

# The Role of the Godparent

## What is the Godparent's role?

Along with joining the parents in presenting the child for baptism, the Godparent's role is to help the child grow and live out their Catholic Faith.

In other words, the Godparent serves as an example of how a Catholic should live his or her faith and takes responsibility for the spiritual growth and formation of the baptized person. The Godparent represents the Catholic Church and the faith community into which the person is being baptized.

## Who is eligible to be a Godparent?

If you are choosing two Godparents, one must be male and the other female. If you are choosing only one Godparent, you may have either gender. To be a Godparent, one must meet the following conditions:

- Is 16 years of age or older
- Has received all 3 Sacraments of Initiation into the Catholic Church (Baptism, First Eucharist, Confirmation)
- If married, they were validly married in the Catholic Church;
- They are currently practicing the faith (active members of a Catholic parish, attending Mass regularly, etc.)

## Can a non-Catholic be a Godparent?

For the reasons mentioned above, it is not possible for a non-Catholic to fulfill the role of the Godparent. However, once a Godparent is selected, a non-Catholic person of the opposite sex may serve as a Christian Witness. A Christian Witness is someone who has been baptized with a valid Baptism and is currently practicing their Christian faith and living an upright moral life. A Christian Witness is present at the Baptism and participates in the ceremony along with the Godparent. Unlike a Catholic Godparent, a Christian Witness is not needed for a child to receive the Sacrament of Baptism. Please note: Because the Catholic Godparent is one who leads a life in harmony with the faith and represents the Catholic community, former Catholics who have joined other Christian Churches or Catholics who no longer practice their Catholic faith *cannot* serve as *either* a Godparent or Christian witness.