

GODPARENTS FOR THE BAPTISM OF A CHILD

One of the joys of preparing for baptism is choosing godparents for your child. Parents honor family members and friends by asking them to be a godparent. Beyond the honor and ceremony, however, there are serious duties and commitments for godparents.

All sacraments require faith to see beyond the church sign. This is especially true for baptism which is the gate to the other sacraments. Just as the Israelites passed through the water of the Red Sea from slavery to freedom—through faith we hold that a person passes through the waters of baptism to freedom as a child of God.

How can small children receive the sacrament of baptism if they do not yet believe? Those who hold to “believers baptism” insist that one cannot be baptized without accepting Jesus as Lord and making the decision to turn one’s life over to Christ. Catholics, however, **believe that the faith of the parent** supplies for the child. When a paralyzed man was let through the roof of the house where Jesus was preaching, it was seeing **their** faith—the faith of those who carried the man—that allowed Jesus to cure the paralytic. In the same way, seeing the faith of the parents, God blesses children with his own life in baptism. This is the reason parents promise to raise their child in the faith of the church so the fruits of baptism blossom for the child within the community. This is the reason that before the child is baptized, **parents and godparents profess their faith by renouncing Satan and affirming the Creed.**

Godparents are:

- Catholic faithful
- chosen by the parents
- to assist them
- in the instruction and formation of their child
- in the love of Christ and
- the traditions of the church.

This duty to assist the child to grow in beliefs of the Catholic Church sets **requirements for Godparents; they must:**

- be mature enough to undertake this responsibility; Church law requires the godparent be 16 years of age
- have received the three sacraments of initiation: baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist;
- be a member of the Catholic Church in good standing.

Notes:

- A believing Christian baptized in another Christian church or community may act as a Christian Witness along with a Catholic godparent.
- Unbaptized persons, even if believers in Christ, are not qualified to be “Christian” witnesses.
- One godparent is sufficient for the rite, but if there are two there must be a male and female godparent.

It’s a great honor to be chosen a godparent. God’s own name is in the title. It is clear that the individual is expected to live a God-fearing life, the life of a serious practicing Catholic. That’s the only kind of person to ask. And that’s the only term on which a person should accept. The good seeds of God’s gifts sown in the heart and soul of the newly baptized Christian requires the good soil of faithful parents and godparents in order to grow to full maturity in Christ. Parents who want the best for their child should first examine their own lives, and second, pick the right kind of godparents for their child to emulate. If they do, the new Christian is off to a good start.

Be ready to discuss your choice of godparents with your host couple at the first meeting with them. It is a wonderful privilege to be a sponsor/godparent for baptism; we pray that all godparents fulfill their calling with care and devotion.