

## WHAT IS A GODPARENT?

Godparents are chosen to be Christian role models for their godchild, who commit to support the parents in raising their child in the practice of the faith.

## WHO CAN BE A GODPARENT?

A godparent is to be 16 years or older and fully initiated into the Catholic Church, that is, baptised and received Confirmation and Eucharist. A child needs to have at least one godparent (either a godfather or godmother) or two godparents (one godmother and one godfather). Christian of other traditions are welcome to be witnesses but non-Christians are unable to be witnesses.

There is no legal obligation as a godparent, rather it is an important ministry of the Church. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, *“For the grace of Baptism to unfold, the parents' help is important. So too is the role of the godfather and godmother, who must be firm believers, able and ready to help the newly baptized - child or adult on the road of Christian life. Their task is a truly ecclesial function.”* (CCC, 1255).

## I'VE BEEN ASKED TO BE A GODPARENT, WHAT NOW?

The invitation to be a godparent is a joy and privilege. Consider some of the following suggestions to embrace this wonderful role:

- When you accept the invitation of godparent, be sure to discuss with the child's parents what their expectations of you will be
- In discussion with the parents ask if you could prepare anything for the Baptism such as the baptismal candle or white garment
- Before the Baptism, write a letter to your godchild welcoming them to the Catholic faith, share about your own faith and your hopes and dreams for them as they grow
- Mark the anniversary of your godchild's Baptism each year, perhaps with a card, a letter, or by simply making contact in some other way
- Stay in contact with your godchild – this could be at special times throughout their lives including celebration of other sacraments, birthdays, graduations or exam times
- Pray for your godchild and their parents
- Share your own faith with your godchild. Look for natural opportunities to talk about your faith and your relationship with God. Depending on your location, it may be possible to regularly attend Sunday Mass with your godchild.