

A guide for sponsors

Walking beside someone who is becoming Catholic.

In short. A sponsor helps an adult through Christian initiation and then helps them live the Christian life.¹

What a sponsor is

- Church law describes the sponsor as someone who “assists an adult in Christian initiation”.¹
- The sponsor also helps the newly baptized person lead a Christian life in keeping with Baptism.¹
- Godparents must be “firm believers, able and ready to help the newly baptized” on the road of Christian life.²
- Their task is a truly ecclesial function, a service on behalf of the whole Church.²

Each week, simply

1. Read the lesson before the session. The code on each handout opens it.
2. Go to Sunday Mass together when you can, and sit with them.
3. Pray for them by name every day.
4. Ask one honest question after each session: what stayed with you, what was hard?
5. When you do not know an answer, say so, and look it up together in the Catechism.
6. Introduce them to people in the parish.

Who can be a sponsor

- Is chosen by the person to be baptized, or by the pastor if needed, and is willing and able to do this.³
- Has completed the sixteenth year of age, unless the diocesan bishop has set another age or the pastor grants an exception for a just cause.³
- Is a Catholic who has been confirmed, has received the Eucharist and leads a life of faith in keeping with the role.³
- Is not under a canonical penalty and is not the parent of the person.³
- A baptized Christian of another community may take part only as a witness, together with a Catholic sponsor.³
- For Confirmation it is appropriate that the sponsor be one of the baptismal godparents.⁴

If they are unsure

- The faith asked for at Baptism is not a perfect and mature faith, but a beginning that is called to develop.⁵
- Faith needs the community of believers: it is within the faith of the Church that each believer can believe.⁵

Remember: You are not the teacher. You are a friend who walks alongside and prays. Your parish’s OCIA team leads the process and sets the schedule.

Sources

1. Code of Canon Law, can. 872
(vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic_lib4-cann834-878_en.html)
2. CCC 1255
3. Code of Canon Law, can. 874
(vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic_lib4-cann834-878_en.html)
4. CCC 1311
5. CCC 1253

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