

# Interview Questions for a Potential Sponsor

**Interviewer:** *This form would be used to assist in discernment with a person who is willing to be a godparent or sponsor, but who is not sufficiently well known to the pastor and initiation leadership. Use the following questions as a guide for a conversation with the potential godparent or sponsor. Use of these questions should be preceded by ensuring that the person being interviewed meets the canonical requirements for this responsibility in the Church (see paragraphs 872-874 and 892-893 of the Code of Canon Law), and has had a chance to become aware of and consider the basic requirements and duties that a parish desires of a godparent or sponsor.*

*The basic requirements include: in good standing sacramentally in the parish, evidence of a converted heart and a love for Jesus and his Church, desire to participate in the Church's mission of evangelization, basic knowledge of the Church's teachings, living in accord with the Church's teachings, desire to continue his/her formation, punctual and flexible, open to new relationships, open to questions, open to being a witness of faith to others, prudent and able to keep confidentiality. If these things are not known about the potential godparent/sponsor, then questions about the above requirements should be included in the interview.*

*The basic duties include: participate in weekly catechumenal gatherings, participate in all relevant liturgical rites, maintain some form of regular personal contact with the person during his/her time in the catechumenal process, continue regular contact especially during the person's first year as a Catholic, maintain periodic personal contact (if chosen as a godparent) with the person throughout your life. If these duties have not already been made known to the potential godparent or sponsor, then they should be discussed as part of the interview. Notes on the conversation should be taken as needed.*

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person being interviewed:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of interviewer:

\_\_\_\_\_

## Questions:

1. Describe your prayer life.
2. What is your previous experience in parish ministries?
3. What experience (formal or informal) have you had specifically in developing communication skills?
4. What is your previous experience with working with individuals in a group setting?
5. What gifts do you believe you have based on the "job description" of a godparent/sponsor?
6. In what areas do you think you would have the most difficulty?
7. It is vital that a godparent or sponsor be willing to share his or her own faith life with the person he or she is serving. Do you have any concerns or questions about the importance of this?
8. What are your employment and family commitments at this time?
9. Are you involved in any other volunteer work at this time?
10. Would you have the time necessary to serve as a godparent or sponsor if asked this year?

**Summary remarks by the interviewer (based on notes):**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Recommendation:**

\_\_\_\_\_

# Sponsor Information

Name (First and Last): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ *Please initial after reading the following paragraph:*

I understand that as a godparent or sponsor I am to live a life in harmony with the nature of this responsibility, meaning, for example, that I regularly attend Mass and receive the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation; and I seek to the best of my understanding of my Catholic faith to be faithful to the teachings of the Church. I attest that I have received the sacrament of Confirmation and that I am at least 16 years old. I also understand that being a godparent or sponsor is a commitment of time. I will attend weekly sessions for catechesis, the celebrations of liturgical rites, and other initiation-related events to the best of my ability. I further understand that being chosen as a godparent or sponsor is a lifetime commitment to be, as I am able, a faithful witness of the Catholic way of life to the individual I am called to serve. If I am not a member of the same parish as the person who I am serving, then I will obtain a Letter of Good Standing from my own parish, attesting to the fact that I attend Mass regularly on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, follow the precepts of the Church, and possess no impediments for serving as a godparent or sponsor.

Full Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (Daytime) \_\_\_\_\_ (Evening/Weekend) \_\_\_\_\_

Cell/Mobile Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Other) \_\_\_\_\_

Place Where You Were Baptized: \_\_\_\_\_

(include church name (or hospital, etc.), locality (town, city, county, etc.), region (state, province, territory, etc.), and country)

Place Where You Were Confirmed: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish Where You Are Currently Registered: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Pastor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## *For Office Use*

Godparent/Sponsor for: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Completed Initial Sponsor Formation by Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If from Another Parish, Letter of Good Standing Received by Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

The Association for Catechumenal Ministry (ACM) grants the original purchaser (parish, local parochial institution, or individual) permission to reproduce and modify this form

# Sample Outline for Sponsor Training:

## 1) Give an Overview of the Initiation Process

*What is Christian initiation process?*

Purpose (conversion of heart to God, turning away from sin, desire for holiness through the Church)

Distinction between catechumens and candidates

Periods and rites of the process

*Why are there godparents/sponsors?*

Representatives of the community

Establish a relationship with the participant

*What do godparents/sponsors do?*

Attend weekly meetings, liturgical rites, and other initiation-related events

Sponsors may or may not become godparents

They are friends (companions on the journey)

They are not catechists

## 2) Discuss Qualities of a Godparent/Sponsor

*Welcoming*

Will I show an inquirer around the parish grounds and introduce them to staff, other parishioners?

*Listening*

Can I listen to another's faith journey?

*Sharing Life and Sharing Faith*

Can I be a friend?

Am I comfortable sharing about my interior life and struggles?

*Faithful to Church Teaching*

Do I support the Church's teachings?

Can I say "I don't understand..." instead of "I've never understood why...?"

*Helpful*

Am I willing to say "I don't know" and try to find an answer?

*Active in the Parish/Community*

Do I participate in some form of outreach?

*A Prayer*

Will I pray for the person I am asked to sponsor?

Will I daily ask God to help me to serve the person to the best of my ability?

*Open to Differences in Participants*

Will I be open to varied types of Catholic spirituality and different ways of living a Catholic life?

Will I be open to gently challenging and seeking to redirect spiritualities that conflict with a Christian understanding of God?

*Able to Trust in God's Plan*

Can I be detached when things go differently than I had hoped?

## 3) Discuss Handing on Catholic Culture

Importance of helping RCIA participants understand and appropriate Catholic culture

Identify "Catholic culture" and "parish culture"

How to share our Catholic/parish culture with others

**4) Explain Conversion**

How conversion is a change in outlook and action

Be aware of signs of conversion; what to look for

Have trainers tell about their own journeys of conversion to the Lord

**5) Discuss How to Model Prayer and Pray with Participants**

Explain the importance of having a prayer life and helping participants learn to pray.

Discuss different prayer styles

- Praying aloud
- Praying with Scripture
- Praying the Mass
- Basic Catholic prayers

Provide information on aids to prayer (e.g., scriptural rosary, Magnificat magazine, etc.)

Require each godparent/sponsor to obtain a faithful intercessor who will agree to pray regularly for their work on behalf of the catechumen or candidate

**6) Encourage Godparents/Sponsors to be Witnesses to Charity**

Explain the importance of helping participants learn to live the Gospel message through acts of charity

How to participate in the corporal works of mercy

How to invite an RCIA participant to do so

**7) Discuss Issues that are Commonly Encountered When Serving as a Godparent/Sponsor**

What if we do not get along as well as hoped?

What if the person has an irregular marriage?

What if the person is not progressing in virtue or desire for the Lord?

What if the person stops attending RCIA sessions or attends very inconsistently?

What if the person is not ready to become Catholic?

Why do I have to attend so many events?

What if I or the person I am assisting is likely to move from the parish (e.g., military transfer)?

## **Diocese of Covington Sponsor Job Description**

<i>Position:</i>	RCIA Sponsor
<i>Accountable to:</i>	RCIA Coordinator (Ultimately accountable to the pastor)
<i>Short-Term Commitment:</i>	Duration of catechumen's/candidate's presence in the RCIA process Weekly RCIA sessions Participation in all relevant liturgical rites Regular personal contact with the catechumen/candidate
<i>Long-Term Commitment:</i>	Regular contact especially during the new Catholic's first year Periodic personal contact thereafter Life (if chosen as godparent or sponsor for the sacraments)

### *Specific Gifts Needed:*

- ✠ Fully initiated and active practicing Catholic
- ✠ Active registered parishioner of our parish, in good standing (parish sponsors)
- ✠ Love for Christ and his Church
- ✠ Basic understanding of the Church's teachings
- ✠ Steadfast commitment to the teachings of the magisterium of the Catholic Church
- ✠ Evidence of a lived faith in one's personal life
- ✠ Mature Christian understanding of the meaning of "servant" and "service"
- ✠ Punctual, flexible, and prepared to make the required commitments
- ✠ Good communication and listening skills
- ✠ Openness to new relationships
- ✠ Prudent and able to keep confidentiality

### *Specific Duties/Responsibilities:*

- ✠ Commit to daily prayer for the person you are serving
- ✠ Become familiar with the stages of the RCIA process
- ✠ Attend weekly RCIA sessions
- ✠ Maintain personal contact with the person you are sponsoring between gatherings
- ✠ Attend RCIA retreats, relevant liturgical rites, and rehearsals as needed
- ✠ Assist RCIA leaders with discernment of a participant's readiness
- ✠ Offer spiritual support throughout the process to the person you are serving
- ✠ Model holiness, sacramental living, Christian charity, and prayer
- ✠ Work to draw the person into the life of the parish (parish sponsors)
- ✠ Answer doctrinal questions as you can; direct the person to catechists as needed
- ✠ Explain as you can liturgical and devotional practices; direct the person to catechists as needed
- ✠ Gently help the person deal with life situations (family problems, forgiveness, etc.) in a Christian way
- ✠ Obtain a faithful intercessor who will agree to pray regularly for your work as a godparent/sponsor
- ✠ Strive to love the person as Jesus would

## **Diocese of Covington Practical Suggestions for RCIA 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)

### **Keep in mind that these are suggestions but not necessarily requirements and not all may be appropriate for every situation:**

- † Above all, pray for the person you are serving as a 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!

### **Lead by the example of your lives. Be a good Catholic. Live the faith.**

“How I wish that when people discovered you are Catholic, they could immediately conclude that you are honest, hardworking, generous, loving, humble, disciplined, prayerful, and generally in love with life.” (Matthew Kelly, Rediscovering Catholicism p. 42)

### **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)*