



The Role of the Sponsor for Confirmation

The role of sponsor is an important one for the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. Although, today some may see the role as “honorary”, the Church sees the sponsor, popularly called the ‘godparent’, as a fully-initiated Catholic who actively supports the newly Baptized, or Confirmed, by their good example and instruction in the Christian Life...

To be a sponsor, a person must be a Catholic, at least sixteen years of age, and have already received the Sacraments of Baptism, the Most Holy Eucharist and Confirmation. Most importantly, the sponsor must be leading a life in harmony with the Catholic faith and not be bound by a canonical penalty.

Pastoral Manual Policies and Procedures
Diocese of Rockville Centre

CONFIRMATION SPONSORS

1. Think responsibly when choosing a sponsor-

Candidates preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation have lots of work to do prior to receiving their sacrament (a day when the Church will officially recognize them as fully initiated Catholic adults). The Sponsor's role is to support the newly confirmed; by seeing that the confirmed person acts as a 'true witness' to Christ. The Sponsor helps set, by the example, the meaning of a virtuous Catholic life, and also by faithfully fulfilling the obligation connected with this sacrament. (Canon 892)

2. Candidate must choose the sponsor, wisely.

A Confirmation sponsor supports the candidate as they prepare to become fully initiated as members of the church. A candidate's choice in sponsor is a decision that must be taken seriously and it is an important role that **no sponsor should take lightly.**

Listed below, are a few things that candidates should consider before choosing a sponsor for their Confirmation candidacy. Though requirements may vary between individual parishes, these requirements have been approved by the Saints Philip and James Religious Education Department and the Diocese of Rockville Centre

- a. **Fully initiated member of the Catholic Church.** The sponsor must be a fully initiated member of the Catholic Church through Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. Issues that affect the eligibility of the Sponsor include:



- i. Someone married outside the Church and is not able to receive Communion, is not able to be a sponsor.
 - ii. A Catholic who left the Church and has become a member of a new church, **is not able to be a sponsor**.
- a. **Age-** In general, a sponsor must be at **least 16 years of age**, but choosing someone a few years older might be more helpful. Remember, the sponsor is supposed to be a 'role model' for the candidate: a person who can offer advice and guidance not only during their candidacy, but after confirmation. Someone who is just a few years older than the candidate might not be able to provide the best advice and/or guidance about our faith due to their limited experience.

It might make things easier if the person you ultimately choose to be a sponsor is someone you already have a strong relationship with and find easy to talk to. This relationship is one that should continue and strengthen years after you have been confirmed. Therefore choosing someone you already have a good rapport with will make it easier for the relationship to flourish. In addition, most people find it easier to ask questions or seek advice from someone they're personally close to, and you will likely have a few questions along the way to being confirmed.

- b. **Number-** the custom in the Diocese of Rockville Centre for confirmation is that there is **only ONE** sponsor per candidate.
- c. **The Sponsor CANNOT BE either parent.** However, baptismal godparents, siblings or cousins are often and do qualify to be sponsors.
- d. **Location-** Another thing to consider when choosing a Confirmation sponsor is where that potential sponsor lives. Once chosen, the sponsor will be asked to fulfill certain requirements, including attending meetings, attending practices, etc. so it might be more convenient to choose a sponsor who lives nearby. Though it is not required that a sponsor live in the community, it will make it easier on the sponsor you choose.