

The Role of Godparent

*So you've been asked to be a Godparent? This is a special honour.
It is an invitation to a unique life-long relationship.*

It is an ancient custom that admittance to the Church requires a Godparent, who as a member of the Christian community will assist in the final preparation for Baptism and after Baptism will help the newly baptised to live in the faith and life of a Christian. The Godparent should be present to be added spiritually to the family and to represent the Church.

Godparents are not needed to witness the validity of the Baptism; the community is there to do that. Nor are they there to promise that they will become the child's foster parents in the case of tragedy. Nor are they to ensure that the child will be guaranteed nice gifts for birthdays and Christmas.

Godparents are there to bear responsibility for the faith life of the child. Faith must grow after Baptism. Preparation for Baptism leads only to the threshold of that new life in Christ bestowed through Baptism. Both the parents and the Godparents have the responsibility to nurture this new life.

One part of the Godparent's responsibility may be in teaching the faith; for instance, in helping the child learn to pray. But it is even more important as Godparent to witness the Good News in your own life. Sounds like an awesome undertaking? But in fact, if you are serious about your own faith you already have what it takes to be a Godparent. It is a gift of the Holy Spirit that you received at your own Baptism and has grown through your own life experiences.

The role of a Godparent is to walk beside, listen to, cherish, pray for, pray with, share with and learn with. In other words to be a friend and a guide on the road to Christian living.

In the case of infant Baptism, the challenge and the advantage is the gift of time. The young child has no sense of good or bad. But you can be there to teach the differences and the impact they have on life. The young child does not have a reason or a desire to be Catholic. However, you will be there to witness, by your own life. Your Godchild will see your reasons.

Being a Godparent is about being a role model, someone to look up to, to emulate. What a privilege! This doesn't call for perfection, but it does call for faith and faithfulness. It calls for clear vision and for honesty. It calls for enduring love and hope in everlasting life. Are you able to accept this responsibility?

Godparents

- Cannot be parents of the one to be Baptized
- There may be one or two godparents...if two, one male, one female
- Godparents must have received the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, and living a life consonant with faith and with the responsibilities of a Godparent.
- A Baptized and believing Christian not belonging to the Catholic Church may act as a Christian witness along with a Catholic Godparent.

A Prayer for your Godchild

God of Love, I thank you that through Baptism my Godchild has become a member of Your Church, and I pray that he/she may grow in Christian love and faith all the days of his/her life. Amen.