

Requirements to be Godparents

As you begin to prepare for your child's Baptism you are invited to reflect on the role and selection of a godmother and godfather. There are various customs and traditions that shape our understanding of the role and importance of godparents.

Prior to inviting a relative or close friend to assume the role of godparent it is important to understand what our church teaches.

- ❖ A godparent is to be at least 16 years of age and have celebrated the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist).
- ❖ The godparent is to be able and willing to enthusiastically profess his or her faith during the rite of Baptism and ready to model a Catholic Christian lifestyle. Naturally weekly participation in the Sunday Eucharist is a hallmark of a Catholic Christian life. [*Canon 874*]
- ❖ We ask the prospective Godparents to **complete the attached form** confirming that they are practicing members of their own parish community.
- ❖ The child may have one or two godparents. The child does not have more than two godparents. If two godparents are chosen, one is to be a man and the other a woman. [*Canon 874*]
- ❖ A Christian from another denomination may act as a Christian witness; however, it is necessary to have one Catholic godparent. You may have only one Christian witness. [*Canon 874*]
- ❖ A Christian witness is a baptized Christian and a member of a non-Catholic ecclesial community. (e.g. Anglican, United, Presbyterian, etc.)

The role of the godparent should not be confused with that of a legal guardian. The relationship is spiritual not legal. Parents are invited to make their choices of godparents with the following in mind.

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Inviting someone to be a godparent implies the following:

- A request by the parents for the assistance of the Christian community in general and the individual godparents in particular in raising their child in the Catholic faith.
- An admission by the parents of their awareness that they need this assistance.
- An affirmation of the faith of the individuals invited to be godparents and a challenge to them to witness their faith.
- A statement by the parents that they want their child to be positively influenced by the faith and lives of the people they have invited.
- A reminder to the entire community that it has a shared responsibility to support each of its members.

Godparents “must be firm believers, able and ready to help the newly baptized—child or adult—on the road of Christian life. Their task is a truly ecclesial (church) function.”
(Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1255)

Prior to the Second Vatican Council and the revision and renewal of our sacramental rites during the Baptism of an infant, the godparents were asked to answer for the infant in rejecting Satan and professing faith. The 1989 Rite of Baptism for Children asks the parents and godparents to renew their own rejection of evil and to profess their faith so that they may offer these to nurture and foster the faith of the growing child.

In reflection upon the responsibilities of a godparent it is apparent that what is asked of the godparent is really the mission each of us as Christians accepted as part of our own Baptism. All of the baptized are to nurture faith and reach out to others in faith through our lives.

The godparent is to be a model, guide and witness for your child as he or she grows in faith. It is good when a godparent lives close to the family, so that the godparent is encouraged to spend time with your child.