

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A GODPARENT OR SPONSOR? CONSIDER THIS SPONSOR'S GUIDE

As a Godparent/Baptism sponsor, you do have specific functions. The Church describes them as the following:

- To support the parents in communicating and nurturing the faith of the child
- To support the candidate in their faith development
- To accompany the candidate, if possible, to special liturgies
- To help the child or the candidate live as a follower of Jesus

Some of the following suggestions will not be possible if you live away from the area but be creative and think of ways to be in contact with the candidate.

- Arrange opportunities to spend time with the parents of the child or the candidate himself/herself, if age appropriate, and to enjoy being together. Some of these times can relate directly to the Baptism.
- Discuss with the parents of the child or the candidate the efforts, progress and problems experienced in preparing for the reception of Baptism. Help them to review the Basic Faith concepts and see if there are any questions or concerns.
- Offer suggestions and encouragement, as they are needed.
- Arrange some time to pray together or to read a passage from Scripture together. If you live close by, make plans to participate in the Eucharist (Mass) together.
- Keep in contact with the parents of the child or your candidate either in person or on the telephone.

Take time for yourself. Put aside some time for thinking and praying. Sponsors can begin to see how they can improve the quality of their role. There are many ways to go about this. One could just spend time alone, quietly reflecting; take up a journal and attempt writing one's reflections; or talk over things with a friend. You might ask yourself:

- Can I share my faith unashamedly?
- Do I live close enough to really get to know my Godchild/Candidate?
- Am I an active member of my local Catholic parish?
- What has being asked to be a Godparent taught me about my faith this week?
- What can I do to encourage the child or candidate I am sponsoring in his/her faith life?
- What do I want to pray especially for this week?

We pray that your role as a sponsor will be an enriching one.

A sponsor must meet the following requirements:

- *Is at least 16 years old*
- *Is a Catholic who has received all the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation)*
- *Leads a life in harmony with the faith, that is, attends Mass regularly and if married, was married in the Catholic Church or with the approval of the Catholic Church.*
- *Is not the father or mother of the candidate*

The sponsor's home parish has the right to verify that he/she is qualified to be a sponsor.