



Helping Your Child Choose a Sponsor

Your child's sponsor is the special person chosen by them to represent the faith community at the Rite of Confirmation.

At Baptism, the Church community shares the responsibility for the development and the safeguarding of the grace given to your child. So too are we challenged to safeguard the grace given at Baptism. A sponsor journeys with the young person through the preparation for Confirmation, supporting and nurturing the faith of the young person.

The sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation are intimately connected. Because of this, the Church encourages candidates for Confirmation to choose one of their baptismal godparents as a sponsor. At Baptism the godparents were witnesses to your son or daughter's sacrament which celebrated belonging – being welcomed into a spiritual family. The presence of godparents ritualized and symbolized the presence of the community and their promise to support the newly baptized in a life of faith. A number of years later, your child preparing for Confirmation is taken on a journey of spiritual remembering – knowing and recognizing the presence of a God who has been, who is, and who always will be in one's life. This is a gift given at Baptism, celebrated at Eucharist, and now revisited in its completeness at Confirmation.

The sacred ground in the young person's life is marked by the footsteps of a loving community – of you the parents, of godparents, of nurturers of faith, of challengers to discipleship. It seems fitting that those who held the infant through the pouring forth of sacred water and the sealing with blessed oil would once again stand up as reminders to both the individual and community of the richness of belonging to the Body of Christ. You can guide your son or daughter in choosing a sponsor who is a person of faith.

As Church we are all challenged by what we witness in the laying on of hands and in the anointing with chrism – “hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.” It may be a godparent or another adult in your child's life whose life is a witness to Christ and who will marvel at the privilege and opportunity of being a part of your family and your son or daughter's life by being a sponsor.

The *Code of Canon Law* and the *Rite of Confirmation* prescribe the requirements and duties of the sponsor:

As far as possible the person to be confirmed is to have a sponsor. The sponsor's function is to take care that the person confirmed behaves as a true witness of Christ and faithfully fulfills the duties inherent in this sacrament.

In Canon 893, para. 2 it states: “It is desirable that the sponsor chosen be the one who undertook this role at Baptism.”

The two following statements from the *Rite of Confirmation* further illuminate the sponsor's function:

5. As a rule there should be a sponsor for each of those to be confirmed. These sponsors bring the candidates to receive the sacrament, present them to the minister for the anointing, and will later help them to fulfill their baptismal promises faithfully under the influence of the Holy Spirit whom they have received.
6. Pastors will see that the sponsors, chosen by the candidate or their families, are spiritually fit to take on their responsibility and have these qualities:
 - a. sufficient maturity to fulfill the function;
 - b. membership in the Catholic Church and their own reception of Christian initiation through Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist;
 - c. Freedom from any impediment of law to their fulfilling the office of sponsor.