



Easter Vigil Instructions for Sponsors and Team

Sponsors:

Prepare your Candidate or Elect for the Easter Vigil. Anxiety about making mistakes in this most important evening is very typical. Here are tips to help them enjoy it more fully.

1. Discuss the various parts of the Easter Vigil, including what they will be saying in response to the priest's cues, but don't go into lots of details. Too much detail not only increases stress (they worry that they'll forget something important), but it also takes away from the experience. Let the evening surprise them!
2. Assure them that you have all the facts and will guide them throughout the ceremonies.
3. Emphasize that it's necessary to set aside the day of the Vigil for quiet reflection. This is not the day for last minute Easter shopping or chores. If they need to prepare their house for guests, help them get it done before Saturday.
4. Most sponsors give a gift to their Candidates/Elect before or after the Vigil Mass. Remember to set aside time for yourself to prayerfully identify what kind of gift would be meaningful.
5. Plan to attend the Mystagogical classes with your Neophyte in order to help him/her identify their giftedness and calling to become active in parish ministry. And be sure to stay involved in their life after the RCIA program ends. Invite them to lunch or dinner and to parish events. Send them a birthday card, anniversary card (especially if their marriage is being blessed by the Church in conjunction with their initiation into the Church), etc.

Additional Information:

Easter Vigil Instructions for RCIA Sponsors and Team

1. **Arrive *one hour early*** to help the Elect and Candidates get their robes and name tags. (Note: The Elect will have name tags that will get wet. Their Confirmation name tags won't be given to them until after they're baptized.) Get these in Room # _____.
2. Everyone participating (and their families) need get their seat reservations early.
3. Direct Candidates only (not the Elect) to pick up an unlit candle, which will be used during the Service of Light. The Elect will receive their candles from their godparents after their baptisms.
4. Remind the Elect and Candidates to go outside to stand near the pit or brazier where the bonfire will be lit, for the Service of Light, to get an unblocked view of what will happen there.
5. **The Service of Light** begins at __:__ pm. As it comes to a close, guide the Elect and Candidates to join the procession into the church. At the head of the procession is the incense, followed by the Easter candle, followed by everyone else.
6. **Baptisms** will take place after the Liturgy of the Word.
 - The priest will call the Elect to water. Godparents will present them to the priest, placing a hand on their shoulder. Babies who will be baptized are carried by their parents or godparents.
 - The RCIA Director will introduce each of the elect to the priest: one or two sentences about their journeys or their reasons for becoming Catholic.
 - When each Elect's name is called, a team member and godparent assists them in entering the baptismal pool.
 - Another team member will assist the person out of the water after the baptism and hand them a towel. Make sure no one rushes and slips from their wetness.
 - Godparents will lead them to the changing room (Room #____) and will help children dry off. Godparents will also help them don their white robes and Confirmation name tags. This all needs to be done quickly.
 - Team members should keep things moving (re: changing clothes) and give a candle to the godparents, who will then present the candle to their Elect (now called a Confirmand), light it, and get everyone ready to re-enter the church.
7. After all baptisms have been completed, the Candidates will make their Profession of Faith before the congregation. When they finish, the newly baptized will process to the front of church (the sanctuary).
8. The priest will sprinkle the congregation with holy water. All the Confirmandi (Candidates and Elect) will follow the priest with lit candles.
9. The Confirmandi return to the front (sanctuary) and spread out, facing the tabernacle. Sponsors/godparents are to stand behind them; Confirmation now begins.
10. After Confirmation, the Confirmandi are now called Neophytes.
11. Next, the Prayers of the Faithful are read, then the offertory starts. A few Neophytes should carry the bread and wine to the priest.
12. After Mass, go to the reception to congratulate all the Neophytes. The team helps with refreshments and clean up.