

Being a Godparent

- is a privilege
- is a sacred responsibility
- is participating and sharing in your new godchild's Christian life and education.
- is sharing in the parental responsibility of bringing the child up in the Christian faith and "to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us"

Before the Ceremony

The role of the Godparents, though secondary to that of the parents, is integral to the ceremony. Traditionally, it is the role of the Godparents to select the garment for the child to wear on the day of their religious initiation. Some religious denominations also require the Godparents to provide the child with diapers, undergarments, and an outfit for afterwards. However, more prevalent nowadays is a joint venture between Mother and Godmother to select an outfit and all accompanying accessories. The day of the Baptism is a day where the Godparents have cared and provided for the infant's needs.

During the Ceremony

Godparents may be asked to perform ritual functions during the ceremony, such as holding the child, praying over the child and to make promises for the child's religious growth. During the opening rites of the Liturgy of Baptism, the godparents are addressed in the following manner "Are you ready to help the parents of these children in their duty as Christian parents". Presumably, after due reflection you will be ready to answer "Yes". In other words, your role is to assist the parents in guiding their child to know God and to belong to his Church in the fullest way possible. As a Christian and now as a godparent, allow the liturgy of baptism to speak directly to you, not just about your new role but also as fellow traveler along the road of faith. Pay special attention to the forms and symbols used: the waters that wash away sin and restore us to new life in Christ, that new life signified in the white garment, the oil of chrism that brings both healing and strength and sets us apart for the work of the Kingdom and of course that lighted candle symbolizing that Christ and his Gospel has become in the words of the psalm a "light for

our feet", guiding us along the road of faith. This is why, at its very heart, your relationship with your new godchild is a "spiritual" one.

After the ceremony

Godparents are to serve as proxies for the parents should they (the parents) be unable to provide for the religious training of the child. **It is the Godparents' responsibility to insure the child's religious growth after the Baptism.**

Over the next few years

Try some of the following ways to nurture and develop your spiritual relationship with your godchild:

- Keep a note of the date of the Baptism and on each anniversary celebrate the day with a visit, a card, an appropriate gift (such as a bible, an icon, a prayer plaque, jewelry etc) or a phone call.
- As your godchild grows in his/her knowledge of the Christian faith try to be present to encourage and share your own Christian faith and values. Send assurances of prayers and blessings to your godchild. Always speak well of the gift of our Christian faith and the need for regular prayer and worship of God.
- Mark each sacramental milestone in the life of your godchild with a special card or appropriate gift.
- Be supportive of your godchild's parents in their role as Christian parents and primary educators of their child.
- Use this wonderful opportunity to review your own faith life and practice. Become a model of Christian living for your godchild through the practice of daily prayer, weekly attendance at Mass and an active and full participation in the life of your own parish. When the initial delight and pride of your choice as godparents has evaporated you still remain in this sacred responsibility, a responsibility you undertook before God and his Church, in response to that invitation. Try to remain faithful to that invitation and active in the life of your godchild. It is after the Baptism ceremony that your real work begins!