

Godparent Requirements

Godparents need to obtain a Sponsor Certificate from the Catholic parish they attend.

What are the requirements to be a godparent? A godparent should be a confirmed, Catholic Christian who is at least 16 years of age, and who faithfully practices and believes in the Catholic faith as a participating member of a parish community.

How many godparents should there be? Church law only requires you to have one godparent; however, it has been tradition to have two.

Can the same godparents have responsibility for more than one child in the same family? Yes, as long as they take seriously their responsibility and intention to help the children grow in faith.

What gender should the godparent be? If you choose only one godparent, you are free to choose a male or a female. However, if you wish to have two godparents, there must be one male and one female.

Can a non-Catholic serve as a godparent? A baptized, non-Catholic may serve as a “Christian witness” to the baptism, only if there is a proper Catholic sponsor who fully meets all requirements of a godparent. The non-Catholic who is selected as a witness should be an active and participating member of his/her church community. During the baptism, a non-Catholic witness may perform all the parts of the ceremony that a godparent does. His or her name will be entered into the Sacrament Record Book as a “Christian witness”, together with the name of the godparent.

What is the difference between a godparent and a witness? Canon (Church) Law describes a witness as “A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community.” A godparent is a confirmed, practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church.

Can someone serve as godparent by proxy (stand-in) if the godparent is unable to participate in the baptism ceremony? If a godparent cannot attend the baptism ceremony, a proxy can stand in the place of the missing godparent. The name of that person will be entered as “proxy” in the Sacramental Record Book, along with the name of the missing godparent.

Sponsors must obtain a Sponsor Certificate from the Catholic Parish that they currently attend. The parish will know what they are requesting. Please drop off the Sponsor Certificate one week before the Baptism.