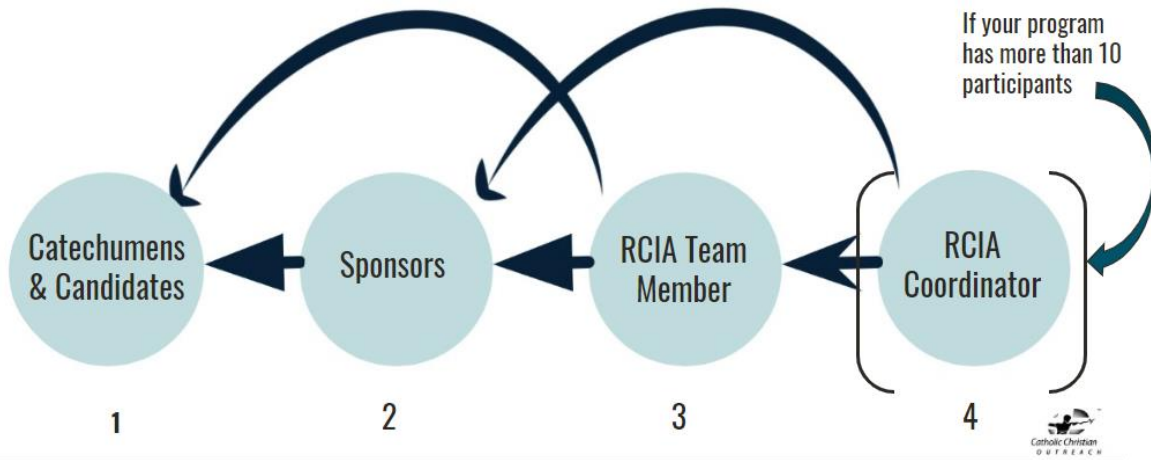


# Intentional Accompaniment



## Principles:

- Our calling as Catholics is to both holiness and mission—we need to be living out both
- In order to live out our missional identity, we must be walking with others intentionally
  - parishioners who are missionary disciples are not seeing an opportunity to do this
- Everyone deserves to be walked with, especially our sponsors who are walking with others in such a special time like conversion to faith!



## Sponsor Recruitment & Training

### Where Should We Be Looking For Our Sponsors:

- Mature Catholics (at least one year past their own initiation)
- Consistent prayer life and relationship with the Lord (and can verbalize what it looks like)
- Good at seeing people and getting to know others deeply
- The "quiet and consistent" faithful that may not be involved in parish ministries yet—it's possible they haven't felt that they were qualified to ever be in a ministry but would do well living out their missional call in a one-on-one environment

### How Should We Approach Them?

- Approach them and invite them into their mission as a missionary disciple
- Inform them that they will be walked with as they walk with a catechumen
- Explain to them that this is their opportunity to get to encounter God in another person
- Present it as you wanting them to get to know another person in faith and make them feel welcome

### What Questions Should We Ask to Vet Them?

- How would you describe your relationship with God?
- What does accompaniment mean to you?
- Describe one of your friendships. What makes it a good friendship?
- Which teaching of the Church is the hardest for you to understand or come to terms with? Why?
- What do you do when you come across something in the Church that you disagree with or don't understand?

### How Can We Implement 4-3-2-1?

- Request that the sponsor connects with the catechumen every single week. Two of these meetings should be an intentional "1 on 1" meetings regarding their faith journey and the content that was covered/prayer practices that were introduced
- After every one of these "1 on 1" meetings, the sponsor should give a sense of where the catechumen is at to either a Team Lead or the Coordinator (dependent on the size of the parish)
- These insights from the sponsor can and should spark meetings between the coordinator and the sponsor to discuss how to best help the catechumen along their faith journey

### How Should We Be Training Sponsors?

- Essentially...how to walk with others intentionally!
  - How to ask survey questions and zoom in where necessary
  - How to teach prayer (inviting others alongside in prayer)
  - How to model the Christian life (what to do when you have a question, what to do when you sin, what to do when you want to encounter Christ, etc)

## The Role of the Sponsor/Godparent

The model of RCIA being suggested requires significant touchpoints between the sponsor and the catechumen as well as regular touchpoints with the sponsor and the RCIA Leader. Sponsors *“are persons that know and assist the candidates and stand as witnesses to the candidates’ moral character, faith, and intention”* (RCIA, 10). The goal of the sponsor is to intentionally accompany the catechumens on the journey of faith from the rite of acceptance through the catechumenate until the rite of election. The sponsor plays a critical role in helping the catechumen unpack and more deeply understand the teachings that are being introduced in the catechumenate. They are also critical in helping the RCIA leader/catechists to discern where the catechumen is at in their journey of faith. Before the Rite of Election, the catechumen may ask the sponsor to become their godparent.

*“Godparents are persons chosen by the candidates on the basis of example, good qualities, and friendship, delegated by the local Christian community, and approved by the priest. It is the responsibility of the 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. Chosen before the candidates’ election, godparents fulfill this office publicly from the day of the rite of election, where they will give testimony to the community about the candidates”* (RCIA, 11).

The godparent will continue to meet with the elect through the completion of their neophyte year and then continue to be an essential role model of the Christian life and what being an authentic disciple of Christ looks like.

### Qualities to Look for in a Sponsor:

- Mature Catholic *at least* one year past their own initiation
- Have a consistent prayer life and can articulate what that looks like
- Passionate about getting to know people deeply

### Requirements of a Sponsor:

- Attending catechesis sessions to be able to support catechumen (discretion)
- Meeting with the catechumen 2/3 x a month to unpack material
- Meeting with the RCIA director/member of the catechist team 1x a month to update on how the catechumen’s understanding of the material is strengthening or where they need more assistance (and/or send a report/google form to RCIA director)
- Assisting with finding ways for the catechumen to get involved in the parish community
- Regularly praying and interceding for the catechumen

### Requirements of a Godparent:

- Meeting with the RCIA director/catechist before the Rite of Election to testify to readiness
- Weekly check-in with the elect during the period of Purification & Enlightenment
- Willingness to accompany and support the elect/neophyte as much as possible for the rest of their life

**Sponsor/Catechumen Bi-Monthly Meeting Structure (40-90 min):**

*Rapport Building*

Catch Up conversation to deepen trust and friendship

*Survey Questions*

What were your thoughts on (x) in the last teaching session?

What struck you about (y) in the last teaching session?

Had you ever thought about (z) in the last teaching session?

What connections were you able to make between (x) and (y)?

What is your understanding of (q) now?

How does this connect/relate to your personal life?

*Zoom/Follow Up Questions*

Can you tell me a little more about that?

Why do you think that?

How does that relate to your previous conception of the Church?

*Strengthening Steps*

It seems to me that God is doing (x) in your life right now. Would you agree?

Let's both dig deeper into that and read about it in the catechism together.

Can I pray with you on this right now?

I think it would be great to set up a time to meet with Father and ask him about this.

I'll check-in with you later this week to see how you're doing in (new practice or change).

*See next page for specific survey question suggestions related to the sessions*

**RCIA Leader/Sponsor Monthly Meeting Structure (30-45 min):**

*Rapport Building*

Catch Up conversation

*Catechumen Comprehension*

What areas of this month's material is the catechumen grasping well?

What evidence do you have of that?

What areas of this month's material is the catechumen struggling with?

What are some ways to strengthen their understanding of the topic?

*Collaboration Check*

What are ways that we can help your catechumen? Let's brainstorm together.

How is your catechumen getting involved in the parish? How is that going?

*Intercessory Prayer*

Let's pray together for your catechumen right now, giving thanks to God for softening their heart and asking for His guidance as to where they will need help next.

**Pre-Rite of Election RCIA Leader/Sponsor/Godparent/Catechumen meeting (20-30 min):**

1. Where are you with your relationship with Christ?
2. What questions about Church teaching do you still have?
3. How have you been living out the faith in your daily life?
4. Do you intend to receive the sacraments of initiation at the nearest Easter Vigil?

## Sample Survey Questions for Sponsors to Ask Catechumens

### **God the Father, Creation, and the Fall**

- What strikes you about God's love for you?
- What does this lesson change about your understanding of sin?
- What does it mean to you to be created in God's image?

### **Divine Revelation and Salvation History**

- Had you given any thought to divine revelation before this lesson?
- What is your understanding of what it means to have a covenant?
- What connections did you notice between the prophet stories?

### **The Paschal Mystery and the Beginning of the Church**

- What connections did you see between this lesson and the previous one?
- Why do you think that Jesus had to die for us? How does that make you feel?
- What is your understanding of love in light of this lesson?

### **The Holy Spirit and the Church**

- How do you see the Holy Spirit? What role does He play in your life?
- How does the Holy Spirit deepen your understanding of God's love for you?
- Why do think we need the Church?

### **Holiness and Judgement**

- What are your initial thoughts about Mary? How do you feel about having a relationship with her as your mother?
- What was your conception of the end of time before this lesson? Did it change?
- What do you think about the Saints? How do you feel about relating to them?

### **The Sacraments of Initiation**

- Have you ever seen a baptism before? If so, what was it like?
- Why do you think confirmation is a separate sacrament from baptism?
- What do you think about what it means for Jesus to be present in the Eucharist?

### **The Sacraments of Healing**

- What struck you about the fact that there are sacraments of healing?
- What is your experience of apologizing in your heart versus out loud to someone?
- Do you find a connection between the Last Rites and your conception of death and resurrection?

---

## Sample Survey Questions for Sponsors to Ask Catechumens (cont.)

### Rightly Ordered Worship of God

- Has your perception of the requirement to go to mass changed after this lesson?
- What is your understanding of divinization and new age spiritual practices?
- Is there a particular way you connect with God? How do you worship Him?

### Rightly Ordered Society and Holy Orders

- Had you ever thought about the priesthood as a role in society before?
- Do you see the Ten Commandments present in our society? Why or why not?
- Which of the Commandments is the easiest for you to understand? The hardest?

### Marriage and Family Ethics

- What is your experience of marriage?
- How do you feel about God being a part of your relationships?
- What do you find unique about the priest's involvement in the sacrament of marriage?

### Respect for Human Life

- What implications does being created in God's image have on how we view people?
- How do you view yourself made in the Image and Likeness of God?
- Which of the topics we talked about was the easiest/hardest for you to understand?
- Why do you think the Church gives particular teachings on all these topics?