



January 2008

Dear Confirmation Sponsor,

May God bless you in this New Year of our Lord 2008! Congratulations on being chosen as a Confirmation Sponsor!! What an honor it is to be chosen as a spiritual mentor and companion to a teen completing their initiation into the Catholic Church. Similar to the role of a godparent, your responsibility in the life of your Confirmation student does not end with the Rite of Confirmation. You are being asked to serve as a spiritual “anchor” and “coach” to your “confirmandi” throughout their whole life. If this sounds a little intimidating, then try not to worry too much, because “when all is said and done” the spiritual welfare of your student is ultimately the responsibility of the Holy Spirit. You just need to be their spiritual companion, trusted advisor, and most importantly to pray, pray, pray for them!

Note: Sponsors need to complete the attached Sponsor Form and return it or see that it is returned to the Religious Education Office **no later than April 6th**.

Your Confirmation candidate is entering into a time of focused activity and preparation. Here are some ways that you can serve him/her:

PRAYER:

Please pray for your candidate daily. The power of your prayers is needed, so that God’s work in their hearts and minds can be accomplished in these months leading up to Confirmation. You might consider taking extra time in the Eucharistic Adoration Chapel and pray for their benefit. If you live locally, then it would be wonderful to take any opportunity possible to accompany your student to Mass (this is a powerful example).

DISCUSSION:

The attached pages should serve as a discussion guide to you as you “companion” your teen during the months leading to the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. Essentially, you are asked to have a spiritually oriented discussion with your candidate each month – beginning in February through April – leading up to the celebration of Confirmation on Saturday, May 3rd at 10:00am. How you develop your sponsor/candidate relationship is up to you. If you are local, then I recommend that you get together for a breakfast or a lunch or an ice cream cone to engage in your monthly discussions. If you are not local, then phone calls, letters, and email can serve as a vehicle to build your relationship. The goal of these conversations is to give you opportunities to be involved in the spiritual and religious formation of your candidate. Hopefully, these conversations will build or strengthen a “bridge” of trust and

understanding, so that your student will feel comfortable coming to you for support and guidance in the future.

PARTICIPATION:

You are asked, if possible, to accompany your candidate to their Confirmation Interview in April. The interview will be done with a member of the parish Staff. The dates available for scheduling an interview are just now being released to the families of Confirmation candidates, so if you have any input on what day or time they should request, then please pass this along to your candidate and/or their parents.

You are invited to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with your candidate on Wednesday, April 9th, at 7:30pm in the Worship Center.

You are asked to participate in the Rehearsal for Confirmation, which will take place on Tuesday, April 29th at 7:30pm in the Worship Center. If you, as sponsor, cannot attend the rehearsal, then the student's parent or another adult proxy must take your place at this function, so that important information for the ceremony can be passed on to you.

On the day of Confirmation, you and your candidate are asked to arrive at 9:00am prior to the 10:00am Confirmation Mass on Saturday, May 3rd to the lower level of the Church. There will be reserved seating in the Worship Center for the sponsors and candidates, so don't worry about saving your seat. At this Pre-meeting we will take care of some administrative functions, briefly review what will happen in the Rite of Confirmation, and then get lined up for the procession in to Mass.

We are counting down the days to the celebration of this wonderful sacrament! Thank you for your important role in your candidate's preparation, especially in these few months leading up to May 3rd. Feel free to contact me with questions or for more information at (630)416-1992 ext. 225 or via email at mike_kuhn@sbcglobal.net (there is an underscore between mike and kuhn).

Peace and blessings,

Mike Kuhn
Director of High School Ministry

Sponsor/Candidate Responsibilities & Discussion Guide

What are you being asked to do before Confirmation?

- >To have a spiritually oriented discussion once a month – beginning in February up through April.
- >To participate in the Confirmation Interview – if possible – with your candidate on one of the following dates in April: Sunday the 6th from 12:30pm – 2:30pm, Monday the 7th from 7:00pm – 9:00pm, Thursday the 10th from 7:00pm – 9:00pm, and Wednesday, the 16th from 7:00pm – 9:00pm.
- >To participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to Confirmation. One opportunity for Reconciliation with your candidate will be on Wednesday, April 9th at 7:00pm.
- >To participate in the Confirmation Rehearsal on Tuesday, April 29th at 7:30pm or send an adult replacement.
- >To arrive with your candidate for a Confirmation Pre-meeting at 9:00am prior to the Confirmation Mass on Saturday, May 3rd at 10:00am.

Setting Up Discussion Times or Methods:

If you are local and can meet in person, then you – the sponsor – should contact your candidate to schedule the day, time, and location of your time together. The discussion should last approximately 30 minutes, but – depending on your relationship – may last much longer.

If you cannot meet in person with your candidate, then you need to initiate the dialogue by writing a letter, emailing, or by making a phone call. If you write an email (other than instant messaging or its equivalent) or write a letter, then we recommend that you contact the parent(s) to let them know of the communication and the expectation that the student responds in a timely manner.

Discussion Guidelines:

FIRST SPONSOR/CANDIDATE MEETING

Scripture

Read together Matthew 19:16-24.

Commentary

At first glance, it may appear that Jesus is saying it is wrong to be rich. On the contrary, Jesus does not have anything against wealth, but is simply concerned about the way it is used and about the “power” that it may have over us. The young man in the story seems to have been too attached to his wealth – in other words it ruled his life – so Jesus asked him to give it up. The question comes down to “what is more important to us than loving God and other people?” If we have obstacles to our growth – like wealth was to the young man – then God is asking us to take steps toward letting go and moving around those obstacles. Having a lot of money and possessions is a responsibility for which we will be held accountable before God. Wealth can lead to a life of selfishness and waste. Having access to significant money and resources can also be a wonderful opportunity to share and bless other less fortunate. It is all in how we relate to our money and possessions.

Discussion

Are you and I grateful and generous with our time, talents, and money/possessions? So the question to each of us from Jesus should be “Have you seen the needs around and done something to help meet those needs?” Another question might be “Are people more important than things and comforts/conveniences?” As a follow up question ask “If people are more important, then what is our responsibility in terms of sharing the money, food, clothing, etc. that we don’t need to meet our basic needs with the poor?”

Attachment to his wealth was a problem for the young man in the Scripture passage. Ask your candidate if they can identify anything that is an obstacle for them, which might keep them from more fully embracing their Catholic faith and their daily relationship with God? It would be helpful if you shared something appropriate that is an obstacle for you to further develop your relationship with God (ex.: busyness, grief over a loss, etc.).

Prayer

If one or both of you shared an obstacle, then simply start your prayer by each finishing the following sentence, “Dear God, please help me overcome or please change _____, which is an obstacle to my growth in faith.

Conclude by reciting the Our Father together.

SECOND SPONSOR/CANDIDATE MEETING

Scripture

Read Matthew 13:44-46

Commentary

The Kingdom of Heaven or the Reign of God is not a physical kingdom or country, but a spiritual reality where love, truth, and justice can survive and flourish. God’s Kingdom is either present or absent through your life and mine. We add our actions of love, truth, and justice to those of others – thereby expanding the Kingdom – or our selfish and greedy actions add to a kingdom that is not from God. These parables show two people who have searched for something of value and worth. Finding something of great value and worth, they were willing to sacrifice everything to obtain it.

Discussion

Ask your candidate to write down a list of 5 – 7 values or things/people/beliefs that are important to him or her (ex.: family, money, faith, success, sports, etc.). Let them know that you are not going to judge their list, so they should be as honest as possible. Make and share your own list as well. Share and discuss your lists in light of the above parables.

Ask your candidate to share a couple ways that they can contribute to the Kingdom of God (love, truth, justice) in their day to day life. Ask for them to share some actions or beliefs that divide people and contribute to hatred, falsehood, and unfairness.

THIRD SPONSOR/CANDIDATE MEETING

Scripture

Read Matthew 6:5-8.

Commentary

While this Scripture passage does recommend praying in private, it does not condemn public prayer and worship. Whether in public or private, true prayer requires an attitude of heart that reaches for God and responds to love with love. Religion and religious practices like prayer and going to Mass can be done with the wrong motivations. If personal faith doesn't support our religious practices, then we are probably hypocrites or at the very least operating from an unworthy motivation. The Father desires to spend time with us. Prayer and worship – whether done in private or with others – are key ways that we connect with our loving God.

Discussion

Have your candidate fill out the survey on the back of the page. Go over their answers and share your answers with them. Again, we are not in to judging the answers. Emphasize that God invites us into a conscious, daily personal prayer life. Further, he invites us to a full, conscious, and active participation in the sacraments of the Church – particularly weekly Mass.

Ask your student to share some examples of hypocrisy that they have seen or heard about (without naming names). Ask them to think of someone who, as opposed to be a hypocrite, really lives what they believe. In other words, who is someone that inspires them? Ask if they can see any connection between people experiencing one hour per week at Mass as boring, and some people rarely praying or thinking of God the other 167 hours of the week.



Prayer Survey

Frequency:

I pray: _____ time(s) per day
 _____ time(s) per week
 _____ time(s) per month

Form:

My favorite form of prayer is ...?

Place:

My favorite place to pray is ...? _____

Difficulty:

Sometimes prayer is difficult for me because of ...? _____

Sometimes actively praying, singing, and listening at Mass is difficult for me because of ...?

Public Prayer/Worship:

I attend Mass how often per month? _____

***Note:** This survey does not need to be returned to the RE Offices.

Sponsor Commitment Form

I have agreed to act as Sponsor for

in the Confirmation process. I certify that I am a fully initiated member of the Roman Catholic Church – having received the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation. Please note that in addition to being fully initiated, a Sponsor must be at least 16 years old and must not be the biological parent of the candidate.

Further, I certify that I am a practicing Catholic and an active member of _____
(printed name of
_____ in _____, _____.
your Catholic Parish) (city) (state)

Lastly, I commit to give support to my Confirmation candidate through my prayers, interactions and the example of my daily life.

(signature of Sponsor)

(printed name of Sponsor)

Mailing Address:

St. Elizabeth Seton Church
Attn.: Religious Education Office
2220 Lisson Road
Naperville, IL 60565