

CONFIRMATION SPONSOR HANDBOOK



2024-2025

Table of Contents

What's a Sponsor.....	p. 2
Supporting Your Candidate.....	p. 3
Confirmation Conversations.....	p. 4
Conversation 1.....	p. 5
Conversation 2.....	p. 7
Conversation 3.....	p. 8
Conversation 4.....	p. 9

Our Vision

Dear Sponsors,

We are looking forward to spending another year accompanying families and sponsors toward the Sacrament of Confirmation. Every year we come together with individuals in every stage of understanding of the Catholic faith and we seek to deepen each person's unique life of faith. Thank you for your commitment to helping our young people become well-formed persons and disciples that love the Church, Jesus, and one another.

We desire for families and sponsors to understand that Confirmation formation at Epiphany is not just a special year with a special program, **but an extension of an ongoing life of faith and community in Christ.** In other words, your role as a sponsor doesn't end in March, but is a life-long journey with your candidate.

Youth in 8th-10th grade are invited to discern Confirmation while continuing to participate in the ongoing life of their middle/high school communities. We ask sponsors to accompany candidates to at least 1 Sunday morning meeting and a 1 day retreat. At these meetings, we hope to offer you tools and support as you accompany your candidate in discernment of the Sacrament and formation in life as a young Catholic.

Dates: Sunday, October 13th and Saturday, January 25th

Confirmation date: Saturday, April 26th at 10am at the Cathedral of St. Paul

What's a Sponsor?



What is a sponsor's role?

A sponsor is someone who walks with a candidate as a mentor and guide on his or her faith journey. They provide support for the candidate in prayer and guidance as they grow in faith. The role of the sponsor does not end after Confirmation, but is an ongoing relationship. Nothing is by mistake. You have been chosen and God has a plan for your time together. A sponsor has three primary roles:

- To assist the candidate in preparing for Confirmation
- to present the candidate for Confirmation
- to help the confirmed person to live out his or her Christian faith fully.

What qualifies someone to be a sponsor?

A sponsor should be able to respond 'yes' to the following:

- Have you received all three sacraments of initiation: Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation?
- If married, are you married in the Catholic Church?
- If single, are you attempting to live according to the sexual and moral teachings of the Church (i.e. not living with anyone outside of marriage)?
- Are you a practicing Catholic, regularly attending Sunday Mass and receiving the Holy Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation?
- Are you attempting to live in conformity with the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Church?

Supporting Your Candidate

How do I help prepare my candidate?

Teenagers are really good at noticing when our words don't match our actions. **One of the most important thing you can do is live out your love for Christ and His Church every day - in actions and in words.** The best way to do this is by participating consistently in the sacramental life of the Church through receiving the Eucharist at Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. You're asked to have four conversations with your candidate that will help you support their discernment of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

There are several other concrete ways you can help your candidate:

Be consistent. As in all things in life, to succeed you have to show up. Sponsors who consistently check-in, who follow through on plans, and attend sessions can have a huge impact on candidates.

Share your life with them. By telling you candidate about your life and personal spiritual journey you can help lead him or her closer to Jesus.

Spend time talking and listening (face to face). Talking about what is going on in his or her life and helping your candidate apply the teachings of the Church to them can help him or her grow in understanding and acceptance of Jesus.

Pray for him or her regularly. Pray daily that your candidate will grow in his or her relationship with God. Ask your candidate how you can pray for him or her and support them in their faith.

Encourage virtue. Be loving and courageous by helping them set aside any habits or sins that prevent them from being open to Christ and ready to receive the gifts God desires to give them at Confirmation.

Confirmation Conversations

Why have sponsor conversations?

The goal of these conversations should be to help you and your candidate reflect on what you are learning and experiencing. The key to a great conversation is to listen and ask follow up questions.

Conversation Tips:

- Talk after you've had an opportunity to encounter Jesus
- Be honest and open
- Begin and end in prayer
- Be relaxed and not forced - don't read the questions from this booklet!
- Have a plan and be intentional.

When to have the conversations?

Conversation 1

October or November

Conversation 2

December or January

Conversation 3

February or March

Conversation 4

After April 26th and within 3 months of being confirmed.



Conversation 1

The first conversation is all about generating a genuine sense of openness and communication. The establishment of trust from the start is essential for the forming of a strong sponsor and candidate relationship.

Dos and Don'ts

Do... something fun. Shared experience is key to any strong relationship and doing something you both enjoy is a perfect way to start off.

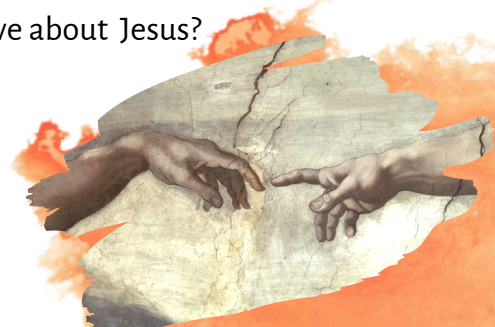
Don't...fake it. Teens can tell when adults aren't being genuine. Be consistent and make sure your words and actions match the beliefs you're conveying to them.

Do...encourage directness and honesty. Our teens need safe adults they can turn to with the hard questions they have about life and faith.

Don't...overshare. When sharing about your own life, give only as much detail as necessary to make your point. Avoid the glorification of sinful behaviors as this may lead them to think you're giving them the go ahead to do the same.

Question Ideas:

- 1) What is the best thing about life right now? What is the worst thing about life right now?
- 2) What do you wish or pray for the most in life? Why? How will this make you happy?
- 4) What are some questions you have about God?
- 5) Describe your relationship with God right now. Is it hard to describe?
- 6) What makes the Catholic Church different and unique compared to other churches?
- 7) What are some misconceptions you think people have about Jesus?



Conversation 2

This conversation involves a turning point in your relationship. Hopefully you and the candidate have a trusting relationship as this conversation is essential. If more general conversation is needed prior to this conversation hold off for a few weeks while you work on building up your relationship.

Dos and Don'ts

Do... something focused on encountering Jesus. Whether it is adoration, mass, or serving the poor this conversation demands a moment of encounter with Jesus.

Don't... be too hasty. Timing is everything. If your relationship with your candidate is not to the point yet where talking about real matters of faith is comfortable, absolutely wait to have this conversation for a few weeks and try to build up your relationship.

Do... share your own personal testimony. Share with them why you have a personal relationship with Christ. Ask God to give you the wisdom to know what to share.

Don't... accept a label for a story. Ask them what they "mean."

Question Ideas

What is your relationship with God like? Can you describe it?

- If they say "I don't believe in God" ask: tell me about the God you don't believe in? What gives meaning to life?
- If they say "I don't know if there is a God" Ask: Have you ever been sure? If you did know for sure what would you do?
- If they say "I don't have a personal relationship with God" Ask: Do you pray at all? How do you pray? Do you know any really spiritual people?
- If they say "I do believe in God and I have a personal relationship with him" Ask: How do you nourish this relationship?

Conversation 3

This conversation occurs just before the actual Confirmation. It is important to envelop this time with prayer as much as possible. Use this conversation to express to your candidate that you are always available in the future to listen and answer questions. Let your candidate know you will pray for him or her every day.

Dos and Don'ts

Do...go to Confession yourself! All the candidates will have gone but you should too.

Don't...push unwilling candidates to the Sacrament. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide his or her discernment.

Do...fast and pray for your candidate.

Don't...refer to Confirmation as a graduation or ending. This is the beginning of a greater faith in God. We are never done learning about our faith, growing in relationship with Christ, and participating in our community of faith.

Question Ideas

- 1) Do you want to be confirmed? Why or why not?
- 2) Have you sought the intercession of your patron saint?
- 3) How will you use the new found grace of the Holy spirit within you?
- 4) What areas of faith do you think you need to still grow in?
- 5) How has your relationship with Jesus grown over this year?
- 6) Make a plan for how your candidate will continue to grow in faith this next year post confirmation. Encourage him or her to stay involved in small groups on Wednesday nights.

Conversation 4

This conversation is one of the most important ones you can have with your candidate. Sadly, many who receive the sacrament stop practicing the faith. We need your help as a sponsor to ensure your candidate is being renewed by the Holy Spirit and living out his or her faith.

Dos and Don'ts

Do...continue to have consistent and continual contact with your candidate.

Don't...lose contact. Your presence, encouragement, and guidance doesn't end after the celebration of Confirmation.

Do...continue to be a witness of faith in your daily life. Frequent the sacraments and continue to grow in your own faith.

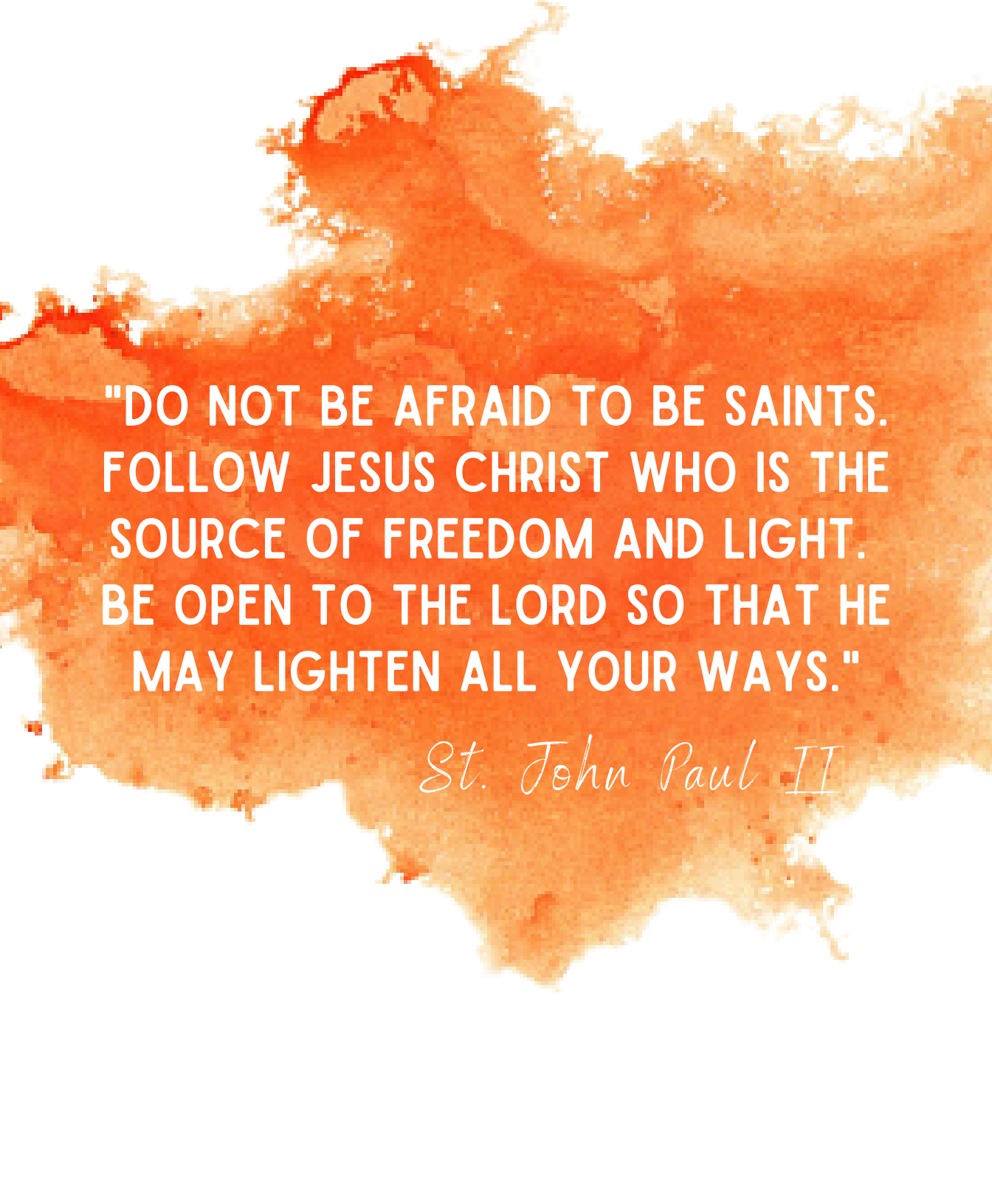
Don't...become discouraged when your candidate falls. We all go through seasons of peaks and valleys in our lives. While it is easy to practice the faith at a time of consolation, encourage him or her to persevere in seasons of desolation.

Questions

- 1) How is your prayer life developing? What are you doing to keep in contact with God on a daily basis?
- 2) How will you continue to deepen your knowledge of the Faith?
- 3) What areas of the Catholic Faith do you want to learn more about?
- 4) How are you staying connected to the parish community or youth group?
- 5) What are you doing to share Christ at your school or community?



This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

The background of the image is a vibrant orange watercolor splash that originates from the top left and spreads across the upper half of the frame. The splash has a textured, painterly quality with varying shades of orange and red. The text is centered within this splash.

**"DO NOT BE AFRAID TO BE SAINTS.
FOLLOW JESUS CHRIST WHO IS THE
SOURCE OF FREEDOM AND LIGHT.
BE OPEN TO THE LORD SO THAT HE
MAY LIGHTEN ALL YOUR WAYS."**

St. John Paul II