

The **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults** is the process through which persons inquire into and determine if they are called to live out their faith life as a member of the Roman Catholic Community.

Sponsors are a vital part of the RCIA process. Each candidate and catechumen has a parishioner who walks the faith journey of the RCIA with him or her. Sponsors strengthen the RCIA and the parish community by becoming the personal connection for our candidates and catechumens to the larger church.

Sponsors are active, practicing Catholic adults who are members of St. Matthew Church. They are prayerful people who participate in the sacraments and in the liturgical life of the parish. Sponsors are representatives of the Catholic community. They are companions, listeners, and mentors. Sponsors are *not* teachers or catechists and there is no requirement to “know the answers.” The most important role of sponsors is to be there – to attend RCIA sessions with the candidates and to participate in the Rites with them. Often, sponsors are learning right along with the candidates. Great sponsors are aware of their own needs for faith growth and development.

Former sponsors have these comments to share:

Sponsoring is a great experience! Everyone has so much to share that there is no way the sponsors cannot learn something new about our faith, our community, ourselves.

- Denise Arie

I felt completely inadequate to be a sponsor. But, after experiencing it twice now, I realize that knowledge is not as important as having a heart to listen, share and love God. What a blessing it has been for me to be a part of another's faith journey and to usher them personally into our wonderful church community.

- Beth Deibel

Informative, inspiring, up-to-date, with exciting dialogues from your Catholic neighbors! Our priests and parish staff plus visiting lecturers give you interesting insights into the Church liturgy. RCIA is a gift of our Church!

- Ed Danison

Going through the RCIA sponsor process as a cradle Catholic made me realize all the wonderful teachings and traditions of the church that I had forgotten. It was a great way to renew my faith while becoming more involved in the church.

- Mary Gilliland

Sponsorship in RCIA enables you to meet people throughout the parish and to feel that you worship in a faith community with friends instead of strangers. Because you examine many aspects of your core beliefs with others, you form friendships that are enduring and relevant.

- Monica Rozzell

My experiences as a sponsor have been among other things: rewarding, heartwarming, educational, and fulfilling. It is so refreshing to see people wanting to become a part of what we are. What better way to reinforce our beliefs and our faith than to have others want to join us on our journey!

- Bobbie Meyers

I can honestly say that being an RCIA sponsor made me a better Catholic, and I am sure that I got more out of being a sponsor than I was able to share with my candidate. The sessions were informative, helpful, enlightening and very well presented. The rites were very touching and meaningful to both the candidates and their sponsors.

- Molly Jablonski

We really weren't looking for this experience but the Spirit seemed to have other ideas. We were stressed about the extra time it would take away from our family and unsure if we could fit it into our already busy schedules. Miraculously, the only day that was free on our calendars was RCIA night. Our children were able to see to their own needs and really pitched in to make this work. It was wonderful watching "our couple" discover and ask questions about the Catholic faith. It made us want to explore our faith even more.

- Jeff and Kim Balzano

It was nice to see that people were excited about becoming Catholic. And that they chose it on their own for themselves. I grew more in my faith by being a sponsor. I would do it again in a heartbeat.

- Cathy Rose



RCIA is open to any adult who wishes to learn more about the Catholic faith, including those who want to become members of the Catholic Church. Typically, groups consist of people who are unbaptized and want to become initiated into the Church, (called catechumens), those who were baptized into other Christian faiths and want to become Catholic, (called candidates), and those were baptized Catholic, but did not

receive the other sacraments of initiation. Also welcome are those who are curious about what Catholics believe and wish to attend for informational purposes only. All are welcome!

At St. Matthew Church, the structured portion of the RCIA process begins in the fall of each year and concludes with Pentecost in late spring. A sponsor walks with each candidate on this portion of the RCIA journey. After Pentecost, the newly initiated meet for one year on a quarterly basis to delve further into the Easter mysteries. Sponsors commit to Tuesday evenings from 7:00pm to 9:00pm and five Sunday mornings at the 10 o'clock mass between October and Easter. From Easter to Pentecost, sponsors commit to one hour sessions on Sunday mornings, between the 10 o'clock and the Noon masses. Creative sponsoring options, such as sharing the commitment with one other sponsor, are possible. Please prayerfully consider this rewarding ministry. Free childcare is available during Tuesday evening RCIA sessions in the church nurseries for children of all ages.

To volunteer, or for more information,
contact Karen Burford at
471-0212 x 1108 or
karen@stmatthew.net.



St. Matthew the Apostle Church

One parish, One family, One Journey

Becoming an RCIA Sponsor
