

What is a Godparent?

The Godparent is a firm believer, a sponsor or guarantor, who assumes a responsibility to assist the newly-baptized, child or adult, on the road of Christian life. More than just a token or honorary role: with the parents, they present the child to the priest/deacon and the Church community for baptism. With the parents, they give their assurance by oath that they will assist the child to grow up in this Catholic faith.

Who can be a Godparent?

They must be at least 16 years old and a baptised and confirmed Catholic, who believes their faith and is willing to help the child to be baptised to live their faith. A baptised non-Catholic may assist in this role, provided at least one Catholic Godparent is provided already. While non-Christian's are not able to offer the same faith role-modelling or promises of faith and therefore are not able to be godparents, all those in a child's life are important in forming and supporting them.



So even if you know a Catholic relative or friend who has received the sacraments, think carefully about who you might choose.

“I do have one godparent who has really been supportive of me my whole life. She has pushed me to become a better version of myself, and has supported me in the difficult decisions I’ve had to make. She treats me like I know she would treat her own kids.”

What makes a Godparent different to a good family friend?

In addition to being there for the child in a loving and caring way, or offering support and friendship, a Godparent is called to role model for the child an example of faith and practice of faith, thereby introducing them and teaching them about what it means to be Catholic. A child can see in their godparent an example of how to live like a disciple of Jesus. It is an honour to be asked to be a Godparent, precisely because it is a challenging role with a degree of responsibility! Try to be a great one!

“Sadly, none of my godparents have really had an impact on my life. Two of them were involved with me early on, but I haven’t spoken to them for years. The other two haven’t really had an influence on my life at all.”



Godparenting isn't for everyone: Hugh Grant playing a reluctant godparent in *About A Boy*.
Photo: Universal Studios

What else makes a great Godparent?

A Godparent ideally will be involved in the life of their Godchild. This could mean Birthdays, the anniversary of their Baptism (Their "Rebirth"-day), Christmas, their first holy communion and other significant moments of their life. Rather than gifts of toys or money, there may be opportunities to provide gifts of a spiritual nature: a Bible, a book of prayers, saints stories to read at night, a medal or crucifix to wear, sacred art, holy picture/icon/crucifix to hang in their room. The Godparent may wish to organise a special candle or cake for the day as part of their gift.

“Dear parents and godparents: You have come here to present this child for baptism. By water and the Holy Spirit he/she is to receive the gift of new life from God, who is love. On your part, you must make it your constant care to bring him/her up in the practice of the faith. See that the divine life which God gives him/her is kept safe from the poison of sin, to grow always stronger in his/her heart.”

- The Rite of Baptism



Not only is a Godparent a mentor they can turn to, a support and friend to help them be a good person, but at the heart of Godparenting is someone who can show their Godchild what it means to live an authentically Christian life.

Your promise:

Celebrant: “You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training him (her) in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him (her) up to keep God’s commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbour. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?”

Parents: “We do.”

Celebrant: “Godparents, are you ready to help the parents of this child in their duty as Christian parents?”

Godparents: “We are.”

- The Rite of Baptism



It is a great privilege and honour to be asked to be a Godparent. This is also a great opportunity to renew our faith. The priest and the parish community together are here to support you through this journey, and will be praying that God bless you in every way.