

OCIA SPONSOR'S GUIDE ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST/SACRED HEART PARISHES

As a sponsor, you do have specific functions. The Church describes them as the following:

- Develop a faith relationship with the candidate.
- Accompany the candidate, if possible, to special liturgies.
- Stand with the candidate before Msgr. Frank Lane, or Bishop Earl Fernandes, and the community, to help the candidate live as a follower of Jesus.

Some of the following suggestions will not be possible if you live away from the area, but be creative and think of ways to be in contact with the candidate.

- Discuss with the candidate the efforts, progress and problems experienced in preparing for the reception of the sacraments. Help them to study the basic faith concepts and discuss their class work. See if there are any questions or concerns.
- Offer suggestions and encouragement when necessary.
- Arrange some time to pray, or to read a passage from Scripture together. If you live close by, make plans to participate in the Mass together.
- Keep in contact with your candidate either in person or on the telephone.

Take time for yourself. Put aside some time for thinking and praying. Sponsors can begin to see how they can improve the quality of their ministry. There are many ways to go about this. One could just spend time alone, quietly reflecting. Start a journal and attempt to write one's reflections, or talk over things with a friend.

It even helps to talk over things with the candidate in relation to your own being. You might ask yourself:

- What has my candidate taught me about my faith this week?
- What did I learn about myself this week?
- What can I do to encourage my candidate in his/her faith life?
- What do I want to pray especially for this week?

A sponsor must meet the following requirements:

- *Be at least 16 years old.*
- *Has received all the Sacraments of Initiation - Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation.*
- *Is an active, participating, registered member of a parish.*
- *Is in good standing with the Church ... e.g. - divorced Catholic and remarried?*
- *According to Canon Law, parents cannot be sponsors. Suggestions are a brother, sister, aunt, uncle, cousin, neighbor, close friend, godfather, godmother, fiancé, wife, or husband.*

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