

Being a Faithful Godparent or Sponsor

The primary job of a godparent or sponsor is to be a witness of the Catholic life. Your way of life should provide an example of how a Christian is to live. You should support your charge during their preparation period by your prayers and presence, and for the rest of that person's life. You act as a spokesperson for the entire Church.

TO BE A GODPARENT OR SPONSOR YOU MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

1. The godparent or sponsor should be a faithful member of the Catholic Church who is an active participant in the Mass, attends every Sunday, and receives the Sacraments often.
2. The godparent or sponsor must have already celebrated the Sacraments of Initiation – Baptism, Eucharist, Penance, and Confirmation.
3. The godparent or sponsor must be in good standing with the Church and free to celebrate the Sacraments (for example, a person who has remarried outside the Church cannot serve in this capacity).
4. According to the directives in the Code of Canon Law #893, neither the father nor the mother of a candidate can be a godparent or sponsor. The godparent or sponsor must be at least 16 years of age.

Some Practical Suggestions for Godparents & Sponsors

- ✦ Above all, pray daily for the person for who are to be a godparent or sponsor.
- ✦ Have every intention to diligently make this person a part of your life, from infancy if your relationship began then, or from whatever point you entered the person's life, until you responsibility ends at your death.
- ✦ Extend an invitation to attend Mass or other parish activities/ministries with you. As you are able, introduce the person to other faithful Catholics.
- ✦ Extend an invitation to attend a Catholic Baptism, wedding, funeral, parish reconciliation service, or other liturgical event with you. Allow a little time to talk about the experience to form them to love the liturgy.
- ✦ Share some good Catholic resources (books, magazines, tapes), or go to a Catholic bookstore together.
- ✦ Suggest having a casual lunch or coffee or dessert together on a regular basis, as you are able.
- ✦ Send them cards on the anniversary of their reception of the Sacraments, with meaningful words from you.
- ✦ Be creative...

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, 4TH CENTURY BISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE

"They should not consider that what they are doing is a routine action. Rather, they should be fully aware that they will share the credit if they guide their charges to the path of virtue by their advice, but if they are negligent, then grave condemnation will fall upon them. For this reason it is the custom to call them 'spiritual fathers' in order that they may learn from their office the affection they owe to their charges in giving them spiritual instruction. For if it is a noble thing to lead those who are in no way connected with us to desire virtue, we have a much greater duty to fulfill this obligation to one whom we have received to the position of spiritual son. To sum up, negligence brings no small danger to those of you who are acting as sponsors."

QUALITIES OF A GODPARENT/SPONSOR

- ◆ Love for God and His Church.
- ◆ Sense of the mystery of salvation.
- ◆ Committed prayer life.
- ◆ Basic understanding of Scripture.
- ◆ Faithful to the Magisterium.
- ◆ Bear personal witness to the Catholic faith.
- ◆ Fruits of the Spirit are evident.
- ◆ Good communication and listening skills.

DUTIES OF A GODPARENT/SPONSOR

- ◆ Become familiar with the process through which the Sacraments will be given.
- ◆ Continue your formation as a Catholic.
- ◆ Maintain meaningful personal contact with the person for the rest of your life.
- ◆ Attend liturgies relating to the conferral of the Sacraments.