

CHOOSING GODPARENTS:

A WORD ABOUT GODPARENTS

As parents you may have decided already who the godparents of your child will be. Or you may be at the point of considering who to ask. Either way, it is helpful to know what exactly the role of a godparents is in the eyes of the Church and what specific requirements there are for a godparent. The custom of having two godparents, one of each sex, seems to be a fairly established practice— it is perfectly acceptable to have just a godmother or a godfather. Your child's godparents are required to be members of the Catholic Church and to have celebrated all three sacraments of initiation - Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist. There is the further requirement that they must be living a life consistent with faith - given their role as a godparent. Quite simply this means that they must be seeking to live a life informed by their Catholic faith - with all the struggles that that entails. A godparent is not a super-Catholic! But hopefully a godparent is someone who is comfortable with their Catholic identity and is willing to support parents who are handing on this faith to their child. Obviously, the responsibility of being a godparent is one that requires a level of maturity. In the Catholic Church a person of sixteen years is deemed to have reached this level and therefore a godparent is someone who is sixteen years or older. At the request of the parents, a baptised and believing Christian, not belonging to the Catholic Church, may also act as a Christian witness along with a Catholic godparent. So in considering who you ask to be godparents to your child the above needs to be taken into account. You are asking the godparents of your child to support you as you hand on the faith. .

THE ROLE OF THE GODPARENTS

To be chosen as a godparent is a special honour. You above all others, are being entrusted with the responsibility of participating in this child's Christian life and education. The privilege offers you the opportunity to develop a mutually enriched spiritual relationship with this child. There are many ways by which this special relationship can be nurtured:

- Celebrate the anniversary of the Baptism each year with a call or visit.
- As your Godchild grows, listen to and share in their struggles and triumphs of living a Christian life.
- Celebrate the religious events of your Godchild's life especially Christmas, Easter, Special occasions, Graduations, First job etc.
- Participate in, or send assurance of prayer as your Godchild receives the other sacraments which complete initiation into the Christian community – First Holy Communion and Confirmation.
- Be supportive of your Godchild's family in their role as primary religious educators of their child.
- By living a Christian life in partnership with your Godchild, both of you will experience the great joy of sharing a life of faith.
- Congratulations and God's blessing. We look forward to meeting you on the very special occasion of your Godchild's Baptism.