



Godparents' Sponsor Certificates Requirements:

Role of the Godparents:

The godparents, also known as Baptismal sponsors, together with the parents, must be willing to help the baptized grow in love for Christ and neighbor. By word and example, the godparents will encourage the candidate to live the Christian life and fulfill faithfully the obligations connected with it (*cf. Code of Canon Law, c. 872*). The Church does not take this role lightly and so has established clear criteria for the fulfillment of these roles in its laws.

Church law permits two godparents for Baptism. Only one is necessary. If one godparent is chosen who has been **validly baptized** in a non-Catholic Christian community, they may act as a *Christian witness* at a baptism, provided there is also one Catholic sponsor. However, a baptized Catholic who does not meet the below mentioned requirements **may not** act as a Christian witness. A baptized Catholic not in good standing with the Church (for example, one who does not attend Mass, registered at a parish, divorced and remarried, no longer practices their religion or has left the Catholic Church to practice another religion) **may not** serve as a Christian witness. In addition, a baptized Catholic under the age of 16 years or a baptized Catholic who has not yet received the sacrament of Confirmation cannot be a Christian witness. Therefore, a Catholic not in good standing cannot participate in the baptism ceremony. If two Catholic godparents or one Catholic godparent and one Christian Witness are chosen, there must be one of each sex; male and female (*cf. Code of Canon Law, c. 873*).

Please keep in mind the following requirements for Baptismal sponsors when choosing Catholic Godparents:

- A sponsor should be living according to the codes, canons, laws and teachings of the Church. They should be a participant in the community life of the Catholic Church. This means he or she must be registered in a parish, receive the Eucharist regularly by attending Mass, and lead a life in harmony with the faith and role to be undertaken.
- A sponsor must be *fully initiated* into the Catholic Church. That is, they have received the three Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Holy Eucharist, and Confirmation.
- A Sponsor must be at least 16 years of age.
- If the sponsor is married, they should be in a marriage that is recognized as valid by the Catholic Church in the Sacrament of Marriage by a priest or deacon. A person currently in a civil marriage (outside of the Catholic Church) may not be a godparent.
- A sponsor for Baptism *cannot* be the mother or father of the one to be baptized.

The Catholic sponsor(s) of a Baptism must obtain a sponsor certificate or testimonial letter from the **pastor of the Catholic Church** the sponsor attends, testifying he/she meets all the requirements stated above. **We DO NOT** accept Sacramental certificates to fulfill document requirements for a Catholic godparent(s). **The original sponsor certificate(s) with a raised church seal for Catholic godparent(s) must be submitted by mail or delivered to Our Lady of the Assumption's parish office, to the attention of Lisa Reed, ten days prior to the actual Baptism. No exceptions.**

Registration is required in order to obtain a Sponsor Certificate.

In the course of the year, many people who have been asked to serve as sponsor for the Sacraments of Baptism or Confirmation call the rectory to request a sponsor certificate. Most of the time there is no problem, and an appointment is set up to meet with our pastor. However, there are times when we are not able to give a certificate to someone.

In order to obtain a sponsor certificate from our parish the person requesting a sponsor certificate must be **registered at Assumption parish and have been registered for at least three (3) months prior** to the request. Even if he/she received all of his/her sacraments here at Assumption years ago but now live elsewhere, he/she is not a member of this parish. Rather, he/she is a member of the parish in whose territory he/she **resides**. This is the parish where the sponsor certificate must be obtained.

*Please note: If the Godparent(s) are a registered member of Assumption Parish, they must still obtain a sponsor certificate by contacting the rectory office. Please share this with relatives and friends. This is Church Law, not the whim of the parish clergy.

It is so unfortunate when someone comes to us seeking a sponsor certificate and we are unable to give one because one (or more) of the above requirements are not being adhered to by the individual.

Register in a parish, practice your faith on a regular basis, follow the Church teaching, and there will be no problem obtaining a "certificate."