



## Choosing a Confirmation Name and Sponsor

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### Reaffirming Your Baptismal Name

Although it is traditional to take a new name at Confirmation, it is not required. Instead, you may want to reaffirm your baptismal name since the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation are so closely related. Confirmation seals and strengthens the faith and graces you received at Baptism. It completes your Baptism. Reaffirming your baptismal name is a sign of your commitment to live as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

### Adding a New Name

You may want to add a new name at Confirmation. This decision indicates your awareness of how Confirmation will help you live as a disciple of Christ. The name you choose must be a Christian name—the name of a saint or one of the great men or women from the Bible who have gone before us in faith. You may also choose the Christian name of your Confirmation sponsor because this individual is an example for you of how to live the Catholic life. Spend time prayerfully reflecting about your choice.

### Finding a Sponsor

The Church's tradition of involving a sponsor in the preparation of candidates for the Sacraments of Christian Initiation is one of our most ancient approaches to faith formation. The sponsor was a living witness and mentor who represented the Christian community (its values, beliefs, behaviors, and so on) to the candidate.

The role of a sponsor was not over with the celebration of the sacraments, however. It was seen as a lifetime commitment, a relationship that would last throughout the individual's journey of faith.

Both the Code of Canon Law (Canon 893.2) and the introduction to the Rite of Confirmation (5) suggest that in view of contemporary pastoral circumstances, it is desirable to have one's baptismal sponsor act as sponsor at Confirmation. While this remains the ideal, it seems much more important that the sponsor chosen be available and involved with the candidate in a significant way, and be able to offer an authentic example of lived Christian faith. You can only have one sponsor to celebrate the Rite of Confirmation.

As a bare minimum, the Code of Canon Law specifies that the requirements for acting as a sponsor at Confirmation (Canon 893) are the same as those for godparents at Baptism (Canon 874). Briefly, that canon directs that

- The person must have completed their sixteenth year,
- Be fully initiated, live a life of faith,
- Not be the parent, and
- Not be bound by any other canonical restrictions.

One of the challenges that might exist occurs when sponsors live at a distance and cannot interact in person with their candidate. However, in this day of instantaneous Internet and cell phone communication, only a little extra effort is required to maintain regular contact between sponsor and candidate. It is important that interaction occurs on a consistent basis and that sponsors are informed about meetings or information they may have missed because of their distance. A *Sponsor Handbook* will be mailed to your sponsor and you will be given direction and encouragement regarding how to interact with your sponsor throughout the process.

