

The Sponsor

The Sponsor must be an Orthodox Christian in good standing with the Church. The following persons can not be Sponsors:

- An Orthodox Christian who does not belong to a parish;
- An Orthodox Christian under twelve years of age;
- An Orthodox Christian who belongs to a parish not in Communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese;
- A married Orthodox Christian who has not been married in the Orthodox Church;
- Any one who has been excommunicated or anathematized from the Orthodox Church;
- An Orthodox Deacon, Priest, or Bishop.

Non-Orthodox persons may, however, be members of the “wedding party”.

Normally there is only one sponsor.

The Sponsor should be sufficiently mature enough to understand the responsibilities he/she is undertaking. For this reason he or she should normally be over twelve years of age.

Because a clergyman has a pre-existent and superior spiritual relationship to the people of God, it is not appropriate for a Deacon, Priest, or Bishop to be a sponsor. As physical relationships are not duplicated, neither should spiritual relationships be duplicated.

The Sponsor is referred to as a “koumbáro” (male) or a “koumbára” (female).

Musical Guidelines for the Celebration of the Mystery of Marriage

The music used at the Marriage celebration is always according to the tradition of the Orthodox Church. It obviously may be of any authentic Greek, Slavonic, Arabic, etc. Orthodox tradition.

If the Marriage is between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Christian partners, the non-Orthodox partner may desire to include music from their own religious heritage; this might be allowed at the discretion of the Metropolitan.

The music or hymn must be in keeping with the solemnity of the occasion. Any words in a hymn must reflect the basic Orthodox understanding of marriage; e.g., “two are united into one,” the couple have “an abiding faith in God,” etc.

The music or hymn must be of those traditionally used within a main-stream denomination, and not of an extreme or avant-garde nature such as “Christian rock” music or from Broadway musicals.

Hymns such as those taken from the liturgical life of a non-Orthodox Church, such as “Ave Maria” or “Amazing Grace” are acceptable, but require prior permission from the Metropolitan.

The playing of any music, or the singing of any hymns, not expressly part of the traditional Orthodox Marriage Service is forbidden during the Marriage Service (i.e., between “Blessed is our God ...” and “Through the prayers of our holy fathers ...”). Any non-Orthodox music or hymn, if allowed by the Metropolitan, must therefore be performed before or after the Marriage Service. It is typical for the hymn to be played or sung as a processional or recessional.

Broadway show tunes or “Cocktail songs” are not permitted; if appropriate, these may instead be sung at the reception.