

What does it mean to be a godparent?

Godparents take the responsibility of participating in the spiritual growth of the newly baptized. They support the parents by nurturing the child in the life of the Catholic faith. A godparent offers his or her own life and practice of the faith, as a witness for the godchild. It's important to remember that when handing on the Catholic faith, it is not merely the exchange of information, but is a model of the tradition of the faith. This is a serious responsibility, second only to that of the child's parents who serve as the child's primary educators.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, "For the grace of baptism to unfold, the parents' help is important. So too is the role of the godfather and godmother, who must be firm believers, able and ready to help the newly baptized on the road of Christian life. Their task is a truly ecclesial function. The whole ecclesial community bears some responsibility for the development and safeguarding of the grace given at baptism" (1255). For this reason, in the Rite of Baptism, godparents will be asked, **"Are you ready to help the parents of this child in their duty?"**

Who can be a godparent?

The Catholic Church requires the following for godparents (Canon 874.1)

- One Catholic godparent is required, but if two are chosen, one must be male and the other female.
- Must be leading a life of faith, and be a registered and practicing member of a Catholic parish.
- Must not be a parent of the one to be baptized.
- Must be at least sixteen years old.
- Must have received the sacraments of initiation: Baptism, First Eucharist, and Confirmation.
- If married, the marriage must be recognized as valid by the Catholic Church.
- Godparents must be physically present at the Baptism.

Note: A baptized non-Catholic who is actively participating in his/her Christian faith may be a Christian Witness in company with a practicing Catholic who will serve as the godparent.

What are the expectations and duties of a godparent?

While the entire Church takes responsibility for being part of and nurturing the spiritual life of the newly baptized, the parents, godparents, and family members are the first visible witness of the Church for the child. In particular, godparents carry out their role by:

- Praying for the child.
- Modeling the traditions of the faith.
- Supporting and affirming the parents in the faith and life of the child.
- Encouraging the newly baptized child in his/her new mission of being a Priest, Prophet, and King.

The duty referred to in the Rite of Baptism is raising the child in the faith, so that "keeping God's commandments, he or she may love the Lord and his or her neighbor as Christ has taught us." You are to help the parents fulfill this duty. The Code of Canon Law says, "A godparent helps the baptized person to lead a Christian life in keeping with baptism and to fulfill faithfully the obligations inherent in it" (872). The witness of your life of faith as a disciple of Jesus Christ is essential. Therefore, in order to take up the responsibility of godparent, please turn the page to sign the Godparent Statement of Faith.

Godparent Statement of Faith

This form should be completed by each godparent.

Godparent's name: _____

Godparent's address: _____

Parish at which you are registered (include city/state): _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

Child to be baptized (first, middle, last name): _____

I, _____, hereby state that:

- I am at least 16 years of age.
- I am a fully initiated Catholic (received all three sacraments of initiation in the Catholic Church: Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Communion).
- I "lead a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on" (Code of Canon Law, 873), namely:
 - I attend Mass every weekend and on Holy Days of Obligation.
 - If I have married, one of the following applies:
 - I have been married within the Catholic Church.
 - I am divorced and have not remarried.
 - My previous marriage(s) has been annulled, and (if currently married) my present marriage is within the Catholic Church.
 - I am currently a registered parishioner at the church listed below.

I will make every effort to live a Catholic life that reflects the teaching of the Catholic Church. I am prepared to assist the parents in their Christian duties as Christian parents.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Certification by Parish

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the individual whose name is signed above is a current parishioner and has adhered to the teachings of the Catholic Church concerning marriage, attends Mass weekly and on Holy Days of Obligation, and receives the sacraments according to the laws of the Church. This person, consequently, qualifies, to the best of my knowledge, as a proper godparent.

Church name and address: _____

Pastor's name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please mail this completed form to the following address:

Baptism Ministry
Stella Maris Family of Parishes
1479 Locust Lake Rd.
Amelia, OH 45102

The Baptism date will be scheduled after all forms have been received and baptismal formation completed. If you have any questions, please contact Mark and Cindy Henderson at baptism@stellamarisfamily.org