

OCIA Sponsor Expectations

Purpose:

An OCIA Sponsor is a companion, witness, and bridge who walks alongside a catechumen or candidate as they grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ and journey toward full initiation into the Catholic Church. A sponsor offers friendship, encouragement, prayer, and support while helping the person feel welcomed, valued, and connected to the life of the Church.

Responsibilities:

- Accompany the catechumen or candidate throughout the OCIA journey by building a trusting and supportive relationship.
Practically: Attend OCIA catechumenal sessions, workshops, retreats, liturgical rites, and other important gatherings whenever possible.
- Share faith and personal experiences by witnessing how God is active in your own life.
Practically: Remember that sometimes words are not necessary. Your presence, example, and willingness to walk with another person can be a powerful witness.
- Encourage participation in OCIA sessions, liturgical rites, dismissal prayer time, retreats, and parish activities.
- Be present at important moments in the process, including rites, celebrations, and meaningful moments in the person's life, such as birthdays, milestones, or times when they need encouragement.
- Listen and walk with compassion, respecting where the person is in their faith journey.
Practically: Never push someone beyond where God is leading them, and never share confidential conversations or trusted personal experiences.
- Answer questions and help connect them with parish resources, the OCIA team, ministries, and the wider Catholic community.
- Pray regularly for the catechumen or candidate and invite them into a deeper life of prayer.
- Celebrate their growth and encourage them as they encounter challenges, questions, and moments of spiritual growth.

- Attend Sponsor Enrichment Meetings to continue growing as a sponsor and to share insights with the OCIA team. These gatherings allow sponsors to support the discernment process and help the team better understand each catechumen's or candidate's readiness as they move into the next phase of the journey.

Qualities of an Effective Sponsor:

A good sponsor is:

- Available – willing to make time and be present.
- Authentic – willing to share their own faith journey.
- Welcoming – creating a sense of belonging and hospitality.
- Faithful – committed to prayer and the life of the Church.
- Patient – allowing God to work in the person's life in God's own time.
- Encouraging – helping another recognize God's presence and the gifts God has given them.

The Heart of Sponsorship:

An OCIA Sponsor is not a teacher who has all the answers, but a companion who says:

"I will walk with you. I will pray with you. I will listen to you. I will help you discover the God who is already calling you."