

Infant Baptism – Important information to read before choosing Godparents.

What is the role of the sponsor at Baptism?

The role of the godparent or sponsor at the baptism of a child is to join with the parents in presenting the child and to be a help and support to the child in growing in faith and living the Christian life.

The question that is asked of godparents explains this: 'Are you willing to help the parents of this child in their duty as Christian parents?'

They stand with the parents and proclaim their faith on behalf of the child.

Only one godparent is required but there may be two. In some cultures it is a common and legitimate custom to allow a greater number. Usually in Australia there are two.

It follows from this that the godparent ought also to live out those same Christian values and way of life that the ceremony implies. For this reason the Church requires that the godparent be a confirmed Catholic who has received the Eucharist and lives out the life of faith required by the role.

Must both godparents be Catholic?

One godparent must be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has received the Eucharist, and who lives a life worthy of the role that he or she is about to undertake. It is possible to have just the one godparent. Alternatively, an Eastern Orthodox Christian may be a godparent (along with the Catholic godparent). Apart from this situation, as long as one godparent is Catholic, it is permissible to have a 'Christian Witness' who is not Catholic but is a Baptised Christian. It is not possible for an unbaptized person to act as godparent or witness.

Does the Catholic Church place any restrictions on who may be a godparent at Baptism?

There must be at least one person who is a Catholic who has been confirmed and has received the Eucharist, who is at least sixteen years old. The minister of Baptism may decide that there is a just reason why a person who is not yet 16 may be godparent.

As long as one godparent is Catholic, it is permissible for a non-Catholic to act as a Christian witness to a child's baptism as long as they are a baptised Christian.