



Diocese of Belleville
Office of the Bishop

Sacrament of Confirmation

GUIDELINES for the Confirmation Sponsor

A sponsor is a person chosen by the candidate or family as a mentor in the process of full initiation into the Catholic Church. The sponsor's role is to walk the journey of faith as a companion to the youth being fully initiated. This person should have good rapport with the *Confirmand*.

Requirements for a sponsor:

1. Be chosen by the candidate or family;
2. Be 16 years of age or older;
3. Be a fully initiated (all three sacraments of initiation) practicing Catholic in good canonical standing who participates in Sunday liturgy, leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken and is willing and able to participate in the Eucharist with his/her candidate;
4. Not be the father nor mother of the one to be confirmed; ***See note about stepparents below.**
5. One possibility is to ask the baptismal sponsor so that the link between Baptism and Confirmation is expressed clearly;
6. Only one sponsor per candidate.

Role of sponsor:

1. Be someone with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and a commitment to the Catholic Church;
2. Be a mentor who knows the candidate and can witness to the maturing faith of the candidate before the community;
3. Be a learner who is interested in his/her faith development as he/she walks in the faith journey of the candidate;
4. Be a guide who will invite the candidate into fuller participation in parish life and service.

Sponsors are expected to:

1. Be willing to commit themselves for the rest of their lives to guiding the newly confirmed as a disciple of Jesus Christ and a faithful member of the Catholic Church.
2. Attend sponsor orientation meetings (which every parish should have).
3. Attend specific gatherings with the candidate (catechetical sessions, retreat, Mass, day of reflection, rites, rehearsals).
4. Participate in all formal liturgical rites and rehearsal in the Confirmation process, including the Confirmation Mass itself.
5. Meet/talk regularly with the candidate outside of sessions, to encourage and to assist him/her to grow in knowledge, in prayer, in service, in worship and in participation in the parish community.

Note/guidance about stepparents as godparents:

Whether or not it is appropriate for a stepparent to serve as a candidate's sponsor for Confirmation is not a black and white issue and requires some discernment.

One should consider: What is the relationship between the candidate and their stepparent? In other words, is one parent absent from the candidate's life and the stepparent has basically assumed the role of parent? If that is the case, then that should disqualify the stepparent from serving as the sponsor, since the stepparent is de facto acting as the parent. However, some people are blessed in that both their parents are still in their life, but they also have developed a close relationship with their stepparent. In such a situation, the stepparent has not assumed the role of parent, but they are perhaps like a good uncle or aunt. In such a situation, it would be acceptable for the stepparent to be the sponsor, since they have not assumed the role of parent.

In these situations, the matter should be discussed with the pastor, he should be shown this document and guidance, and he should be included in the decision to help maintain consistency in the application of this guidance, and in case the bishop has any questions.

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