

Qualifications of Sponsors

- Be designated by the candidate, parents, guardians, or the pastor.
- Have the qualifications and intention of performing the role of sponsor.
- Be at least 16 years old.
- Be a fully initiated Catholic (received Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist).
- Lead a life in harmony with the faith and role of a sponsor (i.e., be a member of a parish, attend Mass on Sundays and holy days, etc).
- Not be bound by a canonical penalty. (Married outside of the Catholic Church is most common.)
- Not be the father or mother of the one to receive the sacrament(s).

Number of Sponsors

1. Only one sponsor is required for Baptism.
2. If two sponsors are chosen, one must be male and the other female.
3. The second sponsor may be a Christian witness (i.e., a non-Catholic Christian may fulfill this role).
*In the event that neither the candidate nor the parents or guardians select a sponsor, pastors may appoint a member of the parish community to fill the role of sponsor. People are often concerned that they cannot find a suitable sponsor for a variety of reasons (e.g., unavailability of family members, being new to the area or unfamiliar with parishioners, etc.). In such cases, pastors have the responsibility of assisting parents and candidates in the selection of a parishioner to be a sponsor.

Code of Canon Law

The Code of Canon Law, specifically Canons 873, 874, 892, 893 and 894, requires the following:

- The sponsor must be chosen by the one to be baptized or confirmed; by the parents or guardians of the one to be baptized or confirmed; or even by the pastor.
- The sponsor must be capable of being the sponsor (i.e., have the use of reason) and must intend to fulfill the obligations of being a sponsor.
- The sponsor must be a fully initiated member of the Catholic Church – the sponsor must be baptized and confirmed and the sponsor must have already received the Sacrament of Eucharist.
- The sponsor must live a life in keeping with the laws of the Catholic Church, leading a life of faith. The sponsor must observe the precepts of the church. The sponsor must be a practicing Catholic and must attend Mass every Sunday and on holy days of obligation. If married, the sponsor must be in a valid marriage.
- The sponsor must not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared.
- The sponsor must be at least 16 years old.
- The sponsor cannot be the mother or the father of the one to receive the sacrament. The church highly encourages that a baptismal sponsor also act as a confirmation sponsor.
- Although the Latin Code of Canon Law does not prohibit a spouse to be a sponsor for his or her spouse, the practice is not encouraged.
- There is to be only one male sponsor or one female sponsor or one of each.