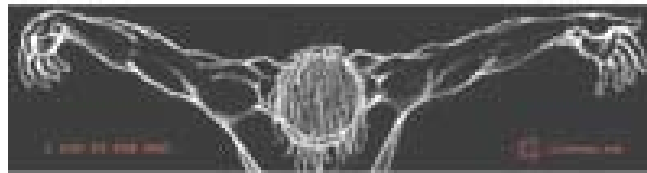


# Sponsor Guidebook 2008-2009

**“How much do you love me?” I  
asked.**



**“This much”, he said. Then he stretched out his  
arms and died.**

**St. Joseph's Catholic Church  
Moorhead, MN**



## Sponsor Information

A Sponsor must be a practicing, confirmed Catholic, who is at least 21 years of age (If younger than 21, please speak with Confirmation Coordinator or priest). He or she may not be the candidate's mother or father. A godparent is a good choice. The candidate is encouraged to choose someone who lives close by. The sponsor should be a person who is prayerful, open, dependable, loving, and is comfortable sharing his or her faith with young people.

### Role

- 1) The sponsor represents the support and prayers of the entire Church. He or she will be the candidate's "spiritual friend." In this program, the following is asked of the sponsor:
- 2) Accompany the candidate to the sponsor and candidate sessions (outlined in the sponsor guidebook and student's journal). To meet with the candidate regularly throughout this year of preparation and to discuss the topics addressed in the preparation sessions.
- 3) Share their faith story with his or her candidate.
- 4) Spend time getting to know the candidate, possibly taking him or her out to lunch or dinner, or having him or her over to your home.
- 5) Pray for and with the candidate.
- 6) Sponsors need to attend the Confirmation run-through.
- 7) Attend the Rite of Confirmation.
- 8) Present the candidate during the Confirmation Rite.
- 9) Continue to be there for the candidate and lend spiritual support after the confirmation ceremony. (Suggestion: Send a card or note every year on the anniversary of his or her confirmation)

## CONFIRMATION GUIDELINES

*St. Joseph's Catholic Church implements these guidelines for the benefit of the Confirmation candidates and their respective families and sponsors. Please make yourself aware of the guidelines to make the preparation process a faith-filled experience for all involved (candidates, sponsors, families, coordinator, teachers, and priests).*

### Attendance:

There are a limited number of classes our students have in religious education before their confirmation. These classes play an important role in the student's faith formation. We established these guidelines to ensure that students fulfill this important process in their formation.

- 1) Students are expected to attend all of their religious education classes.
- 2) If students know ahead of time that they will be unable to attend a class, they should notify their catechist as soon as possible about when they will be gone and the reason for missing class.
- 3) If a student misses class and the catechist has not been notified, the catechist will call the parent/guardian the following day to make sure that there are no problems. On the second unexcused absence, the Youth Ministry Coordinator will make a follow-up call with the parent/guardian.
- 4) After the first class that a student misses, excused or unexcused, the following will occur:
  - Second and third class missed: The student will write a one page paper on the material that he/she missed in class and student will meet with Youth Ministry Coordinator to discuss the paper.
  - Fourth class missed: The student and parents/guardians will meet with the YM Coordinator and the pastor or associate pastor to discuss a proper solution.

**Community building projects:**

*St. Joseph's sees the opportunity to serve our parish and community of Moorhead as an invaluable part of Confirmation preparation and significant in reminding our candidates of their baptismal vows. Included in the service component of Confirmation is serving in the many ministries offered at mass.*

1. The candidates are asked to do four community building projects, two in the parish or in the community, as well as two ministries of the mass during the year.
2. The ministries in mass include:
  - **Ushers of hospitality**, welcoming people as they enter the church and passing out bulletins as they leave the church, as well as doing the offertory
  - **Gift-bearers**, bringing up the gifts during mass
  - **Lectors**, reading the scriptures during mass (1<sup>ST</sup> and 2<sup>ND</sup> Readings)
  - **Commentators**, reading the Petitions (Prayers of the Faithful)

**Retreat Guidelines: "Why do I have to make a retreat for confirmation?"**

*All our candidates are expected to attend a retreat in the eleventh grade. The reason for the retreat is to offer the candidates a concrete opportunity to enter into their baptismal call of being sons and daughters of God and to reflect on all the preparation has to offer them.*

1. The candidate must make at least a full weekend retreat (Friday-Sunday or Saturday-Monday).
2. The candidate is expected to attend a retreat during their 11-grade year or the summer prior to their 11-grade year. Any retreat attended before then will not make up or "count" for their Confirmation preparation. We simply ask the student to attend a retreat their junior year, even if they have attended one before because the student is in such a different place emotionally, spiritually, educationally and socially, from year to year.
3. The candidate may not leave at any part of the retreat, excused or not. If it is in knowledge of the candidate or

- candidate's parents that he/she might leave, we ask the candidate to look at another date to make a retreat.
4. The reason for this is to not distract the other teens on retreat. We want to offer the teens the best we can possible give on retreats. For any retreatant, to leave early or depart for even part of the retreat can destroy the experience for other retreatants and for him/herself.
  5. Candidate must be signed up (registration submitted) for their retreat by November of the eleventh grade.
  6. St. Joseph's offers many different retreat settings for our candidates preparing for Confirmation, such as:
    - TEC, To Encounter Christ (Crookston Diocese sponsored)
    - LIFE TEEN Retreats (Parish sponsored)
    - Discipleship-Week (sponsored by NET)

**To-Do List: *What should the candidate have completed and turned in to be confirmed?***

- \* Check with the candidate periodically to ensure they are completing these tasks in a timely fashion.
- Copy of the Baptism Certificate, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008
- Sponsor Information Form, September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008
- Confirmation Interview; March 2009
- Two LIFT Projects; Completed by March 2009
- Two Liturgical Ministries; Completed by March 2009
- Candidate Agreement
- Choose confirmation name, March 2009
- Letter to Bishop, March 2009
- Journal; March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009
- Attend a overnight retreat
- Confirmation Practice: April 22, 2009
- Confirmation Ceremony: April 26, 2009

## **Sponsor/Candidate Sessions & Dates**

All lessons are to be prepared before each session with your sponsor. Answers to questions are to be written. We have included prayers, but you may make up your own or use from the “Basic Prayers” section of the candidate journal.

### **Session I**

#### ***Getting to know one Another***

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you God for those who love us – those who are there when we need encouragement, a kindly ear, a good talking to, a pat on the back, a shared meal, or the gift of their time. Thank you God for our ability to show love to other people, for the times when we have encouraged, listened, shared advice, patted one another’s back, shared a meal, or given our time. For all these gifts of love, we give you thanks.

1. Recall one person or one event that stands out to you as special and which greatly affected your faith.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Share your faith story/journey with each other.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How have my outlook, my attitude, and my faith been affirmed, challenged or changed because of this experience. Discuss. (Please write a short paragraph).

**Closing Prayer:** Listening is a great gift that you, God, and the people in our lives can give us. Thank you for all those who have heard us out, who let us share our pain and joy, who have taken and words and feelings seriously, who have valued and appreciated what we have said – for all our friends, we give you thanks, God who always listens – may we listen to theirs, too. Amen.

**Session II**  
***Being Called***

**Opening Prayer:** God of power and love, open our hearts in welcome. Remove the things that hinder us from receiving Christ with joy so that we may share His wisdom and become one with Him. Amen.

1. Read together Genesis 12:1-5 and Jeremiah 1:4-10.
  
2. What do these passages say to you?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Were you ever asked to do something or go somewhere alone and were unsure of the outcome?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Have you ever experienced fear of the Lord's call due to your age?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. How have your outlook, attitude and faith been affirmed, challenged or changed because of this experience?

**Closing Prayer:** Dear Lord, keep us, your children born of water and the Spirit, faithful to our calling. May we all follow in Jesus' path of service to humanity and reflect the glory of His Kingdom. Amen.

(Close with praying the Nicene's Creed together, this is in your Section of Basic Prayers). Be ready to discuss the Creed for your next meeting together.

**Session III**  
***Basic Beliefs***

**Opening Prayer:** Dear Jesus, give us faith. Make us good people that we can love, learn, lead lives with meaning, and hope as you intended us to. Grant us faith that you are with us because, in fear, we pray we are not always sure. In your name, Jesus Christ. Amen.

1. Say the Nicene's Creed together. Discuss.
2. To be a responsible, effective member of the faith community, it is necessary to have a basic awareness and acceptance of that community's tradition and practices. What have I done to become more aware of these things?
  
3. Read each of the following statements:
  - God created and creates the universe and continues to hold it in existence and exercise control over it without interfering with but rather empowering our free will toward the good.
  - All humanity participates in sin to some degree and radically needs God's help to do good and to be saved.
  - Jesus is the only Son of God, fully human and fully divine.
  - It is through Jesus, his teachings, his example, and ultimately his saving death and resurrection that all people have access to the redemption offered by God.
  - Though all Churches and religions can help people find the salvation offered by God through Jesus Christ, the one true Church founded by Jesus upon his apostles subsists in the Catholic Church.
  - Though the Catholic Church has a history that includes faults and weaknesses, it is still the best means I have to know about God and to become the fully human person God intends me to become.
  - The sacraments have the power to put me in contact with the Risen Jesus and to experience His saving actions just as truly as if I had lived and walked with him two thousand years ago.

**Closing Prayer:** Dear God, give us an increase in faith so that we may rest in you. Increase our faith so that we can perform the same works as you did. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**Session IV**  
**Prayer**

**Opening Prayer:** Dear Jesus, you said where two or three are gathered in your name there you will be. Be with us now as we pray the prayer you taught us. Our Father...

Prayer is an essential skill for effective membership in the Faith community and for maintaining an overall Christian lifestyle.

How one prays is not as critical as THAT one prays.

**Activity A**

Listed below are four elements that affect our ability to pray and common obstacles related to these. Share together how these problems affect your own prayer life and try to identify practical things you can do to overcome them. Write out possible solutions to each one.

1. TIME
  - Can't find time?
  - Don't take time?
  - Others?
  - Possible solution:
  
2. INNER QUIET
  - Can't seem to settle down?
  - Can't concentrate?
  - Other?
  - Possible solution:
  
3. EXTERNAL QUIET
  - Can't find a suitable quiet place for prayer?
  - Can't find a place with a good atmosphere for praying?
  - Other?
  - Possible solution:

4. AIDS TO PRAYER
  - Can't find the right book or other aid for praying?
  - Don't know how to use the bible well for this?
  - Other?
  - Possible solution:

**Activity B**

Read each of the following scripture passages about prayer. Write an answer to each question.

***Luke 2:41-43***

***Matthew 6:5-15***

***Mark 7: 24-29***

***Mark 8:11-12***

***Matthew 18:19-20***

1. What truth or principle does it seek to teach us about prayer?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Does my own prayer reflect that truth?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What can I do to insure that my prayer will possess that quality described in the scripture passages?

**Closing Prayer:** Try spontaneous prayer! Say whatever is in your heart.

**Session V**  
***Christian Life Style***

**Opening Prayer:** God of love, we once again turn to you, asking for your Guidance and grace. Help us to acquire large-heartedness, clarity of purpose, purity of heart, and an ability to see through your eyes, so that we might truly love our brothers and sisters.

The overall spiritual life involves us in both positive practices and in a program of self-discipline aimed at rooting out or curbing weaknesses and bad habits we may possess. We try to maintain that balance between nurturing the good that is already there and curbing negative elements that may be present.

1. Scripture Search: Read the following scripture passages.

Luke 12:22-34

Matthew 5:21-24

Luke 17:1-11

Matthew 5:27-30

Luke 18:18-30

Matthew 5:38-42

Luke 19:11-27

Matthew 5:43-48

Matthew 6:1-4

2. Write out answers to each question.

- What is Jesus really asking of His followers in terms of life style?
  
- Do I expect people, myself included, to act like that? Why or why not?
  
- To what degree is that principle part of my own lifestyle? What do I need to do, if anything, to improve in this area?
  
- How responsible am I for the decisions I make?
  
- How do I involve God in my decision-making?
  
- How can I stand up for my Christian values in daily situations?

**Closing Prayer:** Close with prayers from your heart.

**Session VI**  
***Witness and Service***

**Opening Prayer:** God, you have gifted each one of us with unique potential to do good for the human family. Thank you especially for the talents of (name them) which I see in (name the person you are praying with). (Each person to pray at loud here).

Gracious God, we thank you for these gifts, unique to each one of us. Let us never be jealous of talents we don't have, but rather let us rejoice in who have made us and dedicate our gifts to the general good. Amen.

An integral part of committed membership in the Church is sharing the day-to-day fellowship and concerns of the local parish community and being willing to share one's own time, treasure and talent in response to the needs experienced by the community. To be a confirmed member of the faith community requires a willingness to 'go public' and to make Jesus visible to society at large by one's own actions and behavior.

1. Under each of the categories, identify what you are doing to share your time, talents and treasure (money) on behalf of the parish and/or others in need of service.
2. Decide what more can be done in these areas in response to your vocation to love and be servant unto others. In terms of treasure, it is good to evaluate just how you are presently spending whatever money you have available for personal use. Where do we place our values and priorities?

**What am I doing?**

**TIME                      TALENT                      TREASURE**

**Ways I can further share and serve:**

**TIME                      TALENT                      TREASURE**

3. Read each of the following scripture passages about witness.

Acts 2: 42-47

Luke 12: 8-12

1 Corinthians 12

James 2: 14-26

Isaiah 6: 1-9

4. As you reflect on your future adult life in the Church, following Confirmation, discuss what your faith life will be like. What contributions of service would you like to make to the Church in the future? What special role(s) will you take? (Write down your thoughts and ideas about this).

5. How will my faith life change as a result of my Confirmation? (Write down your thoughts and ideas about this).

**Closing Prayer:** End with your own prayer between both the sponsor and candidate.



