

Guidelines for Selecting a Godparent

What is a godparent?

According to the Code of Canon Law, a Godparent will, “together with the parents, help the baptized to lead a Christian life in keeping with baptism and to fulfill faithfully the obligations inherent in it.” In other words, the Godparent agrees to have a role in your child’s life, not just now, but as they grow. They will act as role model and encourage your child to develop into a faith-filled, practicing Catholic.

What should we consider in choosing a godparent?

Being a Godparent isn’t simply an honorary title. Godparents are to serve a special role in your child’s life and must be selected carefully. One should not be selected simply because of a blood relationship or as a way to acknowledge a deep friendship; there are other ways to do that. The Godparent should be someone who is living their life in accord with the teachings of the Catholic Church. They should be a faith-filled Catholic who is willing and able to share that faith with your child.

Are there any requirements for godparents?

According to Canon Law, the following requirements must be met in order for one to function as a godparent:

- Be at least 16 years of age
- Be a fully initiated Catholic, meaning that they have been baptized, received the sacrament of the Eucharist and Confirmation, and is living their life in accord with the teachings of the Church
- Not bound by any canonical penalty
- Not the mother or father of the one being baptized
- If married, married in the Catholic Church

How many godparents can we select?

Canon Law says “this is to be only one male sponsor, one female sponsor, or one of either gender.”

Can a Non-Catholic Christian act as godparent, if there is only one Catholic godparent?

No, but they may act as a Christian Witness and these are the requirements:

- A Christian Witness is a validly baptized non-Catholic who practices their faith in Christ in a visible and sincere manner.
- A person who was baptized and raised as a Catholic, but has chosen to leave the Catholic Church and has joined another Christian Church, may not stand as a Christian Witness at a Catholic Baptism.

Are godparents the same as legal guardians?

No, Godparents, together with the parents, help encourage the spiritual life of a child. They are not obligated to take custody of the child in the absence of the parents.