



St. Peter Parish, Rocky Ford
 St. Peter Parish, Ordway
 Mary Queen of Heaven Mission
 Fowler, CO



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Quinceañera formation in the Arkansas Valley Parishes

Formación de la quinceañera En las parroquias de la valle de Arkansas

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The Quinceañera formation process

There are a few steps to take to plan your Quinceañera celebration.

- † Contact the priest before you get the hall to be sure the date and time are available.
- † Plan on at least 6 month's classes.
- † Choose your padrinos carefully for their good example of a Christian life.
- † Be sure to line up a musician and singer for the Mass
- † Make a list of the gifts to be presented at your quinceaños Mass
- † Choose your caballeros y damas for their virtues of holiness, gentleness and humility and catholicity.
- † Be sure to keep the poor and the powerless in mind when deciding on how much to spend.
- † Tell your friends that drinking and drugs are not part of this holy celebration.
- † Tell your friends to dress modestly, chastely, and respectfully at your party
- † Be sure to arrange for a lector and eucharistic ministers with the priest as you plan your celebration

Hay cosas de tener in su mente en la planificacion de sus quince años.

- † Llamar al sacerdote por una cita antes que renta Ud. el salon para evitar conflictos.
- † Tener in su mente que la formación dura por 6 meses.
- † Escoge cuidadosamente sus padrinos por su ejemplo de la vida cristiana.
- † Conseguir servicios de musicos por la Misa.
- † Presente Ud una lista de regalos para bendicir al sacerdote
- † Escoge cuidadosamente sus caballeros y damas por las virtudes de santidad, cariño y humildad y que practicen la Fe.
- † Tenga en su Corazon los pobres, los despoderosos en las decisiones de gastos.
- † Diga a sus amigos que no deben usar alcohol ni drogas en la fiesta santa suya.
- † Diga a sus amigos que deben vestirse modesto, casto y con respeto a esa celebración.
- † Haga compromisos de ministros liturgicos: lectores, comunión y hospitalidad con el Sacerdote.

▶ What is the Quince años celebration?

The Celebration of the *Quince años* (15 years) is as much cultural as it is religious. It is rooted in the dedication of a virgin to chastity and of the presentation of a marriageable daughter to the community. In the USA, the celebration also is about being of Mexican heritage, and the preservation of the family culture in a non-Hispanic world.

The blessing of a young woman necessitates the involvement of the Catholic Faith, and her formation as one who will be a mentor and teacher of the faith to the younger girls who are becoming women after her. She then is a public person, recognized for her important role in the community. It is the goal of the formation to help her to make a personal commitment to be a servant of God as was the Blessed Virgin Mary, and as did Jesus Christ, who chose to become a man in the normal way, and to die for our sakes. So, in the *Quinceañera* there are the conflict-



The Quinceañera receives a bible and a prayer book as tools for living

ing ideas of honor and humility, of a certain public notice and of modesty, of greatness and being a handmaid of God, and finally, but most importantly, of dying to one's self for the sake of others.

The formation

In the formation (it is concurrent with the first year of Confirmation) the young woman is trained in the stories of the faith, especially of the prophets, of the Blessed Virgin, of the Catholic Faith, and the sacraments and prayers of the Church. She will be given many blessed symbols and tools to help her to remember her role as a Catholic Leader, one who lets her light shine in the darkness of a world given over to sin and sinful exploits.

She will be required to demonstrate that faith during the formation in many ways:

- † reciting prayers,
- † living a life of an exemplary Christian in the household and in the community,
- † attending Mass at every Sunday and Feast day,
- † Abstaining from meat during Lent on Fridays,
- † Fasting on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and for an hour before Mass each Sunday (or Saturday night)

- † leading her family in prayers at the table and in the family rosary.
- † Giving time to caring for the Poor and those at the margins of society.
- † Living simply and giving offerings to church and to the poor by donations of money and time.

The focus

The *Quinceañera* celebration's religious nature in Mexico is not supposed to be a celebration of extravagance, although in the USA it has shamefully become so. This is foreign to the understanding of *¡Fiesta!* as celebrated in the old country. *Fiestas* are given so that the whole community can have a celebration, they are not typically about any individual, although the individual's celebration is a good excuse for a party!

The celebration

The *Quinceañera* takes place within the Mass, beginning with altar servers, a number of attendants in matching formal or *stilo folklorico* clothing, the *padrinos*, the *quinceañera* herself and finally the priest. Mass begins in the usual way. The readings speak of the virtues she has been formed in and then the young woman renews her baptismal promises, since it is to the life in Christ we are making a dedication this day. After testimonies are

heard in favor of bestowing the blessing, the tools and symbols for the Catholic Lady are given to the *quinceañera*.

She then, led by the celebrant, goes to the ambo and recites her *votos* or vows of dedication to Christ and to imitate the Virgin of Guadalupe. Toward this end, she presents the Virgin with the *ramo de flores* as a sign of dedicating her chastity and purity of heart to Mary. The Mass ends with a special blessing.

The offering

Many people ask how much to pay the church. The traditional donation that people make is \$100 to the Church, and \$100 for the singer/musician if it is one person. A collection for the Poor will also be taken up during the Mass and brought forward with the bread and wine.



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