

About Godparents

Ancient custom in the Catholic Church teaches that all of the baptized are sponsored by a godparent, or godparents (one godfather and one godmother). Sponsors must be fully initiated members of the Catholic Church, who themselves have been baptized, confirmed and have received their First Holy Communion, and who believe and practice the Faith. If married, they must be in a marriage recognized by the Church.

A godparent assists in the preparation for baptism, and the religious and moral formation of the baptized person, according to the Way of Life revealed to us by Jesus Christ and his Church. A godparent helps the baptized person persevere in faith, grow in the holiness, and cooperate with grace of the Holy Spirit that is received in Baptism. Furthermore, the godparents help the baptized person prepare for first Confession, Holy Communion and Confirmation.

A godparent becomes a spiritual member to the immediate family of the baptized person. Good example — being a living witness to the Faith — is the most important duty of a godparent. In this way, godparents help the parents guide the baptized person to Eternal Life, in the Way that Jesus taught us.

Specific Qualifications to be a Godparent

- Sixteen years of age (minimum).
- Mature enough for the responsibility.
- Example of Christian living.
- Received the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Communion.
- Regular practice of Catholic faith, including weekly Mass attendance.
- Married within the Church (if married).
- Cannot be a parent of the one baptize.



Requirements for Two Sponsors

There may be ONE or TWO sponsors. When there are TWO sponsors, one is male (godfather) and the other female (godmother). One sponsor must be Catholic. A baptized non-Catholic sponsor is called a Christian witness.

Requirements for a Christian Witness

- The other sponsor must be Catholic.
- At least sixteen years of age.
- Baptized Christian.
- Living according to the moral teachings of Christianity.
- Cannot be a parent.
- Cannot be Catholic who has left the Church.
- The notation "Christian Witness" notated in the baptismal register.

Some Questions and Answers:

Can there be a proxy for the godparent?

Yes. Proxies for the godparents are acceptable when the sponsors cannot be physically present on the day of the baptism. The name of the designated sponsor is entered in the register. The name of the proxy is entered under the name of the sponsor with the remark "proxy."

Can a catechumen (someone preparing for baptism) be a sponsor?

No. Those who are unbaptized may not sponsor a person into the Catholic Church.

Can an unbaptized person be a godparent?

No. Because the sponsor or Christian witness renews the promises made at their own baptism, an unbaptized person cannot be permitted to be the godparent.

Can a priest or deacon be a sponsor?

Yes.

Can a priest or deacon be the officiant and the sponsor?

Yes. When the priest or deacon is the officiant and the sponsor, he designates a proxy for the godparent during the rite of baptism.



The Tree of Life