

How Can I help if I am a Sponsor

The church suggests that it's appropriate for godparents to also sponsor their godchildren for confirmation but this isn't always realistic if they no longer practice the faith, Silhavy said.

The specific criteria for eligibility is a person who is at least 16 years of age, a fully initiated practicing Catholic, and not the candidate's mother or father.

Choosing a family member or friend for reasons other than faith pose the same problem and the title shouldn't be merely honorary, Klima said.

"If you're picking your favorite uncle, for example, you've got to look at the reasons why you're picking the person," she said.

Sponsors should actively engage with the young person, which is difficult to do long distance, Silhavy said. Whatever the sponsor's connection, the confirmand's family should also know them, he added.

A sponsor should be a good example who can explore faith questions with the teen, Klima said.

"It doesn't mean the sponsor has to have all the answers, but somebody who's willing to walk with them, to be a kind of companion with the confirmand but in a mentor kind of way," she added.

Sometimes teens ask people who are active in a parish ministry to sponsor them, Silhavy said.

The church doesn't spell out the role and responsibilities for confirmation sponsors, but there are some basic ways they can help confirmands prepare to receive the sacrament, he said.

- **Pray.** Besides the spiritual benefits, young people are encouraged by knowing that their sponsor is praying for them, Silhavy said.
- **Attend formation** if the parish invites or requires sponsors to attend formation or prayer sessions with the confirmand.
- **Serve as a witness** if the parish asks sponsors to write or present a testimony stating that the teen is ready for confirmation. Some parishes have drawn this aspect of the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults process into youth confirmation formation, Klima said.
- **Answer questions.**
- **Be a role model.** Hopefully, the sponsor somehow exemplifies virtue for the teen, Silhavy said.

In whatever way a sponsor-confirmand relationship develops, being able to talk about faith and other aspects of life will make a difference for the teen, Silhavy said. "I just think conversation is the most important thing to do, just simply to be conversing with someone," he said.

Along with their parents, a young person's confirmation sponsor shares the important role of guiding their faith, by words and actions, Klima said.

"You can't have too many good examples," she said. "For people of any age to be able to see that 'Oh, I guess it isn't just my parents that think faith is important.'"