

### Godparents in the Catholic Tradition ...

When you invite a person to serve as your child's godparent, you are asking this individual to make a lifelong commitment to your child. The day of your child's Baptism marks just the beginning of the godparent-godchild relationship. It is the hope of the Church and the Catholic community that your child's godparents will be lifelong companions who will nurture your child's faith and help him or her become a true disciple of Christ.

The Catholic community calls godparents to:

- help their godchild grow in faith
- teach their godchild about Catholic traditions
- model for their godchild how to live a Catholic life

The law of the Roman Catholic Church requires that each child being baptized have one godparent to serve as his or her spiritual role model and friend. This godparent may be male or female. Two godparents-one godmother and one godfather-are the custom in the United States, but are not required.

To be a Catholic godparent, one must:

- be a Catholic who has received the Sacrament of Confirmation and regularly participates in the Eucharist
- be an active member of a Catholic faith community
- be at least sixteen years old

When choosing a godparent for your child, it may be helpful to consider the following:

1. Is this person actively practicing his or her faith? Does he or she worship at Sunday Eucharist regularly? (This is the most important question to ask. If the person selected is not an active, practicing Catholic, he or she will not be able to fulfill effectively the role of godparent.)
2. Does this person live close enough, or will this person have sufficiently frequent contact, to get to know your child and play an active role in your child's faith life?
3. Does this person know enough about the Catholic Church and Catholic faith to be able to teach your child about it?
4. If something happened to you, would this person make sure your child was raised as an active member of the Catholic community?

What is a Christian witness? Some families may wish to have a non-Catholic Christian also serve as a sponsor for their child. Although at least one Catholic godparent is required, a baptized non-Catholic Christian may be invited to serve as a "Christian witness" who will participate in the celebration and will stand alongside the godparent during the baptismal ceremony.