

CONVERSATION

THE LIFE Choosing Ultimate Happiness

*It would be best to have this third conversation
with your candidate after he or she has completed
Lesson 21, “Do I have what it takes?”*

This final set of lessons addresses questions about the active practice of the Catholic Faith in both our devotions and our everyday lives. As your candidate begins his or her final preparations to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, the program tackles issues of morality and living a Christian life. As a sponsor, you have undoubtedly lived more life! Sharing your experiences and challenges in living a Christian life can help your candidate to consider the decisions he or she may face in the future—and give him or her both insight and hope.

Conversation Starter 1:

CHECK-IN

Take your candidate out for dinner, and ask how he or she is doing. If you are drawing a blank, you can ask simple things like “How is life?” “What is your favorite class?” “How are your friends?” “Are they good to you?” “Is there any drama at school weighing you down?” “What are your latest dreams for your life?” “How are you doing with living your faith?” or “How is life at home?”

Conversation Starter 2:

DOING GOOD

Pick a common act of service to perform with your candidate. If you live nearby, you may want to join him or her. If not, choose a similar activity that you can each do in your respective locations. For example, you can each serve at a local food bank or soup kitchen or visit a nursing home. After you have completed your acts of service, consider the following questions:

- » What does it mean that we find ourselves when we give ourselves away?
- » What does it mean to be “poor in spirit” (as in the Beatitudes)?
- » St. Teresa of Ávila says, “Christ has no body now but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours.” How can we be Jesus’ hands?
- » Is there a particular type of service that you feel called to?

Conversation Starter 3:

HEART-TO-HEART

Have a heart-to-heart talk about how we are expected to live as Christians after Confirmation. Emphasize that Confirmation is not an end to learning and living the Faith but rather an empowerment to do so in a fuller, more mature way.

Share how your Catholic Faith has guided your moral development. How does your faith inform your decisions? What virtues do you struggle with? (Use prudence in sharing.) What virtues have you grown in? How does your faith affect your response to making mistakes? What do you find challenging in your own pursuit of living out your faith in the world?

Ask your candidate about their faith. What virtues do they admire in others? Who are some good and holy people that they know? Where does your candidate feel inspired and encouraged in their faith? How can you support them?

Explain that you will be available in the future to listen and to answer questions and that you will pray for him or her every day for the rest of your life, which will be extremely meaningful to your candidate.

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MYSTAGOGY Life After Confirmation

The ancient Church observed a period of fifty days after Easter during which the newly baptized and confirmed received further instruction and formation. This was known as *mystagogy*, meaning “leading into the mysteries.” The mystagogy stage helped newly initiated Christians understand how to fully live the Faith.

For the newly confirmed, mystagogy is crucial to nurturing the life of faith. While it is important and highly recommended for you to have at *least* one follow-up conversation with your candidate after his or her Confirmation, this fourth phase should be an ongoing dialogue!

Conversation Starter 1:

FOLLOWING UP

For a few months, call or text your newly confirmed young Catholic every week with a reminder to attend Sunday Mass. Invite the teen to go with you, perhaps with an invitation to go out to breakfast or dinner afterward. If possible, study the readings together or discuss the homily after Mass. If your candidate already attended Sunday Mass prior to Confirmation, touch base periodically to ask if he or she has started attending a youth group or is finding other ways to live out the grace of Confirmation. This simple gesture of accountability can be very helpful in establishing good habits.

Conversation Starter 2:

CONFESSION ROUTINE

Encourage your candidate to go to Confession at least once a month. Some find it helpful to establish a habit of going to Confession on the first Saturday of every month or some other day. Join your candidate, if possible, or text him or her a simple reminder. Consider establishing a routine where once a month or every couple of months you and your candidate get together for Confession and breakfast or lunch, or maybe just a walk afterward to catch up and talk. Establishing a routine and accountability can benefit both of you.

Conversation Starter 3:

ONE-MONTH CHECKUP

Select a date to meet one month after Confirmation for both of you to look back on the Confirmation experience and look forward to the future. Consider these topics to discuss:

- » How is your prayer life developing? What are you doing to keep in contact with God every day?
- » How will you continue to deepen your knowledge of the Faith?
- » What areas of the Catholic Faith do you want to learn more about?
- » How are you staying connected to the parish community (or youth group)?
- » What are you doing to witness to Christ and your faith at your school and with your friends?

TIPS FOR BEING A GREAT SPONSOR

Start Praying Now

Get a rosary and begin praying with it weekly (or even daily if you so desire). At Confirmation, give the rosary to your candidate as both a sign of prayers offered and as an invitation to grow in a prayer life beyond Confirmation.

Go to Mass

A key goal of sponsorship is to energize and encourage your candidate's participation in Mass. Invite your candidate to attend Mass with you. If this is not possible, take advantage of texting and social media to encourage your candidate to attend Mass and to share your thoughts about the homily or weekly Scripture readings.

Soul Food

As the date of Confirmation nears, plan a special meal with your candidate to create a sense of the significance of this event. Consider choosing a nicer restaurant, and perhaps even dress up for the occasion. This will help to signify that Confirmation is both special and serious.

Three Rules for Sharing

- » Do not glorify sinful behavior or encourage experimentation.
- » Give only as much detail as you need to make your point.
- » Be straightforward, honest, and encouraging.