



**OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION  
CATHOLIC PARISH UMBILO**



**WHAT THE CHURCH (PARISH) EXPECTS  
OF SPONSORS  
OF TEENAGE CONFIRMATION CANDIDATES**

In order to understand the idea and role of sponsors at Confirmation, let us look at what Confirmation means in the context of the Christian Initiation of Adults.

The **RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (RCIA)** is the way in which the Catholic Church receives new adult members. It has been simply described as a **JOURNEY OF FAITH**.

On this, as on any other journey, we do not travel alone. There are fellow travellers and we often meet them. Some of them have been on the journey for a long time, others are only now just starting out. Those who have been on the journey a long time are able to guide the new travellers.

On the journey of faith of the **RCIA**, the community of the faithful are like the experienced travellers. It is their task to welcome and guide the candidates for membership as they begin their journey of faith. However, they meet them as co travellers because the community is still on the journey itself.

So that this welcoming, and especially the guiding, can be **PERSONAL**, the community often appoints - or asks of its members - to do this on a person to person basis. Those who represent the community of faith in this way are called **SPONSORS**.

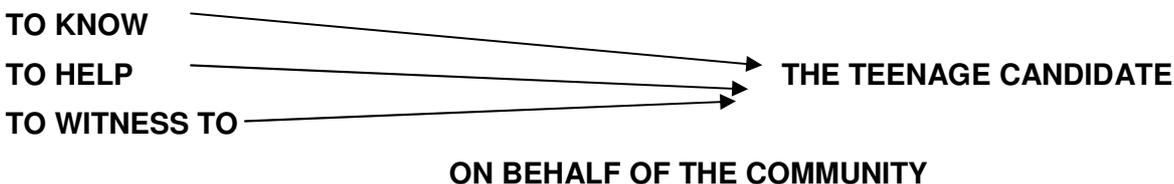
A Sponsor is a man or woman who knows the candidate, helps him/her, and witnesses to his/her morals and intentions (RCIA, No. 24)

In the case of Confirmation, the teenage candidates are also on the journey of Christian Initiation. They have been helped on the journey so far by their families and by the community. With their help, the candidates have already been brought to the other two Sacraments - Baptism and Eucharist.

Their parents, and maybe also their Godparents at Baptism, have been the chief instruments in their religious formation. The parish has also helped through its catechetical programme. Now that the young people are on the threshold of adult membership, the community has a more visible task in the Christian Initiation of its new young adult members.

The family is called upon to open itself to release new adult members into the community. The community has the task of opening itself to accept these new adult members into its ranks. The sponsor is the one who is a bridge between the family and the community.

**THE ROLE OF THE SPONSOR IS THREEFOLD:**



**TO KNOW THE CANDIDATE**

This is to be a friend to his/her candidate on the journey of faith to Confirmation

**TO HELP THE CANDIDATE**

This is to guide his/her candidate and be ready to search and share answers to questions of faith and Christian living.

**TO WITNESS TO THE CANDIDATE**

This involves standing up for the candidate and testifying to his/her progress on occasions. It also means giving correct witness and good example to the candidate through the goodness of his/her (The Sponsor's) Christian living.

## **OTHER REQUIREMENTS/TASKS OF SPONSORS**

Sponsors represent the support and care of the whole parish. Each candidate can have his/her own Sponsor. The Sponsor does not have to be of the same sex as the Candidate.

A **parent** of the Candidate **CANNOT** be a Sponsor.

### **A SPONSOR MUST**

1. Be **mature for the task** and should already be a fully initiated Catholic, that is, Baptized, received Holy Communion (Eucharist) and Confirmed.
2. Be a **practising Catholic** (attending Mass every Sunday, receiving Communion regularly and going to Confession at least once a year) and involved in the life of service to others in the parish. It is preferable that s/he be a registered member of Assumption Pariah or at least living in the Durban area.
3. Take part in the Confirmation Preparation Programme by **attending three adult meetings and attending** together with their candidates, the **various liturgical celebrations** to be hold during weekend Masses - these are part of the process of initiation and the Sponsor recommend their candidates to the parish community.
4. **Co-operate with the Parish Priest** and Adult team leaders of the Programme
5. **Be willing to give the Candidate some time** for advice, review of life, challenge and assessment of readiness during the Preparation Programme, and also to continue to give assessment of readiness during the Preparation Programme, and also to continue to give support and encouragement after Confirmation.
6. Continually renew his/her own life of faith during the Preparation Programme.
7. Invite his/her candidate to get involved in service to others within the parish community