

Godparent Guidelines

At some point in your life you may have tried to join a group or club only to be told that you had to be nominated or recommended by a member for admission. In the early church, when Christians were being persecuted and lived in fear of their lives, a system of sponsors was developed to help evaluate, assist and support each adult candidate during the lengthy preparation process, which preceded Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

Although the focus of Baptism has shifted from adults to infants the Church has continued to recommend that parents select Godparents for their child at the time of Baptism. What follows is a brief description of the role of Godparents and the requirements for selecting Godparents.

Role of Godparents

Today the Godparent is seen as a representative of the Christian Community into which the child is being baptized. The Godparent needs to be a strong Christian, witnessing to a life based on the values of Jesus Christ – in other words, a role model of Christian living in today's world.

There are many ways that a Godparent can, and should, serve as a loving support to the parents who have made a decision to have their child baptized. We have included two sheets, one for each Godparent, which you can give to the Godparents to help them to better understand the important role they play in the faith life of your child. The information on the Role of Godparents sheet may also help you in selecting Godparents for your child.

Requirements for Choosing Godparents

The following are the Church's requirements for choosing Godparents:

- Church law requires that a person who is to be baptized have at least one sponsor who:
 - Is a baptized and confirmed member of the Catholic Church.
 - Is willing and able to help the child develop and grow in the Catholic Faith.
 - Is sixteen years of age or older.
- If there are two sponsors, one must be a Baptized Catholic.
- A baptized Christian, who is not a Catholic, may participate along with a Catholic sponsor by serving as a "Christian Witness".
- Non-baptized persons may not officially act as a sponsor or a witness to a Baptism of a child in the Catholic Faith.

The names of the sponsors, or sponsor and witness, will be recorded in the Baptismal records of the Church.

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