

Dear Sponsor,

Thank you for agreeing to be a confirmation sponsor. In response to your “yes,” we offer this journal, an opportunity to reflect on and enjoy many aspects of confirmation, some personal and some from our Catholic tradition. If you intend to share what you do in this journal with your confirmand, then the journal might become a letter in installments to him or her. If you choose to keep your work with the journal completely private, as background for your role as sponsor, then the gift of self-reflection that you give yourself can’t help but enrich your relationship with your confirmand, too. Either way, this is your chance to cut loose and really share all that you can of what you love about being a Catholic Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ, and all that you can of your love and concern for the confirmand. Of course, when you stand as sponsor on the day of confirmation, you will offer a unique and indispensable witness—to the confirmand and also to the community. On that day, nothing else you do can replace your presence during the conferral of the sacrament. On that day, the Spirit will speak for you in words that go beyond your own personal ability.

What does a journal like this have to do with confirmation? We Catholics celebrate our faith in liturgical, communal, sacramental ways. We also live our faith every day in our ordinary lives. That personal life of faith is unique to each of us. While both aspects of faith—personal and communal—are crucial, your unique life of faith is a powerful source of encouragement, reflection, and affirmation to your confirmand, and he or she is also living a life of faith and will always receive support for the life of faith. Your personal, unique witness to the confirmand is a way for the confirmand to come to understand that, like yours, his or her own life is unique and necessary to the life and mission of the Christian community.

Written by Sue Overkamp

Imprimi Potest: Richard Thibodeau, C.Ss.R.

Provincial, Denver Province

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So here on these pages (and on any extra sheets you may need) is your opportunity to recollect your life of faith, and to allow it to become the Holy Spirit’s tool to inspire and support your confirmand. Tell stories on yourself, think out loud, crystallize important ideas. Respond to the prompts in ways that you



believe will be the most fruitful. If you choose to write, do it out of how you think and feel in the moment. Here, in the private forum of your heart, the Holy Spirit will speak in surprising ways about the gifts you received at confirmation, gifts the Spirit continues to develop in you to this day. This record is, in itself, a wonderful and unrepeatable confirmation gift—a gift to enrich you, and a gift to share with others in whatever ways seem appropriate to you.

You will find much encouragement in these pages for ways to relate to your confirmand. According to temperament, he or she may prefer to share with you through writing, conversations, e-mail, or outings. With these encounters, you have the opportunity to establish or refine a pattern of relating to the confirmand that can last a lifetime. As you already know, the support and encouragement you offer this special young person goes on long after the day of confirmation. And as you also know, your role as sponsor is important because adult faith life is challenging. We all need help from one another to live it with integrity, joy, and compassion.

So please use this little journal in whatever ways you see fit. You might simply look through it and see if something catches your eye, something that speaks to you of your own faith life or that of your confirmand. Or you may wish to go through the reflections and exercises in an orderly way, from start to finish. And of course there are a myriad of choices that fall between these two. At the very least, find something important to share of yourself with your confirmand, and do not underestimate the power of your caring presence. (See Bob's confirmation story, p. 19.)

Again, thank you for saying “yes” to your confirmand. You have given a priceless gift, a gift to be treasured for life. May what you discover here be an important part of the many blessings shared between two people living the life of faith in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

**con•fir•mand** *n.* a candidate for or recipient of the sacrament of confirmation.

**spen•sor** *n.* person who supports the confirmand, not only in the reception of the sacrament but also in a lifelong journey of faith.



I was confirmed when I was (age)

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My sponsor was

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I was confirmed in (parish)

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My confirmation name

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What I remember about my confirmation is

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From the time of Jesus' baptism in the Jordan, followers of Christ have always celebrated the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Confirmation, like baptism and Eucharist, is a sacrament of initiation, and as such is an extension of the sacrament of baptism. Today's rites of initiation for adults reflect a return to many of the practices of the early Church, in which the link between baptism and confirmation is evident. When an adult professes Christ, and dies and rises with him through the waters of baptism, the Holy Spirit is poured out to guide and comfort the new Christian in his or her journey as a disciple.



When infants and young people are received into the Church, the situation is different. Often the sacraments of initiation are administered at different times in the person's life, rather than all at the same time. This is very likely the case with your confirmand. (Sometimes children and teens are initiated in the same way as adults, receiving all the sacraments of initiation at Easter Vigil. If this is the case with your young confirmand, then you are very likely both the godparent and the sponsor.)

The practice of infant baptism has historically had a big impact on the timing of confirmation. Sometimes even today, the Church practices infant confirmation. As you can see in Israel's story, page 27, infant confirmation is much more meaningful for the sponsor than for the baby—at least at the time! For this reason, the U.S. Catholic bishops encourage the reception of the sacrament of confirmation by those who have attained the “age of reason” (generally assumed to be around seven years of age).

If your confirmand is an older child, teen, or young adult, be happy that they will have the opportunity to register both their training (catechesis) and the actual day of confirmation. The goal of the Church is to make young people strong in their faith!

*Right now I would describe my faith life as*

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*Something I am happy about in my faith life right now is*

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*Something about my faith life I'd like to change is*

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*Someone who has supported me in living a life of faith is*

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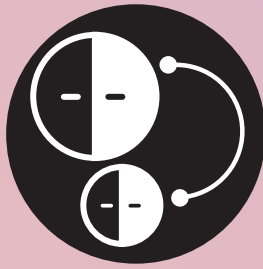
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# How to be a Confirmation Sponsor

As a confirmation sponsor, you are responsible for taking the long view. The day of confirmation may be important, but the rest of your confirmand's life is even more important, because that is where each of us lives out the Christian life under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit helps us with our challenges and celebrates our joy, both directly and through the Christian community. You, as sponsor, are a very important way for the Holy Spirit to help your confirmand live the Christian life day by day. To do this, you will need to build a strong relationship with your confirmand if you don't really know one another very well yet. And if you do, you can help make a good thing better.

**Here's what I'd like to do to get to know my confidant a little better:**

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Dear Teresa,

It was great to see you and your family on Thanksgiving Day, and it was an especially good day because you asked me to be your sponsor. Even though I've already accepted, I just want to let you know again how much I look forward to being your companion on the faith journey you are taking.

I hope we will have lots of opportunities to talk before the big day comes.

Love,

Mary (your sponsor)

## Here are some ideas relating with your confirmand that can carry over long past the day of confirmation.



What is your easiest mode of communication? If you like e-mail and your confirmand does too, it can be a good way to keep in touch with the latest. But it can't completely take the place of spending time with your confirmand.



Do you have a ministry in your parish? If you do, what would be a good way to share it with your confirmand? If you are a music minister, hospitality minister, lector, or eucharistic minister, you might want to invite your confirmand to participate in a liturgy in which you are ministering. You might even find a special spot for him or her to sit, or special task he or she could do.



Even if you don't have a parish ministry, all Christians minister to others through their work. Most young people are curious about adult jobs and careers. Can you find some simple way to share your work life with your confirmand?



Take a minute to go online, or look up in a reference book the feast day of your confirmand's patron saint. Write it in your calendar, and surprise your confirmand on that feast day with some unexpected communication. You can send free e-cards from [www.hallmark.com](http://www.hallmark.com)—or you may prefer to write a note or make a phone call.



Take the time to understand your confirmand's interests. Think of a way you might give some welcome attention at a ball game, a concert, or another event of his or her choosing.