

Candidate Sponsor Conversations

IHM Confirmation Preparation 2015

Sponsors for Confirmation stem from an ancient tradition when baptisms were done as adults. The idea was that a member of the community could vouch for the candidate's Christian attitude and desire for the Sacrament in front of the entire community.

Today, sponsors are just as important. They continue to be guides on the journey towards the Sacrament, and they are models for candidates. The sponsor-candidate relationship is unique because it allows for comfortable talks about religion and faith in a society where such discussions are rare.

The purpose of this exercise is to guide that relationship and build that trust. Please use the following discussion topics to start your conversations. They are not the end-all of conversations, and in fact should only get the ball rolling. Do not be surprised or hesitant if the conversation shifts away from the original topic. The idea is to build relationship, not stifle conversation.

More than anything else, enjoy these conversations. Enjoy the discussions with one another. The sponsor-candidate relationship is unique and has the potential to be wonderful. But, like all relationships, it needs time and energy devoted to helping it grow.

Discussion Topic One: the Mass

The word Mass comes from a Latin word, Missa, which was spoken at the end of the celebration back when official Catholic worship was only in Latin. It means something like dismissal. Today we hear the same concept in the words of the priest or deacon, "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord."

The word liturgy is often used to describe the Mass, although all the sacraments are liturgy. The meaning of the Greek word liturgy tells us something important. Liturgy means something that a community does together. There are two parts in the Mass: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Taken from Handbook for Today's Catholic Teen

Discuss the importance of not only attending, but participating in the Mass. As a sponsor, what benefit do you see in going to Mass on Sunday?

As a candidate, what do you like about Mass? Are there any parts of Mass you are not overly fond of?

What would you want to change?

Share some of the highlights of your conversation here:

Discussion Topic Two: Images of Christ

Jesus lived in a time before Kodak and we have no way of knowing what he physically looked like.

What are some of images of Jesus with which you are familiar? Describe and discuss.

What image(s) speak to your heart and make you feel like you know Jesus?

Why do you think they do?

Do you think the depictions of Jesus do (or should) affect how we relate to the man who set us free from sin?

Yes or no: how do they?

Prayer is conversation with God. It involves both speaking to God and LISTENING for God's voice. How does your image of Jesus influence how you pray?

How and when and where and why do you pray? What works? What doesn't?

Discussion Topic Three: Convicted Christian

In 313 CE the Roman Emperor issued an edict making Christianity legal. For 313 years it was *ILLEGAL* to be a Christian. If you were convicted, or sometimes even suspected of being Christian you were killed. Yet people kept practicing their faith. These early Christians are a model for us when it comes to strength of faith. Imagine you were on trial for being a Christian.

What evidence could be brought to the court to convict you?

Do you think you could be convicted of being Christian? Why?

Who models the Catholic faith for you from your family? From the Saints (www.catholic.org/saints)? From famous people in history?

Mass is about an hour on Sunday. Grace before meals is typically less than a minute. Prayers before bed can be long or short, depending on the person and the energy level at the end of the day. And not everyone finds grace or prayers before bed helpful to their faith life. So how do we live the rest of our lives?

How do you live your life as a Catholic? What do you do between Sunday Masses?

How can (do?) you include God in your daily life?

What acts of kindness and charity can (do?) you do?

How do you serve others?