



SAINT JOSEPH PARISH

FAITH FORMATION OFFICE

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GUIDELINES for Parents in Choosing a Godparent for Your Child's Baptism and for Confirmation Candidates in Choosing a Sponsor

Being a Godparent for Baptism or a Sponsor for Confirmation is a very important role in the Catholic Church. You are asking a family member or a friend to serve as a mentor and guide throughout your (for Confirmands) or your child's life. The Godparent/Sponsor will be able to share the Church's teachings and practices in your life or in the life of your child. Moreover, the Godparent/Sponsor will help you or your child live a Christian life befitting of the baptized and confirmed.

Precisely because it is an important role, there are certain requirements that must be met for those seeking to be Godparents/Sponsors. These guidelines are meant to assist you when choosing potential Godparents or a Sponsor. Please ensure that each potential Godparent/Sponsor obtains a Certificate from his/her parish or a letter from his/her Pastor affirming that the potential Godparent/Sponsor meets all of the requirements to serve as a Godparent/Sponsor for a candidate for baptism and/or for confirmation.

REQUIREMENTS OF GODPARENTS OR SPONSORS:

Insofar as possible, one to be baptized is to be assigned a Godparent/Sponsor. In the case of an adult baptism, the Sponsor's role is to assist the person in Christian initiation. In the case of an infant baptism, the role is, together with the parents, to present the child for baptism, and to help the child live a Christian life befitting of the baptized, and faithfully to fulfill the duties inherent in baptism.

There is to be only one male sponsor or one female sponsor or one of each for Baptism. One Sponsor is required for Confirmation.

To be permitted to take on the function of Sponsor a person must:

- Be appointed by the candidate for baptism, or by the parents, or by whoever stands in their place, or (if necessary) by the pastor, parish priest, or minister, and is to have the qualifications and the intention of fulfilling this role.
- Be not less than sixteen years of age.
- Not to be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared.
- Be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has received the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, and who lives a life of faith which befits the role to be undertaken.

A baptized non-Catholic Christian from a denomination recognized by the Catholic Church will serve as a Witness to the Baptism, and only together with a Catholic Sponsor. Anyone who is unbaptized, and those whose baptism is not recognized by the Catholic Church, may not serve in the role of sponsor or Christian witness but are welcome to be present at the ceremony.

A parent cannot be the Godparent or Sponsor for his or her child.

Because the Sponsor must be leading a life in harmony with the faith, the person, if married, must be in a valid marriage recognized by the Catholic Church.

A Sponsor may act through a proxy. One who is to act as a proxy for a Sponsor must meet all the same requirements that the official Sponsor must meet and must be the same gender as the official Sponsor. (A parent or stepparent may not fulfill the role of proxy for the Baptismal Sponsor.)

A baptized Catholic who does not meet the above-mentioned requirements may not act as a Christian witness. A non-practicing Catholic (one who does not attend Mass or has left the Catholic Church to practice another religion) may not serve as a Christian witness.