



## Shepherd job description

*A shepherd is a guide to and caretaker of sponsor and seeker alike, prepared to support the journey of the seeker and the friendship of the sponsor with prayer, resources, and active leadership that models the Christian life, asks the difficult questions, provides both answers and accountability, and does so with love and compassion. Like a sponsor, the shepherd is not meant to be an expert in theology or a perfect Catholic without flaws, but a shepherd is prepared through experience and maturity to bring greater resources of knowledge, discernment, and care to the process of guiding the seeker to faith in Christ and an active relationship with his church.*

A shepherd is a unique role key to effectively maintain the OCIA as a year-round process geared to the individual and his or her journey into a deep, well-formed relationship with Christ and his church, especially in large parishes or those whose OCIA director works only part time or bears responsibility for other evangelism and discipleship efforts.

A shepherd...

- Must be a confirmed, practicing, and experienced Catholic who has exhibited a deep and consistent faith in Christ and a heart for accompanying other on their journey of faith.
- Serves as a spiritual and practical resource to several sponsors and their catechumens or candidates, upholding them with prayer and encouragement.
- Develops individual formation plan with seeker in consultation with the OCIA director.
- Shares the seeker's formation plan with the sponsor, ensuring the sponsor understands the plan and the formational purpose of its elements.
- Following the plan, guides the sponsor in creating opportunities within parish life for the seeker to be immersed in a catechesis of experience within the body of Christ.
- Provides resources to sponsors to help them support the seeker. The shepherd is available to the sponsor and the seeker to answer questions, find additional materials when needed, to offer suggestions about opportunities within the parish that will help shape the experience and spirituality of the seeker, and to help discern the seeker's readiness for initiation.
- Meets regularly with sponsors and seekers, providing encouragement, prayer, and guidance.
- Under the leadership of the OCIA director, functions as catechist for some of the monthly sessions, retreats, or special sessions through the year, most especially during purification and enlightenment and mystagogy.

Please note: *shepherds are not required to attend every session but are very welcome at any of them*