

Godparents

What is the role of a godparent?

A godparent is chosen to take on the very special role of participating and sharing in his/her godchild's Christian life and education. During the opening rites of the Liturgy of Baptism, the godparents are asked, "***Are you ready to help the parents of these children in their duty as Christian parents?***" A godparent's role is to assist the parents in guiding their child to know God and to belong to his Church in the fullest way possible. What a privilege to share the responsibility of bringing a child up in the Christian faith!

What are the requirements to become a godparent?

The Church law calls for godparents to be practicing Catholics who have reached the age of sixteen and have received the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation. Godparents may be either male or female or one of each. A non-Catholic Christian witness may be a godparent, along with a practicing Catholic, as long as he or she has been Baptized. If you have questions or concerns, please consult with Deacon Bob or Fr. Jim.

What does a godparent do?

As a Christian and now as a godparent, pay special attention to the forms and symbols used in the rite of Baptism:

- **the waters** signify that our sins are washed away and we are restored to new life in Christ
- **the white garment** is a symbol of our new life in Christ
- **the oil of chrism** brings both healing and strength and sets us apart for the work of the Kingdom
- the **candle** is lit to symbolize that Christ is a "light for our feet," guiding us along the road of faith.

Over the next few years try some of the following ways to nurture and develop this spiritual relationship with your godchild:

- Celebrate each anniversary of your godchild's Baptism with a visit, card, phone call, or appropriate gift (*such as a Bible, religious book, or religious jewelry*)
- As your godchild grows in his/her knowledge of the Christian faith, continue to share your own Christian faith and values. Send assurances of prayers and blessings to your godchild. Always speak well of the gift of our Christian faith and the need for regular prayer and worship of God.
- Mark each sacramental milestone in the life of your godchild with a special card or appropriate gift. Try to attend your godchild's First Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation.

- Be supportive of your godchild's parents in their role as Christian parents and primary educators of their child.
- Use this wonderful opportunity to review your own faith life and practice. Become a model of Christian living for your godchild through the practice of daily prayer, weekly attendance at Mass and an active and full participation in the life of your own parish.

Baptism is the sacrament of faith. But faith needs the community of believers. It is only within the faith of the Church that each of the faithful can believe. (Catechism of the Catholic Church #1253) Being a godparent is a lifetime responsibility and privilege, and it is only by living a full Christian life that you both will experience the great and joyful potential this relationship has to offer.

Congratulations and may God bless you and your new godchild!