



# *Sponsors*

## **What do they do?**

We may agree that as adults in today's world we are used to being defined by what we do. In fact, this is a common first question we ask one another upon first meeting. It is a comfortable way to initiate the small talk that at some point might evolve into deeper conversation. Yes, as a confirmation sponsor, you will have particular things "to do." These may include attending a rehearsal, buying a gift, walking with the candidate to the bishop, going to dinner after the liturgy. But you are about to embark on a journey with a young person. *What you do* is not the primary concern. This is a journey concerned less with what you will do as a sponsor and more with who you are as a person of the Gospel. This journey will take you and a young person to new and exciting places in the life of faith. Faith penetrates the heart of the matter — how has faith penetrated who you are; can a young person read the Good News in the actions of your life?

### **✦Called to Relationship with Youth**

In your role as a sponsor you are a minister with youth. You are a part of an exercise in building relationships. These relationships allow young people to know adults who care about them and who are willing to walk as fellow pilgrims on a life-long journey of faith. A special young person has called you into deeper relationship. At the center of this relationship is our faith. And in a particular way, your unique ability to share your faith with this person is more important than the confirmation program itself.

### **✦Nurturer and Supporter of Faith Growth**

You are one of the nurturers and supporters of faith growth for the confirmation candidate. The integrity with which you live your faith and take care of its growth is as important as the walk in faith you are a part of with the young person. You have been chosen to share your faith and that is a gift freely given by God; our response to that gift is the challenge of us all as members of the Body of Christ. Communicating with interest and excitement the challenge of living as Catholics in today's world is a wonderful gift to share with youth.

### **✦Being Present**

Your presence in the life of the young person who has chosen you as a sponsor is essential. You can be present in many ways. Your relationship has the potential for creating very sacred space between the two of you—holy ground. To walk on holy ground with a young person is indeed a blessing!





# *Twenty Tips*

- 1) Participate with the young person in activities, i.e., take him or her to a movie and talk about it over a snack afterwards or invite him/her on an outing such as biking, roller blading, iceskating or hiking. Try activities that involve the young person in creative expression.
- 2) Establish a regular time to be with the young person as listener, sharer and co-traveler on the faith journey. Communicate that the friendship between the two of you makes a difference in your life.
- 3) Encourage the young person to keep a personal journal and share reflections of your own from daily life. Talk about current events and trends.
- 4) Be willing to enter into discussion with the young person about the differing values around us and affirm the healthy, life-giving choices of the young person. Model healthy, life-giving choices and relationships in your own life. Share stories of others, both current and of history, who have struggled with issues of personal integrity.
- 5) Recommend and even buy for the young person spiritual reading, "reflections for every day," that link faith to life.
- 6) Expose the young person to professional acquaintances in particular fields and vocations as he/she explores possible vocational choices.
- 7) Share with the young person the significant moments in your faith life. Ask open-ended questions (why, how, where, when) that encourage the young person to explore how his/her faith is experienced in life.
- 8) Participate with the young person in community service activities and together keep a photo journal of your involvement.
- 9) Advocate for inclusion of the young person and his/her peers in leadership capacities at the parish, and to become an integral part of the planning process for programs that involve them.
- 10) Explore with the young person a variety of ways to pray. Send the young person scripture notes every week. Meet with the young person and talk about what kind of homily the young person would write for the upcoming Sunday.
- 11) Find five other adults who are going to pray for this young person.
- 12) Create a prayer board for the young person's bedroom where he/she can put up the names of people who are in need of prayer.
- 13) Send a special card to the young person on the anniversary of his/her baptism.
- 14) Reach out to the young person with a "good luck on the exam" telephone call or a congratulatory note about a job well done. Try doing "random acts of kindness" for your young person.
- 15) Support mom and dad with a listening, empathic ear.
- 16) Learn friends' names and inquire about them regularly. Invite the young person's friend(s) to join the two of you on an occasion or two. Host a popcorn/movie night and watch a "religious movie" with the young person and his/her friends, e.g., *Jesus of Nazareth*, *Romero*. Prepare a special dinner before Confirmation for the young person and his or her friends. Find ways to include peers in making the Confirmation celebration more meaningful, e.g., have a group of friends make a scrapbook for the young person. Talk with him/her about the values of friends and the struggles of relationships.
- 17) Take the young person to the ritual experiences at Church or in the community, e.g. Community Stations of the Cross.
- 18) Share how your faith and experiences of Church have made a difference in your life—including the doubts and struggles you may experience.
- 19) Pray for the young person and let him/her know it.
- 20) Ask the young person to pray for you.

