

Parents and Godparents: Please read this prior to the Baptism

For Parents: Baptism is an important event in the life of a child. The child does not know what is happening at the time of baptism. In fact, by baptizing their child, the parents are making a commitment before God and the Church that they would do with all the resources available to share their Catholic faith with their child. It involves an exemplary Christian life by parents. For this, the parents should love each other and pray as a family with their children. They should take their children to Mass, and as they grow up teach the scripture stories and show their children by their exemplary life what it means to be a Christian.

For Godparents: The new (1983) Code of Canon Law is quite specific about the qualifications of godparents. A parent cannot be the godparent of his/her child, because the parent has a unique and special relationship with the child.

Godparents need to be sixteen years of age or older; have made their first communion; and were confirmed. They need to be practicing Catholics. By "practicing Catholic," the Church means that godparents should be registered parishioners in their local church and attend Mass every week and on Holy Days of Obligation.

If married, the marriage needs to be recognized by the Catholic Church as being valid. Therefore, those divorced and remarried without the benefit of an annulment, are not permitted to be sponsors. A person who married outside the Catholic Church without permission is also in an invalid marriage and cannot be recognized as a godparent.

Catholics who do not regularly go to Mass and rarely, if at all, go to confession should decline to become godparents. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is recommended both for parents and godparents just before baptism.

This is not a question of whose turn it is to be a godparent. X or Y might be the brother or sister of a parent, but the relationship as uncle or aunt of the baptized is not sufficient to be a godparent. A person who does not go to Church, leads an immoral lifestyle, and embraces opinions and values that contradict Christian doctrine (racism, abortion, promiscuity, drunkenness, etc.) should not be asked to assume the sacred duties of godparent.