

Having Your Baby Baptized

Choosing Godparents!

Part of the excitement in having your baby baptized is choosing godparents or sponsors. In various cultures, the role of godparents has taken on many different looks. For some, being a godparent creates a deep, life-long bond as the godparent becomes a part of the family. For others, it is merely a passing honor, a favor to a dear friend or relative but without lasting significance.

In the rite of baptism up until the late 1960's there was much for the godparents to do in the ceremony. Now the parents hold the baby, answer the questions and take the baptismal candle. But the godparents still have their part in the baptismal rite.

At the beginning of the ceremony they are asked by the priest if they are ready to help the parent in their duty as Christian parents. Along with the parents, they renew their baptismal vows and profess their faith in God.

In the introduction to the "Rite of Baptism for Children," it says this of the godparents: ***"In the baptism of children, the godparent should be present to be included spiritually into the immediate family of the child being baptized. The godparents represent the church and official welcome this newest member into the Christian Community. The godparents are to be ready to help the parents bring up their child to profess the faith and to show by their example how to live this faith."***

The church emphasizes that the bond between the godparent and the baptized persons family should be a close bond with the godparent to be always ready to help the parents in the Christian formation of their child, when needed. The godparent should be a source of guidance, support and inspiration to the child on its journey toward God.

When choosing godparents for your child you should remember it is serious responsibility to choose well, it is a decision worth much prayer, thought and discussion. Once you make your decision it is appropriate to tell the one you have chosen why led you to choose them.

When making this decision there are a few important attributes to look for in a godparent:

1. A mature member of the Christian Catholic Church, one who has received the sacraments of initiation (baptism, confirmation and Eucharist).
2. Someone who can share with you the task of handing on their faith to the child and someone who lives that faith on an everyday basis.

3. Someone who knows that being a Christian Catholic means praying, being kind to friends and strangers and someone that helps those in need.
4. Someone who is willing to establish a special relationship with the child, one that will include sharing their faith with the child and helping the child develop its own faith life.

When you ask someone to be a godparent you are asking them to witness your promise to the church that you will do all you can to bring this child up in the Christian Catholic faith. You are also asking them to help you by bringing this faith alive to your child in all that they do in their lives.

Reading this you may feel that a godparent cannot be a relative or a close friend or that the godparent has to be extremely involved in parish activities. This is not true! Godparents can be friends or relatives as long as they meet the attributes discussed earlier. Godparents do not have to be highly involved in their parish community. Their Catholic Christianity can be expressed in many other ways.

When choosing godparents, talk it over with each other, you don't have to choose someone just because it is expected of you to do so. Consider what would happen if you end up living away from the godparents. Would they continue to take an interest in the child, pray for the child and be present in the child's life?

Each year on the anniversary of the child's baptism you may want to invite the godparents to your home to celebrate this important event in your child's life.