

Canadian Anglican Cursillo

SPONSORING AND SPONSORSHIP



This guideline serves to assist in understanding sponsoring and sponsorship.

Cursillo is one of a number of renewal movements active in the ministry of the Church. Cursillo seeks to change environments, one at a time, by finding, developing, and equipping leaders in those places where we live, work, worship, and socialize. Cursillo seeks to equip these leaders where they are, not to transplant them into some other environments. To change environments means to make them Christ-centred, to bring Christ into them.

Cursillo is a movement with a method – a method of living a life in Christ – a method of supporting and encouraging each other through prayer, and in planned individual and joint action in order to change the world for Christ.

It is essential to remember that Cursillo is a movement whose primary foundation is the grace of God. Cursillo's most characteristic mark is "Palanca," that is, prayer, sacrifice, and works of mercy.

Sponsorship of a candidate is one of the most important contributions a Cursillista can make to the movement. It comes with great joy but carries serious responsibilities. In order to be an effective disciple of Christ and bring candidates into the Cursillo Movement who will continue to spread the Good News on earth, it is vital to the movement that the Authentic Method is understood. *"The purpose (or goal) of the movement is to make Christian Community possible in the neighborhoods, parishes, work situations and other places where people live the greater part of their lives. It makes possible for anyone in the world to live a Christian life in a natural way."* (Leaders Manual Page 13) In the Cursillo movement, we must choose people after due thought and prayer have been given to the key environments in which they live. Potential candidates should be well known by the sponsor and should not be isolated in their environments. Sponsoring is preceded by the process of selecting environments which have potential for changing society, discovering key persons or leaders within those environments, and preparing those people for whom the Cursillo Movement may be of assistance in their daily Christian lives.

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The Cursillo Movement is focused to help each of us fulfill our baptismal responsibilities: To go forth, as apostles and proclaim the Gospel. Cursillista cannot and must not sit passively by and hope the world will come to know Christ. Each one must make a continuous effort to tell the world about Christ. Knowing and understanding the purpose of Cursillo will enable one to more fully understand the purpose of sponsoring candidates.

To be a more effective part of the church in our dioceses, each Cursillo movement needs an overall plan for its work – a pastoral plan linked to the pastoral plan of the diocese. This plan should identify key environments and persons in them. Within this context there are six basic steps.

1. Selection of Environments

Some questions to ask here are: What potential does a given environment have to create change in society or in the community? What Christian leaders are already in those environments, or can influence them through people they know? Where are Christian leaders needed? Where are the gaps?

2. Discovery of potential candidates in those environments

Sponsorship is not and should not be done haphazardly; it is not merely to fill seats on a weekend. It should be a deliberate act to bring Jesus Christ into the world. Who are these potential candidates? They are men and women who love Christ, are maturing in their Christian lives, and influence their environments. They are interested in spiritual growth and open to the challenge of the Cursillo method. They have stable personalities, and are baptized. For married couples, it is desirable that both partners attend a Cursillo weekend.

Some people should probably not become involved at particular times in their lives. These include those who do not match the descriptions above. Others who should wait to become involved are those who have serious health or addiction problems, who have recently gone through a crisis that would prevent them from concentrating on the message of the weekend, or do not regard themselves as Christian believers.

Great care is needed in sponsoring. Some Cursillistas tend to believe that Cursillo is the answer for everyone. While it is true that everyone has the right to come to a full Christian life, Cursillo may not be the best means for every person. The Cursillo method has specific demands and requires concrete conditions for its effectiveness. It is not necessary or desirable for every Christian to follow the same path.

Discernment in choosing a suitable candidate for Cursillo may take time.

In the search for potential candidates, we are admonished: “Before speaking to a person about God, we should speak to God about that person”. It is important that those who come into the movement come in

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with their eyes open to the social environments surrounding them. Otherwise, they may seek only solutions to their personal needs. Their parish priest should be consulted. We must remember not to use Cursillo to add individuals to the movement, but rather to transform environments. The most appropriate persons are those who are able to understand the truth of the Gospel, wish to do so, and are able to help others understand it.

3. Preparing potential candidates

Your role as a sponsor is to ensure the candidate will become an active participant in Group Reunions and Ultreya. It begins with prayer to the Holy Spirit for guidance, for perseverance, for the ability to recognize opportunities and to respond to them for the right reasons. Once a possible candidate is identified, he or she should be approached through personal contact. **The sponsor should explain the purpose and process of the entire method**, including the weekend, the nature and importance of the Fourth Day, and support available in the Fourth Day through Group Reunions and Ultreya.

Sponsors should be in permanent group reunions and attending Ultreya. It is fitting for sponsors to consider inviting potential candidates to join their group reunion and attend Ultreyas before making a weekend. Of greatest importance is the prospective candidate's understanding of the purpose and method of the Cursillo movement.

A potential candidate must be told:

- About the talks and about the dynamics of the weekend. There are no secrets.
- Costs of the weekend. (Funds should be found if a potential candidate cannot afford the weekend.)

It is most important to explain fully the challenge of the Fourth Day. Remember, you invite the person to a Fourth Day experience, rather than a weekend experience!

4. Sponsor's role during the weekend

The sponsor must:

- Pray, Pray and Pray
- Arrange Palanca, which is prayer and sacrifice. Support letters as indicators of that prayer and sacrifice may be included.
- Arrange to take the participant to the weekend site.
- Attend the closing, and bring the spouse if the spouse has already made a weekend.
- Take the candidate (and family) home again.
- Contact the candidate the day following the Cursillo.

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5. Sponsor's role in the Fourth Day

Remember the whole point of Cursillo is the Fourth Day. There is a saying in Cursillo: *“Once a sponsor, always a sponsor!”* Sponsorship lasts longer than the weekend. A commitment of one year is encouraged.

The sponsor must:

- Meet with your candidate and talk to them about the weekend experience.
- Help the new Cursillista to become part of a Group Reunion even if it means that the sponsor forms a Group Reunion.
- Accompany the new Cursillista to the welcome Ultreya.
- Accompany the new person to Ultreyas and Servant Community, offering transportation if needed.
- Support the new Cursillista in the Fourth Day with continued prayer.

6. Diocesan Secretariat Role in Sponsorship

There are a number of ways the local Secretariat and Cursillo community can support and guide sponsors in choosing potential candidates.

- Provide sponsorship workshops through Servant Community or Day of Deeper Understanding, and require attendance prior to sponsoring a candidate.
- Provide written guidelines or checklists for sponsors, outlining their sponsorship responsibilities.
- Provide sponsorship forms which are completed by the sponsor, and accompany the candidate's application. These forms can assist the sponsor in the discernment process of a potential candidate.

Sponsors can be supported in their role by:

- Being commissioned prior to the weekend, when the Cursillo community can then commit to support sponsors through ongoing prayer and sacrifice.
- Having sign-up sheets available at Ultreya to match up those new Cursillistas seeking a permanent Group Reunion, with groups available for new members.

It is vital for us to recognize how important sponsorship is for the health of the Cursillo Movement. It is our task and calling to bring together into the Cursillo Movement those Christian leaders who have the capacity to Christianize their environments. You should be prepared to walk with your candidate. Your candidate needs to see Christ working within your life each and every day. It is not enough to send someone on the Cursillo weekend and expect the team to work miracles. They need as much attention after the weekend that they received during the weekend, possibly even more. As a sponsor this is the role you agreed to fill.

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In the Gospel of St. John 15:16 we read, “You did not choose me, but I chose you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last,” and in Acts 1:8 we are assured. “You will receive power... and you will be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth.”

Further References

Lower Your Nets

The Cursillo Movement’s Leaders’ Manual

The Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement

National Episcopal Cursillo Library - Sponsorship