

# Confirmation Sponsor Handbook

2026–2027



**Stella Maris**

FAMILY OF PARISHES



# Table of Contents

What is Confirmation?	3
Who is a Sponsor?	5
Sponsor Roles and Responsibilities	6
Candidate/Sponsor Conversations	7
Important Dates for Sponsors	12

## What is Confirmation?

Confirmation is the Sacrament that completes Baptism; in it the gift of the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon us. Anyone who freely decides to live a life as God's child and asks for God's Spirit under the signs of the imposition of hands and anointing with chrism receives the strength to witness to God's love and might in word and deed. He/She is now a full-fledged, responsible member of the Catholic Church.

When a coach sends a soccer player onto the playing field, he puts his hand on his shoulder and gives him final instructions. We can understand Confirmation in a similar way. A hand is placed upon us. We step out onto the field of life. Through the Holy Spirit, we know what we have to do, and we have been given the power to do it. He has motivated us. His mission resounds in our ears. We sense his help. We will not betray his trust or disappoint him; we will win the game for him. We just have to want to do it and listen to him.

In Confirmation, the soul of a baptized Christian is imprinted with a permanent seal that can be received only once, and marks this individual forever as a Christian. The gift of the Holy Spirit is the strength from above in which this individual puts the grace of his Baptism into practice through his life, and acts as a "witness" for Christ.

To be confirmed means to make a "covenant" with God. The confirmandi says, "Yes, I believe in you, my God; give me your Holy Spirit, so that I might belong entirely to you and never be separated from you and may witness to you throughout my whole life, body and soul, in my words and deeds, on good days and bad." and God says, "Yes, I believe in you, too, my child—and I will give you my Spirit, my very self. I will belong entirely to you. I will never separate myself from you, in this life or eternally in the next. I will be in your body and your soul, in your words and deeds. Even if you forget me, I will still be there—on good days and bad."

—From the *YOUCAT*, 203 and 205

## Who is a sponsor?

A sponsor encourages and assists a Confirmation candidate to embrace and actively practice the Catholic faith both *before* and *after* Confirmation. Recall that a godparent for Baptism takes upon himself/herself the responsibility of helping the newly baptized person mature in the living of a Christian life and offers his or her own life and practice of the faith as an example of faith, prayer, and service within the Catholic Church. The sponsor for Confirmation continues that work for the candidate.



It's important to remember that handing on the Catholic faith is not merely the exchange of information, but "handing on a tradition [that] transforms lives, directions, attitudes, values, and relationships" (Lewinski, *Guide for Sponsors*). A sponsor plays an important role in handing on this tradition by:

1. Representing the Catholic community — A sponsor is the personal representative of the Church for the candidate.
2. Acting as a companion — A sponsor is a companion: available, encouraging, and supportive.
3. Mentoring — A sponsor helps the candidate learn what it means to live as a Catholic.

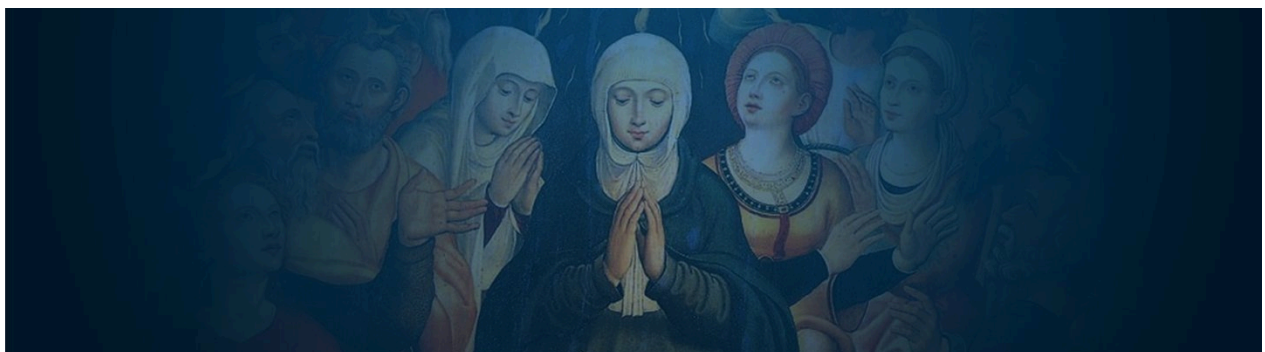
During the Rite of Confirmation, the sponsor takes on the responsibility of presenting the candidate to the bishop (or his delegate) and placing a hand on the shoulder of the candidate as the bishop (or his delegate) anoints the candidate. This is a show of support for the candidate and a gesture of prayer.

The Sacrament of Confirmation itself creates a strong spiritual bond between the one who is confirmed and the sponsor. After Confirmation, the sponsor should remain committed to the confirmand's life by presence and prayer. One's "yes" to be a sponsor for Confirmation is not just a "yes" to the candidate, but also a "yes" to God. In other words, taking on this obligation is a serious commitment to God.

## Sponsor Roles and Responsibilities

The sponsor is an invaluable assistant to parents in transmitting the faith. The sponsor needs to be able to fulfill the following requirements:

- The Church requires that the sponsor be an active, practicing Catholic, at least 16 years of age, who has already celebrated the sacrament of Confirmation. The Church recognizes that a person cannot transmit what the person does not have. The sponsor may NOT be a parent. The sponsor is an assistant to the parents as the prime transmitters of the faith.
- It is important that the sponsor be more mature, more informed, and more experienced in the ways of our faith and culture than the candidate is.
- The sponsor should be a person who already has a trusting relationship of some sort with the candidate.
- It is recommended that the sponsor be an older person who has some experience with his or her faith and, hence, a clearer perspective from which to speak.
- The sponsor needs to be willing to meet with the candidate on a regular basis prior to the celebration of Confirmation and to make a commitment to continue the faith journey after the celebration of Confirmation.
- The sponsor needs to be willing to attend sponsor meetings.
- The sponsor is one who is willing to share his or her faith with the candidate. The sponsor is to “walk and talk” with the candidate on the faith journey.
- The sponsor is to be an honest, caring, and encouraging person who will help the candidate grow in his or her understanding of the faith as the young person comes to a deeper appreciation of God in his or her life.



## Candidate/Sponsor Conversations — Due Mar. 14, 2027

At Stella Maris, sponsors are expected to meet with the candidate on a regular basis as part of the candidate's journey of faith. In these meetings, a sponsor should be willing to share his/her faith with the candidate. The life of faith really is a journey, and the sponsor steps into that journey with a candidate at a critical moment.

That critical moment at Stella Maris comes during the 8th grade year. Adolescents at this time are growing in social awareness and in establishing their own identity. There is an emphasis on independence. Yet, they often don't want to stand out. As our society moves further and further from God, the life of faith of a child is threatened. They are foreigners in a foreign land. The combination of a candidate's age, maturity level, cultural hesitation in talking about faith, and the general decline in social mores (largely due to ingesting media) can make it difficult for candidates to open up to sponsors. Conversely, sponsors often find it difficult to get a meaningful conversation started with a candidate. In fact, sometimes it's hard to even know where to begin.

To help our sponsors, we have composed two "Candidate/Sponsor Conversations." It is our expectation that by **March 14, 2027**, a sponsor will *initiate* and engage in at least two meaningful conversations with a candidate. Ideally, these conversations will take place in person, with the permission of the candidate's parent(s). If meeting in person is not possible, using FaceTime, Zoom, or a simple phone call is totally acceptable. The important thing is that they happen.

The "Candidate/Sponsor Conversations" should be viewed as a starting point for a conversation. With any conversation, there's an element of organic creativity involved. Use our "Conversations" sheets as *conversation starters*. Don't feel confined to the questions listed on the page. Take the conversation where you think it will be most fruitful and helpful for your candidate. Both the sponsor and candidate should fill out the form separately after each conversation. Once you have had a conversation, let us know by filling out the Google Form available via the QR Code or:

<https://forms.gle/dXWcHZYMiz21TV1S7>



# Candidate/Sponsor Conversation #1: Character and Virtue

## *Icebreaker Questions*

- Who do you hang out with?
  - The sponsor should share a bit about when you were in 7th/8th grade. Who did you hang out with? What did you do?
- What stresses you out the most?
  - The sponsor should share a bit about when you were in 7th/8th grade. What stressed you out?
- Asked the candidate: What is the most exciting part of your typical week?
  - The sponsor should share a bit about when you were in 7th/8th grade. What was the most exciting part of your week?

## *Reading and Discussion*

This might be a rather morbid way to start a conversation, but: "Imagine it's your funeral. You've lived a long life, and the people closest to you gather to pay their final respects. Some of them will stand up to say a few words...One by one, they speak about your life and what they appreciated most about you. What would you want them to say?" (Sri, *Who Am I to Judge?*, 22-23)

- Well, what would you want them to say? (Share a bit with each other.)

Ed Sri goes on to say, "One thing that usually becomes clear in the funeral exercise is that the purpose of life does not consist in the things that most often allure us: wealth, power, pleasure, and fame. These will not make us happy. Deep down, we know we're made for something more. We long to have good relationships" (26). This funeral thought-exercise helps us to think about where our lives are going. What do you want to become? What do you want your relationships to look like? What kind of life should you live? These are questions about the purpose or goal of human life. How we answer these questions shapes our character.

Character is tough to define, but it involves your personal habits, attitudes, and relationships. It's about how to live a life that thrives, a real life, a life to the fullest. The *YOUCAT* (Youth Catechism) says that "we must work at forming our character so that we can freely, joyfully, and easily accomplish what is good. A firm faith in God, in the first place, helps us to do this, but also the practice of the virtues." A virtue is an "interior disposition, a positive habit, a passion that has been placed at the service of the good." That word "disposition" basically refers to ordering life in a particular direction — taking aim at a certain goal and pursuing that which is necessary to achieve it. Virtues are the skills we practice to achieve the goal.

- Who are 2 people who have heavily influenced you? How? What do you respect most about these people?

Virtues help us to develop our character and build stronger friendships. The most important virtues are called the "cardinal virtues" (from the Latin word *cardo*, which means "hinge" — all the other virtues hang on these). The first of the cardinal virtues is prudence. Prudence is the ability to recognize what is right: "after all, someone who wants to lead a good life must know what the 'good' is and recognize its worth" (*YOUCAT*, 301). Next, we have justice: giving to God and neighbor what is due to them. Third, there is fortitude. Fortitude means persevering in a commitment to do what is good, even if it's scary. It's kind of like courage. The person who has fortitude faces fear and chooses to move through it, even though the feelings of being afraid might persist. Finally, moderation refers to practicing self-control or restraint. Too much of a good thing can be a bad thing, and too much of a bad thing is, well, bad. Moderation helps us to keep our passions in check.

- In your own words, what does each cardinal virtue mean? Can you think of an example?
- Do you see these virtues in the people you talked about earlier?
- Which of these virtues comes easiest for you? Which is the hardest?

### *Closing Prayer*

Conclude your time together by making the Sign of the Cross and praying the Our Father.

## Candidate/Sponsor Conversation #2: Prayer

### *Icebreaker Questions*

- What has been one of the best times of prayer you can recall?
  - The sponsor should share a bit about this from his/her own perspective.
- Have you ever been bored at Church or with the idea of prayer?
  - The sponsor should share a bit about this from his/her own perspective.
- Do you have any funny memories about prayer?
  - The sponsor should share a bit about this from his/her own perspective.

### *Reading and Discussion*

Prayer is a conversation with God. It's talking to God and listening to God. "Prayer is turning the heart toward God. When a person prays, he/she enters into a living relationship with God" (*YOUCAT*, 469). In his book *Appointment with God*, Fr. Michael Scanlan says, "The most important thing in life is our relationship to God, and the most important means of nurturing that relationship is daily prayer."

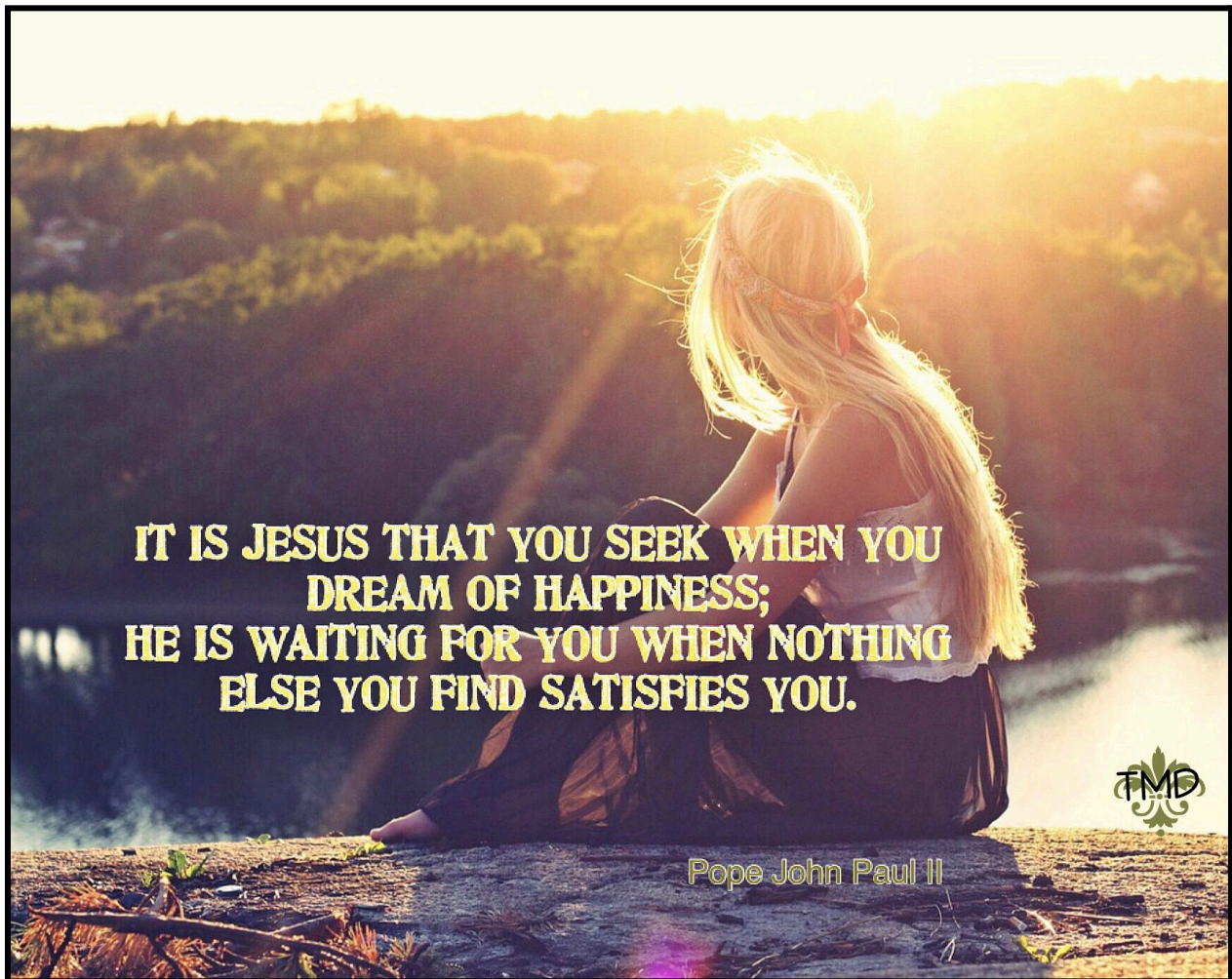
- When you think of prayer, what do you think of? Why?
- Do you find it easy or difficult to pray? Why?
- How often do you pray? What does your prayer look like?

The *Catechism* says, "Prayer is the life of the new heart. It ought to animate us at every moment...We must remember God more often than we draw breath" (2697). This is why St. Paul commanded the early Christians to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thes. 5:17). However, "we tend to forget him who is our life and our all." This is a problem, and the *YOUCAT* (Youth Catechism) points it out: "Anyone who loves another person and all day long never gives that person a sign of his love does not really love him. So it is with God, too." 2732 It goes on to say, "Someone who does not pray regularly will soon not pray at all." We can't pray without ceasing — at all times — if we don't pray at specific times. Committing to a specific time of daily prayer is a game-changer in one's relationship with God.

- If you were to make a commitment to set aside dedicated time each day for quiet prayer, how much time would you like to devote to it?
- When could you pray?
- Where could you pray quietly and not be distracted?
- What would you do with your prayer time (e.g., thank God, pray for petitions, read Scripture, etc.)?
- Are you willing to do this? Are you willing to have some daily prayer time?

### *Closing Prayer*

Conclude your time together by making the Sign of the Cross and praying the Our Father:



# Important Dates for Sponsors

Please be sure to have the following dates/times on your calendars:

- Confirmation Sponsor Information Meeting
  - Wednesday, November 18, 2026
  - 7 pm at St. Thomas More Dining Hall (800 Ohio Pike, Withamsville, Ohio)
- Deadline for two Sponsor/Candidate Conversations
  - March 14th, 2027 — summaries of the conversations should be submitted via the Google Form linked above (pg. 7)
- Confirmation Rehearsal
  - April 20, 2027 — Confirmation rehearsal (7 pm at STM)
  - 7-8 pm in St. Thomas More Church (800 Ohio Pike, Withamsville, Ohio)
- Sacrament of Confirmation
  - April 21, 2027 — Sacrament of Confirmation (7 pm at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Peter in Chains)
  - 7 pm at Cathedral Basilica of St. Peter in Chains (325 W. 8th St., Cincinnati, Ohio)
    - Arrive no later than 6:15 pm

