

The Christian Sponsor at the Baptism of an Infant

To be chosen as a Godparent (sponsor) is a special honor. You, above all, have been entrusted with the responsibility to participate in this child's Christian life and education.

This privilege offers you the opportunity to develop a mutually enriching spiritual relationship—one that will last throughout this life and beyond.

There are many ways you can nurture this spiritual relationship and become a special friend to your godchild. Among these are:

Celebrate the anniversary of the day of baptism each year with a visit, a call or a card.

As your godchild grows, share your faith with him/her. Grow in your own knowledge of Catholic doctrine, practice, and values so you can answer his/her questions.

As your godchild receives the other sacraments, especially First Communion and Confirmation, send a card and a gift (bible, rosary, etc.) and try to be present for the celebration.

Support the parents of your godchild in their responsibility as the primary religious educators of their child.

Most important is your faith life which is nourished by daily prayer, reflection on the Word of God, and a lifestyle based on Christian values.

Catholic godparents must sign the “Baptismal Sponsor Affirmation Statement” and return it to St. Olaf Parish at least one week before the Baptism. The form must be signed by your pastor or another parish representative.

Non-Catholic godparents must sign the “Baptismal Witness Affirmation Statement” and return it to St. Olaf Parish at least one week before the Baptism. The form must be signed by your pastor or another church representative.

Because the church values the role of sponsors, there are requirements for serving in this ministry found in church law:

- 1) When an adult is to be baptized, a sponsor is to assist the adult in the Christian initiation process. When an infant is to be baptized, the sponsor is to present the child for baptism along with the child's parents. In all baptisms, the sponsor “will help the baptized to lead a Christian life in harmony with baptism” (Canon 872).
- 2) One sponsor is sufficient (male or female), but if two sponsors are chosen, one must be male and one female (Canon 873).
- 3) To be a sponsor, a person must (Canon 874):
 - a) Be chosen by the one to be baptized or by the parents
 - b) Be willing to fulfill the role of sponsor
 - c) Be at least sixteen years old
 - d) Be a practicing Catholic who has received the Sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation. (Please note that a Catholic who is married outside the Church or who has joined another denomination should not be chosen. These situations contradict the idea of “a practicing Catholic.”)
 - e) Not be the father or mother of the person to be baptized.
- 4) A non-Catholic Christian who has been baptized may serve as a witness to the baptism (and may therefore act as a second godparent) as long as the other godparent fulfills the requirements to be a Catholic sponsor (Canon 874).