

# Cum Christo Sponsorship



**Cum Christo brings Christians together in an ecumenical environment to renew their relationship with Jesus Christ and to motivate them to grow as disciples of Jesus in their churches, their everyday life and other places where God leads them.**

## Introduction

The mission of Cum Christo is *“to bring Christians together in an ecumenical environment that renews their relationship with Jesus Christ and motivates them to grow as disciples of Jesus in their churches, their everyday life and other places where God leads them.”*

Bringing Christians from the three branches of Christianity (Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant) to experience the gift of a Cum Christo weekend is the job of “sponsors.” People attend Cum Christo weekends for many reasons, but the human delivery agent is the candidate’s sponsor. So, being the sponsor for a weekend candidate, and being an effective sponsor, is of paramount importance to achieving the mission of Cum Christo.

In the song “De Colores” that we learned on our Cum Christo weekend, the words “...joyfully we will bring to our Savior a harvest of souls”...remind us of the awesome responsibility to which we are being called. Yes, Christ is counting on Cursillistas to bring him a harvest of souls. Yes, Christ is counting on Cursillistas to be His disciples and bring others to a closer relationship with Him. Introducing Christian friends, family, acquaintances and co-workers to Cum Christo and seeking God’s guidance in the “sponsorship process” are very special opportunities that Cursillistas have to help grow disciples of Jesus and to support the Cum Christo movement.

This pamphlet provides the essential information to motivate a Cursillista to adopt sponsorship as a regular part of their “life in God’s grace.” And it provides the guidance needed to be an effective sponsor of a candidate. Being an effective sponsor is a significant commitment, and it is also a special opportunity to be God’s agent in helping a Christian friend renew their relationship with Jesus and grow as a disciple----however and wherever God leads them.

## **Guidelines for Candidates for Cum** **Christo Weekends**

*Candidates for Cum Christo weekends should meet the following eligibility guidelines:*

- *Be at least 21 years old. Young adults between the ages of 18 and 21 may attend a weekend if an age-appropriate “short course in Christian living” is not available for them within about 50 miles of their home.*
- *Be baptized Christians. Attending a church, or desiring to grow as a Christian.*
- *Be affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church, Orthodox Church, or a Protestant church which accepts the basic tenants of the Nicene Creed (or substitute Apostles’ Creed), the Bible as the inspired Word of God and the fullness of the Holy Trinity. Affiliation includes membership, or attending worship services, or participating in ministry.*
- *Be ready, in the Sponsor’s judgment, to receive the Cum Christo experience.*
- *Be in such physical, mental and spiritual health as to permit the person to participate fully and constructively in a weekend.*
- *Reside within about 100 miles of Columbus*

## **Additional Guidelines for Sponsoring Married Persons**

*Cum Christo encourages both spouses in a marriage to attend a Cum Christo Weekend, so they can share the benefits of the weekend and enjoy together their opportunities to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ in their family, church and other shared environments.*

*In October, 2005, the Secretariat approved new guidelines for sponsoring married persons on a Cum Christo weekend. The former policy of generally requiring a husband to make a weekend before the wife could attend a weekend is superseded by these new guidelines.*

### **Ideal Way**

*The ideal way for a Cursillista to approach a married person about considering Cum Christo is to arrange a meeting with both spouses. Both spouses would thereby have the opportunity to learn about Cum Christo first-hand and in each other's company. Each spouse would have the opportunity to get questions answered by the experienced Cursillista and to have their spouse ask his/her own questions and to hear the answers. During this meeting the spouses would be invited to pray to discern whether God is leading them to attend a Cum Christo Weekend. The sponsor would encourage the spouses to communicate with each other about this opportunity to attend a weekend and then give their decisions to the Cursillista who has offered to be their sponsor. Neither spouse might attend. Both might commit to attend. Or one spouse might decide to attend soon and the other spouse might not make a commitment about Cum Christo.*

### **Alternative Way**

*Frequently, however, a Cursillista has a close relationship with one spouse in a marriage but not the other. And sometimes it is difficult or impractical to follow the "ideal way" described above. In these situations, it is also acceptable for a Cursillista to meet personally with the spouse that he/she knows well, educate them about Cum Christo and invite him/her to consider and pray about attending a Cum Christo weekend.*

*The Cursillista would urge the prospective candidate to share all information about Cum Christo with his/her spouse and to collaboratively reach a decision about having the “prospective candidate” attend a Cum Christo Weekend. Experience shows that if one spouse attends fourth day weekends like Cum Christo, the other spouse frequently attends a weekend in the next several years. So by one spouse attending a Cum Christo Weekend, frequently the other spouse attends later.*

## **Whom to Sponsor**

Sponsoring another person for a Cum Christo weekend is a God-given opportunity for a Cursillista to share the gift of a weekend with a candidate. However, a sponsor should not lead a candidate into envisioning that the candidate will have the same weekend experience that the sponsor had on his/her original weekend. Accept the reality that different people will gain different insights and outcomes from a weekend. Sponsorship is one of the most important ministries in the Cum Christo community. It is an act of Christian love that should be carried out with prayer, commitment and following through with all the responsibilities.

The strength of the Cum Christo community depends heavily on our recruiting practices for weekend candidates and carrying out sponsorship activities. Sponsoring appropriate candidates is a great act of *palanca* for Cum Christo, for the person who will attend a weekend and for the person’s home church

Sponsorship should start with prayer, seeking God’s leading in discerning people who would benefit from attending a weekend. Through prayer, put yourself in a position to let God work through you. Keep an ongoing list of people (see the last page of this pamphlet) who come to your mind as possible candidates for a Cum Christo weekend. Pray regularly over these individuals and ask God

to reveal to you whether a particular person ought to be invited to a weekend. Keep praying and adding to your list of prospective weekend participants, and then talk to prospects about the weekend when you get a nudge from the Lord. Timing can be an important issue in the receptivity of a potential candidate to attending a weekend. Some people on your list will attend a Cum Christo weekend very soon. Others may attend in 2, 3, 4, or 5 years. Some of them will never attend, either because you discern that they should not be invited or they are invited by you and they decline to attend. Trusting God's leading and listening empathetically to responses from prospective candidates is key to escorting the right people to a weekend in God's timing and their timing--- with respect to what else is going on in a prospect's life.

Cum Christo is designed to motivate and coach church leaders, potential leaders and ordinary church ministry participants/helpers to grow in their relationship with Jesus and to grow as Christian leaders and disciples of Jesus in their church and their other environments. God is glorified in Cum Christo when weekend "graduates" move to a higher level of commitment to their relationship with Jesus and when they expand their discipleship activities and become more effective leaders in their church and other environments.

Cum Christo is not an evangelization ministry for non-Christians. It is not just a program to re-educate people about Christianity or to give them an introduction to the Christian life. If someone is not seeking to grow in their relationship with Jesus, Cum Christo is not for them.

Cum Christo operates in an "ecumenical environment," focusing on the basics of the Christian faith that are held in common by Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches. A key factor in considering someone for a weekend is the comfort level of the prospective candidate with the content of the weekend. Such discomfort might extend to their beliefs about God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit that differ from the traditional belief of the Holy Trinity. Such discomfort might arise from Cum Christo not including or allowing in a

weekend a particular practice that is common in the prospect's home church (e.g. speaking/praying in tongues). Cum Christo is designed to foster Christian community; it is not a place for theological or religious debate. Persons who challenge basic tenets of the Christian faith could become disruptive or withdraw from participation in a weekend. In praying about and discerning prospective weekend participants, consider other ministries for them if they are not ready or appropriate for an upcoming Cum Christo weekend. Help them grow in the Christian faith ---even if Cum Christo is not yet ready to receive them. Beware of persons who are poor listeners and who blatantly espouse certain practices of their church as "right" or "the only way." Such persons could be disruptive on a weekend and counter to Cum Christo's goal of bringing the body of Christ together and building Christian community.

Evaluate the emotional stability, moral condition, and physical health of prospective weekend candidates; factor these issues into the discernment of whether a person is ready and able to participate effectively and completely in the weekend experience. A person who is experiencing, or has recently experienced, a tragic or traumatic event such as a fractured marriage, death of a loved one, job loss, serious illness or treatment for chemical dependence should not attend a weekend until they are healed. Share God's love with such persons and guide them to the help they need to become whole and stable persons in Christ. Then when they have recovered from their problem issue(s), consider and pray about inviting them to make a Cum Christo weekend.

## Responsibilities and Activities of a Sponsor

A sponsor has many responsibilities that extend over a long period of time. Sponsorship starts with praying over a list of prospective weekend candidates. The job of a sponsor gets pretty extensive during a weekend, and there are important activities extending to a year after the weekend.

### Before the Weekend

1. **Share how Cum Christo has impacted your life.** Very early in communications with a prospect, share with them briefly how your faith-walk and daily life have been affected by participation in Cum Christo. Your prospect may not gain the same benefits as you by attending a weekend and following through with grouping. But, your witness will build confidence that the Cum Christo experience can, with God's help, really accomplish the Cum Christo mission in the prospect's life.
2. **Find out where the prospect is in his/her Christian faith walk.** This is easy conversation. Inquire about their relationship with God and Jesus, worship service attendance, Bible study, and service in their church or community. Be interested in where your prospect is, so you can help the person understand how a Cum Christo weekend might be a good "gift" for them. Ask the person what they are considering as a possible "next step" in their growth as a disciple of Jesus.
3. **Ask the prospect what they would like to know about a Cum Christo weekend and the follow-up activities.** It is important to first find out what a prospect desires to know about Cum Christo and to listen empathetically. Respond to his/her questions first, and then share additional information that they are entitled to know.



4. **Explain other important features of a Cum Christo weekend and grouping that haven't been covered so far in your conversations. Present the Mission and Method of Cum Christo, so the prospect sees the "big picture" of what Cum Christo is about.**
  - Explain the content and format of the weekend (i.e. talks, discussions, posters, chapel).
  - Explain the weekend schedule, sleeping arrangements and eating arrangements. Explain that special diets can be accommodated if a candidate specifies what is needed or what must be avoided.
  - Explain the cloistered environment.
  - Explain the post-weekend activities.
  - Explain the separate participation in Communion and the Eucharist.
5. **When the prospect says that he/she will either seriously consider attending a weekend or commits to attending an upcoming weekend, give him/her an "application."** Go through the application with the prospective candidate, providing explanations, as necessary, for the information and signatures that are requested. Complete the sponsor's section of the application. Application can be downloaded from [www.cumchristo.org](http://www.cumchristo.org).
6. **Clean the Cum Christo Center with other sponsors.** On the Monday evening before a weekend, all sponsors are expected to spend an hour or two cleaning the Cum Christo Center. In the event that a sponsor can't do this, a replacement person should be recruited to do some cleaning.

## **During the Weekend**

1. **Do palanca for your candidate and write a “palanca note” to him/her.** This personal palanca must be delivered to the Center by no later than Friday, but it is recommended that it be delivered on Thursday evening. Write “from sponsor” on the outside of the envelope.
2. **Do general palanca for the weekend.** This is palanca that is for the entire group that is read by the rector in the rollo room during the weekend. General palanca should be labeled as “General Palanca” on the outside, and is generally addressed as “Dear Babe Chicks.”
3. **Bring your candidate to the Center Thursday evening.** If a sponsor is unable to do this, secure a substitute to deliver the candidate(s) on time. Take your candidate on a tour of the center. Help them get their name badge and find their bed in the dorm. Then, drop them off at the lounge where team members will welcome him/her.
4. **Keep in touch with the candidate’s family over the weekend.** Make sure a family member has the phone number for the Center in case there is an emergency need to contact the candidate. Maybe there is something that a sponsor could help the family with during the weekend (great palanca).
5. **Come to the “community serenade.”**
6. **Pray frequently for your candidate during the course of the weekend.** And pray for the other candidates and the weekend team.
7. **Come to the weekend closing Sunday evening.**

## **After the Weekend**

- 1. A sponsor should attend the next three Wednesday evening Ultreyas with your candidate(s).** The weekend participants will get strong encouragement at the close of the weekend to come to Ultreyas immediately following their weekend to enjoy the fellowship with the Cum Christo community, to practice grouping and to find a group to join or start a group with some of the weekend “graduates.”
- 2. Help your candidate find a group or start their own group.**
- 3. Make connections periodically with the person(s) you have sponsored for a year after their weekend.** Babe chicks can benefit greatly by being mentored by their sponsor after a weekend: A) to hold them accountable, B) for getting into a Cum Christo group and C) by fellowship with an experienced Cursillista.
- 4. Send a letter to the pastor or priest who endorsed the candidate for the weekend.** Inform the appropriate clergy person in the babe chick’s church that they successfully completed the weekend. Ask the clergy person to contact the babe chick and invite him/her to become involved in a ministry of the church that is open and fits the interests of the babe chick. This letter and the hoped-for action by the clergy person will help the babe chick grow as a disciple in his/her church. And, it will let the clergy person know that Cum Christo is doing something to support the church and the babe chick.
- 5. Coach your weekend “graduate” in the process of sponsoring people for a weekend.** Weekend “graduates” are eligible to sponsor candidates for the very next weekend. A wife could sponsor her husband. A husband could sponsor his wife. There is no waiting period or formal training program to qualify as a sponsor. Just pray about the sponsorship process and adhere to these Sponsorship Guidelines.

## **Other Information about Sponsorship**

A maximum of 4 people from any one church can attend a particular weekend. So if there are more candidates applying to attend a given weekend, some will be deferred to the following weekend.

Some Cursillistas who regularly encourage prospective candidates to submit applications for weekends may find themselves with 2 or 3 candidates, for which they are the listed sponsor, attending a particular weekend. It is recommended that a Cursillista serve as sponsor to no more than two candidates on a weekend, because of the activities that are required for a sponsor. It may be advisable to find another person that a candidate knows to serve as a “replacement sponsor” if a Cursillista is faced with the blessing of having more than two candidates accepted for a particular weekend.

Cursillistas are not allowed work on a kitchen team during a weekend if they are sponsoring a candidate on that weekend. This practice is designed to keep weekend candidates in a somewhat cloistered environment ---away from family and special friends such as a candidate’s sponsor.

Team members on a weekend are allowed to sponsor candidates on the same weekend where the Cursillista is serving on the team. But, such team members are encouraged to seek another Cursillista to be the official sponsor for their prospective candidate in order that the weekend relationship is that of team member and weekend participant---rather than a sponsor-candidate relationship.

**Prospective Participants in a Cum  
Christo Weekend Whom I am Praying  
About Inviting to Attend**

(Visit [www.cumchristo.org](http://www.cumchristo.org) to download weekend application)

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**The Cum Christo Method**

Cum Christo emerged from Catholic Cursillo and has adopted many practices from this heritage. Cum Christo brings adults from Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches together for a 3-day “workshop in Christian living.” Participants are urged to grow as disciples of Jesus by gathering weekly in small “Group Reunions” to share their relationship with Jesus, their Christian study and Christian action. Prayer support for each other and accountability also are part of these Group Reunions. The entire Cum Christo community is invited to attend regular weekly gatherings to gain encouragement, reconnect, practice Group Reunion, worship and pray and share Christian fellowship. Cum Christo guides participants to live as Jesus’ disciples in their daily life and to be ministry participants and leaders in their church and in the other environments where God leads them.