

Sponsor job description

A sponsor is a representative of the Christian community who journeys with the seeker, serving as a guide to living the Christian life and participating in parish life. People often think a sponsor must be an expert in theology or someone who can answer every question and has no flaws (the "perfect Catholic"). Such a notion is far from the truth. A sponsor is a spiritual friend, someone who can share his or her faith in a very real and practical way, encouraging the seeker and testifying to the seeker's sincerity of heart.

A sponsor...

- Must be a confirmed, practicing Catholic. Church law (Canon 874) prohibits parents from serving as sponsors for their own children.
- Submits to sponsor training and is assigned to candidates and catechumens under the discernment of the OCIA director.
- Provides encouragement, regular prayer, and companionship for the seeker throughout their journey, developing a genuine friendship with them (and their family) and helping them do the same with others in the parish.
- Develops a relationship with the seeker in whatever way seems natural. Phone calls, email, or text messages are encouraged by mutual agreement. If the seeker is a minor, the child's parent must give verbal permission.
- Guides the seeker in
 - **Participation in parish life according formation plan.** Checks in with them about their experiences, asks leading questions to help them reflect on them in light Christ and his work in their lives. Attends events and activities with them as much as possible.
 - **Progress through their assigned studies.** A sponsor does not need to be a theological expert or catechist, but they are to check in with their candidate/ catechumen on a regular basis to make sure they are progressing in any assigned studies, to ask if they need any additional help or resources, and to spend a little time reflecting with them on what they are discovering and how it relates to their growing relationship with Christ. Sponsors are not expected to be trained catechists or to know more about church teaching and theology than the averaging practicing adult Catholic. The seeker may raise many questions for which the sponsor does not have an immediate answer. That's okay. Sponsors should always consult their shepherd, the Director of Faith Formation, our parish priest, or one of our deacons for assistance in answering such questions.
- Stands with the seeker in all rites and attends monthly sessions and retreats with their seeker.
- Does more listening than talking. A sponsor coaches more than teaches.
- Makes a commitment for the duration of the journey. A godparent makes a commitment for life. A sponsor and a godparent for the unbaptized are not necessarily the same person. "It may happen that it is not the sponsor for the rite of acceptance and the period of the catechumenate but another person who serves as godparent for the periods of purification and enlightenment and of mystagogy" (OCIA 10-11).