

Regulations for Sponsors for Baptism and Confirmation

Who may be baptismal sponsor/godparent? Insofar as possible, one to be baptized is to be assigned a sponsor. In the case of an adult baptism, the sponsor's role is to assist the person in Christian initiation. In the case of an infant baptism, the role is, together with the parents, to present the child for baptism, and to help the child live a Christian life befitting of the baptized, and faithfully to fulfill the duties inherent in baptism.

One sponsor, male or female is sufficient but there may be two, one of each sex. It is prohibited to have either two male or two female sponsors. To be admitted to undertake the office of sponsor, a person must:

Be appointed by the candidate for baptism, or by the parents, or by whoever stands in their place, or (if necessary) by the pastor, parish priest, or minister, and is to have the qualifications and the intention of fulfilling this role;

Be not less than 16 years old;

Be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has received the Eucharist, and who lives a life of faith which befits the role to be undertaken;

Not to be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;

Not be either the father or the mother of the one to be baptized. **N.B. These criteria are the same for those who would sponsor a candidate for confirmation.**

A baptized non-Catholic Christian, i.e. a baptized non-Catholic Christian maybe a witness to the baptism, and only together with a Catholic sponsor. Non-Catholics and non-Christians may not be sponsors for baptism and confirmation.

Because the sponsor must be leading a life in harmony with the faith, the person, if married must be in a valid marriage recognized by the Church.

A baptismal sponsor may act through a proxy. One who is to act as a proxy for a sponsor must meet all of the same requirements the sponsor must meet. The proxy must be the same gender as the official sponsor. A parent or stepparent may not fulfill the role of proxy for the sponsor.

A baptized Catholic who does not meet the above mentioned requirements may not act as a Christian witness. A non-practicing Catholic (one who does not attend Mass, or has left the Catholic Church to practice another religion) may not serve as a Christian witness.

One's own pastor normally issues sponsor certificates, which declare that one is fit to serve as a sponsor for a candidate for baptism and confirmation. These are ordinarily presented to the priest or deacon administering the sacrament.