

CHOOSING GODPARENTS

Much thought and prayer should go into the selection of godparents. In addition to being practicing members of the Catholic Church, godparents should be persons of prayer and persons who have continued to grow in their faith. It is not appropriate to ask non-practicing Catholics to be godparents. Godparents are to be witness of a *Lived Faith*. They must be willing to witness to their faith so that they, along with the parents, can share their faith with the child. The godparents are not invited to a casual relationship; they make a serious commitment to the child, the family, and the Church.

Baptism
in
Christ



THE ROLE OF GODPARENTS

Godparents serve two important functions: *They represent the larger church community.* They, along with the priest/deacon and the parents, welcome the child to the community and signify that welcome by marking the child with the sign of the cross.

In addition, *godparents pledge to continually support the parents*, and to be ready to help the parents, when appropriate, in the Catholic formation of their child. Even more than that, the godparent is to be an example to the child of how to live a Christian lifestyle.

In the Roman Catholic rite of Baptism, until the late 1960's, there was much for the godparents to do within the ceremony. Now, it is the parents who hold the baby and answer the questions. But the godparents, though they may not be at the center of things, still have an important part in the rite:

- At the beginning, they are asked by the priest (or deacon) if they will help the parents in their duty as Christian parents.
- During the ceremony, the godparents renew their Baptismal vows together with the parents.
- During the ceremony, the godparents place the Baptismal garment on the child and light the Baptismal candle which is presented to the parents.

GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING GODPARENTS

Suitable godparents should be chosen following the norms of the Code of Canon Law. To be admitted to the role of godparent, a person must:

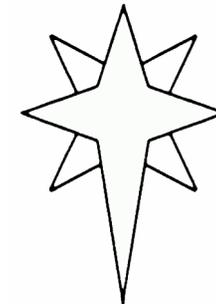
- Have completed the 16th year
- Be a Catholic who has been confirmed and is regularly celebrating the Sacrament of Eucharist and leads a life in harmony with the faith and role to be undertaken
- Have a marriage sacramentally celebrated in the Catholic Church (if married)
- Not be the father or mother of the one to be baptized

Only one godparent is required for Baptism. At most, two are permitted, in which case one must be male and the other female. A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic Christian community may not be admitted except as a Christian Witness to Baptism and together with a Catholic sponsor.

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM



CHOOSING A GODPARENT



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