

Recognizing the Role of Godparents

Every person being baptized must have a sponsor, traditionally called a godparent. You must have at least one sponsor, but parents typically choose a godmother and a godfather for their child, often from each side of the family. Only one godparent is required to be a Roman Catholic. The second godparent (who would be a Christian but not Roman Catholic) would have the title of "Christian Witness". The role of a godparent is to support and aid the parents in raising the child in our Catholic faith; therefore, prior Catholics who no longer practice their Catholic faith are not eligible to be godparents or Christian witnesses.

The role of godparents has a very practical history. Godparents took over rearing children who were orphaned when their parents died prematurely. Today, being a godparent carries with it no legal right or ecclesiastical authority to the custody of children. Being a godparent means actively being a role model and supporting the child through regular and faithful practice of the Roman Catholic faith.

- Must be a minimum of 16 years of age.
- Have received the Sacraments of Initiation, namely Baptism, Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist.
- If married, your marriage must have been celebrated by a Catholic priest or have a special exception approved by the Bishop. Individuals who are living in the same household outside the bonds of marriage or have not received an annulment are ineligible to be godparents.
- Presently active in the practice of the Roman Catholic faith by regularly attending Mass and Holy Days of Obligation. Someone who was Catholic, and no longer practices the Catholic faith, *is ineligible* to be a godparent or Christian witness.
- Must obtain a letter of certificate of eligibility from their current parish.