask one another on first meeting. It is a comfortable way to initiate the small talk that at some point might evolve into deeper conversation. Yes, as a Confirmation sponsor, you will have particular things "to do." These may include attending rehearsal, buying a gift, walking with the candidate to the bishop, going to dinner after the liturgy. But you are about to embark on a journey with a young person. What you do is not the primary concern. This is a journey concerned less with what you will do as a sponsor and more with who you are as a person of the Gospel. This journey will take you and a young person to new and exciting places in the life of faith. Faith penetrates the heart of the matter—how has faith penetrated who you are; can a young person read the Good News in the actions of your life?

- **Called to Relationship with Youth** In your role as a sponsor you are a minister with youth. You are a part of an exercise in building relationships. These relationships allow young people to know adults who care about them and who are willing to walk as fellow pilgrims on a life-long journey of faith. A special young person has called you into deeper relationship. At the center of this relationship is our faith. And in a particular way, your unique ability to share your faith with this person is more important than the Confirmation program itself. This guidebook strives to help you walk with your young person.
- **Nurturer and Supporter of Faith Growth** You are one of the nurturers and supporters of faith growth for the Confirmation candidate. The integrity with which you live your faith and take care of its growth is as important as the walk in faith you are a part of with the young person. You have been chosen to share that faith is a gift freely given by God, and that our response to that gift is the challenge of us all as members of the Body of Christ. Communicating with interest and excitement the challenge of living as Catholics in today's world is a wonderful gift to share with youth. We hope that this guidebook inspires you in your own spiritual journey.
- **Being Present** Your presence in the life of the young person who has chosen you as sponsor is essential. You can be present in many ways; look further in this book for some practical ideas. Your relationship has the potential for creating very sacred space between the two of you — holy ground. To walk on holy ground with a young person is indeed a blessing! This guidebook will give you some practical tools for helping a young person grow in faith and at the same time challenge your own faith through the mutuality of the relationship.

Twenty Tips

1. Participate with the young person in activities, i.e., take him or her to a movie and talk about it over a snack afterwards, or invite him or her on an outing such as biking, roller blading, ice skating or hiking. Try activities that involve the young person in creative expression.
2. Establish a regular time to be with the young person as listener, sharer and co-traveler on the faith journey. Communicate that the friendship between the two of you makes a difference in your life.
3. Encourage the young person to keep a personal journal and share reflections of your own from daily life. Talk about current events and trends.
4. Be willing to enter into discussion with the young person about the differing values around us and affirm the healthy, life-giving choices of the young person.
5. Model healthy, life-giving choices and relationships in your own life. Share stories of others, both current and of history, who have struggled with issues of personal integrity.
6. Recommend and even buy for the young person spiritual reading, “reflections for every day,” that link faith to life.
7. Expose the young person to professional acquaintances in particular fields and vocations as her or she explores possible vocational choices.
8. Share with the young person the significant moments in your faith life. Ask open-ended questions (why, how, where, when) that encourage the young person to explore how his or her faith is experienced in life.
10. Participate with the young person in community service activities and together keep a photo journal of your involvement. Advocate for inclusion of the young person and his or her peers in leadership capacities at the parish, and to become an integral part of the planning process for programs that involve them.

Candidate Questions

6. **REVERENCE leads us to honor God. When we honor God, we see all people as our brothers and sisters in Christ.**

Do you accept others? Can you tell about a time when you reached out to someone different from you? Can you tell about a time when you hurt someone because you did not reach out? (50 words.)

7. **WONDER and AWE help us to appreciate God’s role in creation, in human history and in our own lives.**

From the prayers listed from pages 11-13, choose four lines from one of the prayers that speak to you in a very special way and then share the reasons why. (50 words.)

What is one of your favorite day-to-day sayings? Why? (25 words.)

8. **An Invitation to Trust**

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has chosen me to bring good news to the poor. God has sent me to proclaim to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed and announce that the time has come when God will save God’s People.” Isaiah 61:1-2

In this passage from Isaiah, God is talking directly to YOU. What is God asking of you? If the Holy Spirit had a voice, what would that voice sound like? If the Holy Spirit were a color, what color would it be? If the Holy Spirit was something found in nature, what would that be? If the Holy Spirit was music, what would that music sound like?

The scriptures tell us...

...God is our Comforter. God is with us when we hurt, are troubled, or distressed. What are some things you think God would say to us during these times?

...The Holy Spirit guides you into truth and has a purpose for you. What are some aspects of your life, now or in the future, where you think you may need some guidance?

9. **If you ran into a friend who is not Catholic, and he or she asked you the following questions, how would you answer?**

What does Confirmation mean to you?

What are your reasons for being Confirmed?

Where have you discovered the face of God during this time of preparation for Confirmation?

In what ways have you brought Christ into the world this past year?

10. **In Confirmation, a special name is chosen.**

What name have you selected and why? (50 words.)

for Sponsors

The responses to these questions are to be shared at the time of the Sponsor-Candidate dinner. The sponsor does not need to write out the answers, and this booklet does not need to be handed in. However, the Sponsor is asked to sign the sheet in the Candidate's booklet, verifying that the Sponsor-Candidate dinner took place and that the answers to these questions were shared at this time.

1. **WISDOM is much more than being smart. It is the ability to appreciate all of our life experiences—both the good and the not so good.**

Wisdom helps us to use our experiences to focus on being good Christians. Name some ways in which you can use this Wisdom. (25 words.)

Just as God has given us Wisdom, name some people in your life who have also given you the gift of Wisdom. (25 words.)

What might be a creed or motto that would be a guiding principle or statement of what you believe? (25 words.)

2. **UNDERSTANDING, the second gift of the Holy Spirit, brings us beyond knowledge of faith to a deeper understanding of the heart.**

What have you experience in your Catholic faith that is most valuable to you? (50 words.)

List 5 very important things in your life that you could not live without and explain why they are important.

3. **RIGHT JUDGEMENT guides us to make choices that are true to our faith.**

If God came to stay with you, could God tell from the things in your room that you are a Christian? What items in your room would point to this? What do they mean to you? If there are no objects, what could you put into your room and why? (50 words.)

4. **COURAGE empowers us to stand up for the Gospel message, no matter how difficult or uncomfortable.**

If you were in a situation where you had to stand up for your belief in Christ, what do you think might happen? (50 words.)

If you could invent something that would help solve a world crisis or help alleviate human suffering, what might that be? (50 words.)

5. **KNOWLEDGE helps us to understand God's love for us and to share that love with others.**

What are some examples, from your own life, that show God's love really exists? (50 words.)

11. Explore with the young person a variety of ways to pray. Send the young person scripture notes every week. Meet with the young person and talk about what kind of homily the young person would write for the upcoming Sunday.
12. Find five other adults who are going to pray for this young person.
13. Create a prayer board for the young person's bedroom where he or she can put up the names of people who are in need of prayer.
14. Send a special card to the young person on the anniversary of his or her baptism. Reach out to the young person with a "good luck on the exam" telephone call or a congratulatory note about a job well done. Try doing "random acts of kindness" for your young person.
15. Support mom and dad with a listening, empathic ear.
16. Learn friends' names and inquire about them regularly. Invite the young person's friend(s) to join the two of you on an occasion or two. Host a popcorn/movie night and watch a "religious movie" with the young person and his or her friends, e.g., Jesus of Nazareth, Romero. Prepare a special dinner before Confirmation for the young person and his or her friends. Find ways to include peers in making the Confirmation celebration more meaningful, e.g., have a group of friends make a scrapbook for the young person. Talk with him or her about the value of friends, and the struggles of relationships.
17. Take the young person to the ritual experiences at Church or in the community, e.g. the community's Stations of the Cross.
18. Share how your faith and experiences of Church have made a difference in your life — including the doubts and struggles you may experience.
19. Pray for the young person, and let him or her know it.
20. Ask the young person to pray for you.

How Do I Share Faith?

Central to being a Confirmation sponsor is sharing with young people the worthy adventure of living a gospel-centered life. You may not feel equipped for this task, but don't worry, neither did the first disciples of Jesus! In fact, sharing our faith with each other is not a task, it is a way of life. We carry a particular identity with us, and into all of our environments because we are Catholic. One writer has said that the walls of her home growing up were Catholic, filled as they were with symbols of belief.

Ask the young person why he or she chose you as a sponsor. You may discover that this particular adolescent has already been reading the Good News through you!

As a sponsor, you are “being church” with a young person. What does this mean? The mission of church is three-fold. We proclaim the Good News, namely the saving action of Jesus, we offer ourselves as a group of people transformed by the Spirit into a community of faith, hope and love, and we bring God's justice and love to others through service. In its ministry with young people, of which you are a part, the church works to foster the total personal and spiritual growth of young people and to draw them to responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the faith community. In addition, we empower young people to become disciples of Jesus Christ who witness to their faith by living and working for justice, peace, and human dignity. (Vision of Youth Ministry 3, 7)

Here are some simple strategies for “being church” with your young person...

Have Faith Conversations: Witness to God's Presence in Your Life

Young people, particularly older adolescents, are exploring their beliefs and values. They are searching for a worthy adventure upon which to embark; an adventure that gospel living surely is. Here are some simple strategies that will help you initiate faith conversations:

- Share stories with each other. Stories have a tremendous impact. If all you do as a sponsor is share how God has been moving in and through your life, you have given your young person a gift of tremendous value. Share with each other the significant religious celebrations of your lives — compare “notes” about first communion, etc. Help the young person identify what is uniquely Catholic about his or her life. Share as well significant life experiences in the context of faith.
- Affirm the actions of the young person which witness to the Good News. Make direct correlation for the young person

between what you see him or her doing and how it is a value and action of Jesus. Break open the Scriptures for the week and share how Jesus' teachings apply today.

- Help the young person explore how the events of his or her life are glimpses of the “vision of the glory of God.” Be comfortable with the young person's questions and challenges. In order for belief to be meaningful, for God to be meaningful, young people need the space to explore their questions and doubts. They need adults who will stand by them, be faithful to their searching, and not abandon them in their disbelief.

Explore Prayer and Celebration

Our tradition as Catholics is rich with ritual and celebration of God's presence and action in humankind. Prayer is relationship with God. Young people are exploring the meaning of Catholic ritual, and discovering their own unique spirituality and personal relationship with God. Walk with them on this adventure!

- Challenge yourself and the young person to move beyond mediocrity in your spiritual lives. Have prayer discussions. Share your own struggles with a prayer life and explore praying together. Help the young person establish a regular pattern of prayer. Together commit to a joint effort such as placing a prayer/scripture reflection on your bathroom mirrors and praying it each morning individually.
- Focus prayer with the young person on significant events in his or her life (e.g., driver's license, death of a friend, finishing the semester). " Visit the local museum to see the variety of artistic expressions of faith and prayer. Encourage the young person to write prayers in the form of poems or journal entries. Give him or her a decorative blank book for this purpose.
- Read Scripture aloud.

Explore Justice and Service Opportunities

Young people have a tremendous capacity for selflessness. In giving themselves through service and concern for others, they discover more about who they are and about the unique gifts that God has given them. Tap into the idealism of your young person by initiating participation in service opportunities or by expressing interest in what the young person is already involved. Explore together the needs of the world (individual, parish, community and world) and how the gifts of individuals are meant to meet those needs. "

- Decide together on one meaningful service project in which you will both be involved. Find something that calls forth the unique gifts of the young person. Talk afterwards about how the involvement was a reflection of Jesus' mission of service.
- Discuss options for further direct service or exploring social justice issues.
- Assist the young person to find information and resources in expressed areas of interest. Visit local service organizations and Catholic social ministry programs together. " Search scripture with the youth and discover Jesus' teaching on the social issues of his time. Talk about how they relate to the social issues of our time.