

What it Means to be an OCIA Sponsor

The Call to be a Sponsor

The Church seeks to share its tradition, life, values, prayer and apostolic work. Receiving a tradition is not like taking a class and passing a test. It is a transmission by those living the tradition, in a way that transforms lives, attitudes, values and relationships. This is the call of the sponsor – to share your lived faith with those you serve. Being a sponsor is like being a trusted friend. You share what you can about your own faith journey.

OCIA is not a course, class or program. It is a gradual, guided process of transformation and conversion leading participants towards initiation into the Catholic Church. The vision of OCIA at St. Paul Catholic Newman Center is: *“Heart speaks to Heart: A Welcoming Place to Meet Christ through the Catholic Faith”*.

If you have chosen to be a sponsor, it means you are being called to share your faith with those seeking faith. It means your faith community considers you a mature Catholic who will be a good influence on the person you serve.

Most new sponsors feel apprehensive and unworthy. It will help to remember what St. Paul said: “We hold this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing power may be of God and not from us” (2 COR 4:7). We will always be unworthy, and we do not take credit for what God accomplishes through us.

Qualifications of a Sponsor

- Must be a practicing Catholic who has received all three sacraments of initiation - Baptism, First Holy Communion and Confirmation.
- If married, must be married in the church (or have marriage validated)
- Be willing to share your faith and assist those put in your charge in their journey of faith.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Commit to daily prayer for the person you are serving
- Attend weekly OCIA sessions with the person you serve
- Attend weekly sessions when your charge cannot and share the experience with them
- Attend liturgical rites, retreats, rehearsals as needed.
- Maintain personal contact between gatherings.
- Support the person you serve in their spiritual journey.
- Assist the OCIA team in ensuring attendance and participation of the person you serve.
- Model holiness, sacramental living, prayer and Christian way of life.
- Work to draw the person into the life of the parish.
- Love the person you serve as Jesus would.
- Help the parish discern the suitability of the candidate for the sacraments.
- You may sometimes be called to also be a Godparent of the person you serve.