

Developing and Caring for Sponsors

A Workshop by Rev. Mark Wilson

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“You have been chosen by this community to serve as companions to these persons. Will you support them by prayer and example and help them to grow in the knowledge and love of God?”

“Welcoming Rite” from the *Episcopal Book of Occasional Services*

“chosen by this community”

- Representatives of the congregation
- Active in the life of the community
- Spiritual depth and maturity
- People who know they too are on a journey
- The community prays for the sponsors
- Sponsors not chosen by the candidates
- Sponsors selected as people having some affinity for the candidate, someone who is older than the candidate, yet the sponsor and candidate have some shared experience.
- It takes prayerful discernment to get the candidates and sponsors matched. Then the sponsor, for example, is approached in this way: “You are the person God wants to be the sponsor for *name*.”

“to serve as companions to these persons”

- Present at sessions and liturgical rites
- Develop relationship
- Keep in contact

“support them by prayer and example and help them to grow in the knowledge and love of God”

- Pray for candidate daily
- Set a good example

Some roles a sponsor assumes (from Lester Ruth’s *Accompanying the Journey: A Handbook for Sponsors*)

- The sponsor as bridge
- The sponsor as tour guide
- The sponsor as host

- The sponsor as language tutor
- The sponsor as exemplar
- The sponsor as mentor
- The sponsor as godparent
- The sponsor as witness

Expectations

- It is expected that the paired candidate and sponsor will worship at the same service time.
- See “Commitment of Sponsors” handout which follows.

Training

- Training is less important as sponsors gain experience.
- Candidates need to know what is expected of sponsors.

Commitment of Sponsors

Saint George's Catechumenal Process

Persons serving as sponsors of candidates for Baptism, Confirmation, Reception, or Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows are asked to make the following commitments:

1. Read Peter Ball's *Adult Believing* as well as Marjorie Thompson's *Soul Feast*.
2. Pray daily for the candidate's continued growth in the knowledge and love of the Lord.
3. Pray for personal direction as you accompany the candidate in his/her faith journey.
4. Develop a spiritual friendship with the candidate, offering guidance and support.
5. Participate with the candidate in the appropriate liturgical rites, thereby signifying your commitment to the candidate and your intention to support him/her by prayer and example.
6. Contact the candidate weekly; meet privately at least biweekly.
7. Attend sessions with the candidate as scheduled, beginning with Stage Two of the catechumenal process.
8. Stay in touch with the candidate for at least one year following Baptism, Confirmation, Reception, or Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows.

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