

Who Can Be A Godparent?

Thank you for choosing Holy Spirit Catholic Church for your child's Baptism. We look forward to welcoming your child into Christ, the Catholic Church, and our vibrant parish community.

"Who can be a Godparent?" seems like a simple question, but there is more to it than just choosing someone you'd like to fill that role. To help you make an informed decision, we offer this brief description of what is required of a Godparent.

Often it is assumed that *any* Catholic can be a Godparent, but that is not the case. Being a Godparent is not merely an honorary role like being a maid of honor or the best man at a wedding. In the Baptism ceremony, when asked, Godparents agree to help the parents in "raising them in the [Catholic] faith so that, keeping God's commandments, they may love the Lord and their neighbor as Christ taught us."¹ To do that, it only makes sense that a Godparent be living the life of a faithful Catholic, so the Church maintains that Godparents must meet certain criteria. Briefly:

- 1. Practicing Roman Catholics:** This means each Godparent must be attending Mass and partaking in the sacraments on a regular basis. Their Pastor or his designee will confirm this on the Godparent/Sponsor form. *Please also note that Non-Catholics cannot be Godparents.*
- 2. There can be no more than two Godparents:** If there are two, one must be male and the other female.
- 3. Each Godparent must have received Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.**
- 4. If married, each must be in a marriage that is recognized by the Catholic Church.** Such a marriage would normally have been witnessed by a Roman Catholic Bishop, Priest or Deacon, and have been recorded in the Marriage Register of the parish where the marriage took place. *Those married only civilly do not meet this requirement.*
- 5. They must be sixteen years of age or older.**
- 6. A Godparent cannot be the parent of the child to be baptized.**
- 7. They must attend a Baptism seminar at Holy Spirit, or another Catholic Church within the past year.** If they attended a seminar at another Church, please provide Holy Spirit with a Certificate of Attendance from that parish.

Please, don't put the cart in front of the horse. To avoid a potentially embarrassing situation, attend the baptism seminar to fully understand the requirements for Godparents *before* asking someone to be your child's Godparent. If you have questions, please contact:

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Deacon Ray Stiles: ed.prisby@holyspiritchurchjax.org

Or Holy Spirit Parish Office: 904-641-7244

¹ USCCB, *The Order of Baptism of Children*, 2020, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, paragraphs 39-40