

Sacrament of Baptism

Godparents OR WITNESSES

via "the Holy See" CODE OF CANON LAW BOOK IV. FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH (Cann. 834-848)

CHAPTER IV.

SPONSORS

Can. 872 Insofar as possible, a person to be baptized is to be given a sponsor who assists an adult in Christian initiation or together with the parents presents an infant for baptism. A sponsor also helps the baptized person to lead a Christian life in keeping with baptism and to fulfill faithfully the obligations inherent in it.

Can. 873 There is to be only one male sponsor or one female sponsor or one of each.

Can. 874 §1. To be permitted to take on the function of sponsor a person must:

1/ be designated by the one to be baptized, by the parents or the person who takes their place, or in their absence by the pastor or minister and have the aptitude and intention of fulfilling this function;

2/ have completed the sixteenth year of age, unless the diocesan bishop has established another age, or the pastor or minister has granted an exception for a just cause;

3/ be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist and who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on;

4/ not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;

5/ not be the father or mother of the one to be baptized.

§2. A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community is not to participate except together with a Catholic sponsor and then only as a witness of the baptism.

**YOU'RE
INVITED**
*To a preparation class for
your upcoming God-Child*

Baptizing a child is a blessing. You have been selected by the parents of _____ as a Christian Witness or as a Sponsor for his/her baptism on _____. We know how precious this sacrament is and especially for you as a witness. Please join us as we discuss the Sacrament of Baptism and all that the Lord has told us about this very special event. We encourage your attendance because we know the important place you will hold in this child's life for the rest of their life. As Jesus said to his disciples in Matthew 28:19-20 "19_h Go, therefore,* and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit,20_i teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.* And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes this best: CCC 1231

1231 Where infant Baptism has become the form in which this sacrament is usually celebrated, it has become a single act encapsulating the preparatory stages of Christian initiation in a very abridged way. By its very nature infant Baptism requires a *post-baptismal catechumenate*. Not only is there a need for instruction after Baptism, but also for the necessary
13 flowering of baptismal grace in personal growth. The *catechism* has its proper place here.

Sacrament of Baptism

Godparents OR WITNESSES

per the Archdiocese of Saint Louis via archstl.org/sacred-worship/frequently-asked-questions/baptism-faq

To be admitted to the role of a Godparent what requirements do I need?

To be permitted to take on the function of sponsor(godparent) a person must:

- be designated by the one to be baptized, by the parents or the person who takes their place, or in their absence by the pastor or minister and have the aptitude and intention of fulfilling this function;
- have completed the **sixteenth year of age**, unless the diocesan bishop has established another age, or the pastor or minister has granted an exception for a just cause;
- **be a Catholic** who has been **confirmed** and has **already received the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist** and who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on;
- not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;
- not be the father or mother of the one to be baptized. §2. A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community is not to participate except together with a Catholic sponsor and then only as a witness of the baptism (Canon 874).

How do parents choose a name for Baptism?

Parents, sponsors, and the pastor are to take care that a name foreign to Christian sensibility is not given (Canon 855). The law does not require that the child be given a saint's name but forbids a name that would be offensive to Christians (Pastoral Companion for Canon Law 51).

How soon after birth should Infants be Baptized?

For infants, parents are bound by obligation to ensure that infants are baptized within the first weeks after birth (Canon 867). For adults, baptisms may be celebrated at any time however it is commendable to celebrate them at the Easter Vigil.

What happens if the Godparent cannot be present at the Baptism?

If the Godparent cannot be present he/she is to appoint someone else to serve as a proxy. According to the Pastoral Companion; "If the godparent cannot be present in person, he/she may appoint another person to serve as a proxy, but the appointment must be made so that there is certainty as to the person who takes the responsibility as Godparent. Ordinary, the Godparent should make the appointment of the proxy in writing or before two witnesses so that there is certainty about who is the responsible person. The custom of leaving the appointment of the proxy to the parent of the infant or two the baptizing priest tends to make sponsorship doubtful and is to be reprobated. The real Godparent must give a mandate directly or indirectly (through the agency of others but with his or her consent) to the proxy. In the record of Baptism, the names of both the Godparent and the proxy should be entered" (56).

How do I have my child Baptized in another parish?

One must coordinate with the pastors of both one's own parish and the parish the parent's wish to have their child baptized and **permission from both must be given.**

Who can Baptize?

Any validly ordained Deacon, Priest, or Bishop can baptize. In extreme cases, when death is eminent, any person can baptize (Canon 861).

Can a Non-Catholic be a witness?

Yes, non-Catholic witnesses can serve as a Christian witness but it is not preferred. The non-Catholic must be baptized and must be present with a Catholic godparent at the time of baptism (Pastoral companion for Canon Law 57).