



Your child's spiritual mentor: *Catechesis for sponsors*

It is a great honor and privilege to be chosen as a sponsor. This task is an important and lifelong responsibility. Your duty will be to help this child on the road of Christian life, to follow Christ. It is not just about an honorary title to signify your close relationship with the person or family but about your relationship with Christ and the Church. Similar to the parents, you are to be a role model and mentor in the practice of the Catholic faith. Parents are the primary educators in forming their child's faith. You are to assist the parents in this important ministry. Are you a firm believer in Christ and ready to help guide this child to live a life of holiness as a Catholic?

For Baptism, the Church asks for one or two Catholic sponsors, one man and one woman. These Catholic sponsors are sometimes called godparents. At the request of parents, a baptized and believing Christian not belonging to the Catholic Church may act as a Christian witness along with a Catholic sponsor. Though the Christian witness has no liturgical role in the ceremony itself, a witness ought to be a good role model and mentor in following Christ. A Catholic who has left the Church is not eligible to be a Christian witness.

For Confirmation, the Church encourages (but does not require) having the Catholic baptism sponsor be the confirmation sponsor in order to reaffirm the connection between baptism and confirmation. Confirmation continues the work of Baptism by strengthening the life of grace at work in the child. Confirmation sponsors, like in baptism, become mentors who walk beside the child and assist them in practicing the Catholic faith. Hence, the sponsor is simply re-affirming their commitment to help the child mature in the practice of the Catholic faith.

In order to fulfill this valuable role as sponsor, it is important to understand the qualities of the person chosen. Here is a little about what the Church requires for sponsors (Canon 874):

Appointment:

The sponsor must be invited to take on this responsibility freely, knowing what it entails. The sponsor is specifically appointed or chosen because he/she is suitable for this role and has the intention of fulfilling it. Are you able to stay in touch with this child over the years to mentor them in Catholic faith?

Other than the natural or adoptive parents:

The sponsor cannot be the parent. The sponsor represents the broader community of faith which is distinct from the child's parents. Sponsors assist parents in being spiritual parents to the child. Are you willing to be a spiritual parent to this child?

Maturity:

The sponsor needs to have enough maturity in the faith to be capable of leading another in knowledge and practice of the faith, and usually be at least 16 years old. Are you mature enough to guide and help this child grow in their relationship with Christ and His Church?

Fully initiated into the faith:

The sponsor must have received Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist: the Sacraments of Christian Initiation. Sponsors hand on the faith that they have received. To model the Catholic faith, sponsors must be initiated into the Catholic Church by means of these three sacraments.

Living a life of faith which befits the role:

For a Sponsor

Do I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church?

Have I received the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist? Do I regularly participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

Do I practice my Catholic Faith by faithfully attending the celebration of the Mass every Sunday and Holy Day? Am I free to receive Holy Communion?

If married: Has my marriage been celebrated in accord with the laws of the Catholic Church?

If not married: Am I living a chaste life (not living with anyone in a sexual relationship)?

If I have children: Am I raising my children in the practice of the Catholic faith?

Printed Name

Person receiving Baptism/Confirmation:

Signature

Today's Date