

Some Practical Suggestions for Godparents and Sponsors

From the Church's Guidelines for the RCIA Process

“Sponsors are persons who have known and assisted the candidates and stand as witnesses to the candidate’s moral character, faith, and intention.” (RCIA 10)

“It is the responsibility of godparents to show the candidates how to practice the Gospel in personal and social life, to sustain the candidates in moments of hesitancy and anxiety, to bear witness, and to guide the candidates’ progress in the baptismal life.” (RCIA 11)

- ✘ Above all, pray for the person you are serving as a godparent or sponsor.
- ✘ Exchange telephone numbers and email addresses with the person.
- ✘ To help the person feel at home in the RCIA setting, try to arrive for the RCIA sessions and rites before the person.
- ✘ Ask your inquirer/catechumen/candidate to notify you or a team member in the event that he or she will miss a session.
- ✘ If the person misses an RCIA session, call afterwards to show concern.
- ✘ Extend an invitation to attend Mass or other parish activities/ministries with you.
- ✘ Introduce the person to other parishioners.
- ✘ Extend an invitation to attend a Catholic Baptism, wedding, funeral, parish reconciliation service, or other liturgical event with you. Allow time to discuss the experience before or after.
- ✘ Offer to baby-sit sometime so that the person you are serving can have a special night out with his or her spouse.
- ✘ Share good Catholic resources (books, magazines, tapes), or go to a Catholic bookstore together to browse.
- ✘ Suggest having a casual lunch or coffee or dessert together sometime.
- ✘ Send a Christmas card, or give a small gift.
- ✘ Prior to receiving Baptism, the person you are serving will be asked to participate in the long-standing tradition of choosing a patron saint’s name from among the many saints of the Bible and the Church’s history. You can assist in this process in many ways, especially by praying for guidance, discussing your favorite saints, and helping the person you are serving think about how to decide and to look for resources on saints.
- ✘ Give an appropriate gift at the time of the person’s initiation (patron saint medal, book on the chosen patron saint, rosary, subscription to a good Catholic periodical)
- ✘ Remember the anniversary of the person’s Baptism or reception into the Church (card, note, phone call, etc.)
- ✘ Be creative!

St. John Chrysostom, 4th Century Bishop of Constantinople

“They should not consider that what they are doing is a routine action. Rather, they should be fully aware that they will share the credit if they guide their charges to the path of virtue by their advice, but if they are negligent, then grave condemnation will fall upon them. For this reason it is the custom to call them ‘spiritual fathers’ in order that they may learn from their office the affection they owe to their charges in giving them spiritual instruction. For if it is a noble thing to lead those who are in no way connected with us to desire virtue, we have a much greater duty to fulfill this obligation to one whom we have received to the position of spiritual son. To sum up, negligence brings no small danger to those of you who are acting as sponsors.”

The Heart of this Ministry of Service

“We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.” (1 Thessalonians 2:8)