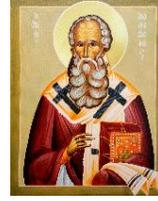




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How to Choose Godparents for Baptism

We are thrilled that you are presenting your child for the sacrament of baptism! Here is some important information about choosing Godparents to help you raise your child within the Catholic Christian Faith.

What is the role of the Godfather and “Godmother in baptism?”

The Godfather and/or Godmother, with the parents, present the child for baptism. The Godfather and/or Godmother agree to help the child grow up to be a good Christian, an intentional disciple of Jesus Christ within the Church that He founded—the Holy Catholic Church. They do this through a number of ways. First, they pray regularly for the child. They also present a good example of someone who practices their faith through regular worship of God at Mass, through the regular reception of the sacraments, and through striving to live a good moral life. Nobody is perfect. We are all sinners. Yet, a Godfather or Godmother should be someone who strives to grow in holiness with the help of God’s grace. They must be the kind of people who live the kind of life that will help the child to live out the grace of their baptism and to form their identity as a Catholic Christian.

How many Godparents must I have?

Ideally, your child will have two, a Godfather and a Godmother, so as to better reflect the roles of the father and mother of the child. The Godparents need not be related to each other or to the child. If two qualified Godparents cannot be identified, then your child may have only one Godparent. The maximum number of Godparents is two, with no more than one of each gender. The parents may not serve as Godparents.

Can I choose someone who is not Catholic?

Because baptism brings a child into the Catholic Church, the Godparent must be a practicing Catholic. A baptized non-Catholic Christian can serve as a “Christian witness.” You would still need to choose at least one Catholic to serve as one of the Godparents.

In addition to being Catholic, what are the other requirements that a Godparent must meet?

The Catholic Church’s universal Code of Canon Law establishes certain requirements for a Godparent. They must be a baptized Catholic, at least 16 years old, have already themselves received the sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Communion. In addition, they must lead a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken. They must be practicing Catholics. If they live in a domestic partnership, their marriage needs to be recognized as valid by the Catholic Church. They should not have anything that

prevents them from being able to worthily receive sacraments within the Catholic Church. Your prospective Godparents will be asked to complete the *Baptism Godparent Eligibility* form.

What if I have already asked someone to be a Godparent and they do not meet the requirements?

In many cases, parents ask friends or family to serve as Godparents before they truly realize the meaning of this role. While it is understandable to want to honor a relationship with someone that you love, and while such persons may possess many virtues that would make them a great mentor to your child, the role of the Godparent for baptism has a very specific purpose: to assist the parents in helping the child to live out the grace of their baptism as a disciple of Jesus within the Catholic Church.

If you have already asked someone to serve as a Godparent and they do not meet the requirements of a Godparent, please ask one or two other individuals to serve as the Godparents. You can still tell your other friends and family that they may be a “Christian Witness” to the Baptism.

What if I do not know anyone whom I can choose to serve as a Godparent?

Begin to call to mind the people that you know who actively practice their Catholic faith and receive the sacraments. You might want to consider your child’s grandparents, aunts, uncles, close friends of these relatives, friends, etc. If you are not currently attending Mass, please start coming! Perhaps there is someone whom you know at the parish who can be a support to help you attend Mass and get more involved in the parish family. If you still cannot think of anyone who may meet the requirements of a Godparent, please ask the parish priest or Baptism coordinator to help you identify a potential Godparent.

What is MY responsibility as a parent when I present my child for baptism?

When you bring your child to be baptized you are making a commitment to raise them within the Catholic Church. This is an awesome responsibility. Your child is a gift from God. Your child belongs to God and is only yours “on loan.” It is the role of Christian parents to do all that they can, with the help of God’s grace, to teach their baptized children the way of prayer, the life of Christian virtues, the life of a disciple of Jesus. In Baptism, a child is made holy and consecrated to God. Although it is primarily the role of the parents to help their child answer this call to holiness, the Godparents should always be prepared to assist them.

This responsibility involves, among other things, attending Mass on Sunday and Holy Days. The priest may postpone the baptism if, in his judgment, there is no founded hope that the child will be raised in the faith. If you are not currently very consistent in the practice of your faith, please know that the Lord loves you and invites you to turn back to Him today. Start to come back to the regular attendance at Mass. Get involved in the life of the parish. God loves us where we are and wants to meet us where we are, but He wants to also take us deeper in our relationship with Him and with His Church!