

The MINISTRY of RCIA SPONSORS

RCIA sponsors represent the Catholic Church as friends and companions in faith.

A number of people are ready to begin the RCIA journey. They need sponsors!

St. Thomas More Catholic Community needs Sponsors for the people who are on the journey to becoming Catholic. Sponsors take the responsibility of becoming a “bridge” between the Church and the person who is moving closer to becoming a member of it. A sponsor represents the Church to a Catechumen (an unbaptized person), or a Candidate for full communion (a person baptized in another Church, but uncatechized in the Catholic faith) on their journey of faith. Sponsors also represent the Catechumens and Candidates to the community, bearing witness to their progress in the faith and their readiness for initiation.

Sponsors offer a welcoming presence and a familiar companionship that assists and encourages the Catechumens or Candidates through the various steps of the RCIA experience. They participate with the persons they are sponsoring in some of the catechetical sessions, and they stand with the person they are sponsoring at the various liturgical rites. Most important, they provide a listening ear, an encouraging heart, and a prayerful presence.

Being an RCIA sponsor is both an opportunity to share your faith with others and an opportunity to deepen your own experience of faith. Sponsors do not have to be “teachers” of the Catholic faith. They do have to be fully-initiated Catholics, (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist), who would like to be a companion to someone who is becoming Catholic.

Please consider prayerfully this invitation to become an RCIA sponsor. I would be glad to discuss more of the details of sponsoring with you by phone or in person.

Contact: Jim Hynes, RCIA coordinator: 919-942-6237 jhynes@stmchapelhill.org

The prerequisites for sponsors are described in the Code of Canon Law (Canon 874). A person who wishes to be a Sponsor must:

1. have received the three Sacraments of Christian Initiation, namely, Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist.
2. be a Catholic in full communion with the Catholic Church.
3. regularly attends Mass on Sundays.
4. be at least 17 years of age
5. not be the father or mother of the candidate

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As a sponsor you represent the Catholic Church on the journey of faith with a catechumen or candidate for full communion. You are the welcoming presence and familiar companionship that assists and encourages the catechumen or candidate through the various steps of the R.C.I.A. experience. Your responsibilities include:

1. Praying for the person you are sponsoring.
2. Participating in a Sponsor Formation session.
3. Participating in the rehearsals for the various liturgical rites, or naming a proxy to represent you.
4. Participating in the rites for the person you are sponsoring, or naming a proxy to represent you.
 - Rites of Acceptance or Welcome
 - Rites of Sending and Election during Lent, (if applicable)
 - Penitential Rite or Scrutinies during Lent, (if applicable)
 - Sacraments of Initiation, as scheduled for the person you sponsor
5. Regularly participating with the person you are sponsoring in the catechetical session that follows the 9:15 a.m. Mass. (This session will normally conclude by 11:30 a.m.)
6. Participating with the person you are sponsoring in occasional catechetical sessions at other times.
7. Participating with the person you are sponsoring in a Retreat prior to the Sacraments of Initiation.
8. Regularly participating with the person you are sponsoring in the mystagogical sessions after the Sacraments of Initiation have been celebrated, if applicable. (When they occur, these sessions will follow or precede one of the Sunday Masses and will continue for no more than 8 weeks.)
9. Throughout the journey, listening to and encouraging the person you are sponsoring, and inviting her/him to join you at parish liturgies, devotions, or events.
10. Participate in the discernment process for the person you are sponsoring.