

So you've been asked to be a Godparent?



Congratulations on being asked to be a Godparent; they are very important people! It means that your friends or relations think you'll be a good example to their child. They trust you to pray for them, speak to them about God and encourage them in their Christian faith.

Here are some answers to questions you might have.

What does being a godparent involve?

As a godparent, you have a special role. It's about helping a child to come to know God, encouraging them in their spiritual life and supporting them in their membership of the local church.

You will be expected to attend the child's baptism, where you will make promises to help to bring them up in the Christian faith.

It's a role that will develop over time, as your godchild grows up and develops their own faith.

It feels like a big responsibility . . .

It is. Have a look at the questions you will answer in the baptism service. Take some time to think through the commitments you make when you answer them. But don't forget that the Church can support you in encouraging and praying for your godchild.

I'm not sure I can make these decisions. What if I've not thought much about my faith and don't go to church regularly?

Most people have doubts at some stage, and no one's asking you to be perfect. However, being asked to be a godparent is a good opportunity to think about your own faith.

Godparents must have been baptized themselves, and it's best if you are also confirmed. Baptism or confirmation preparation can help you with your own questions about the Christian faith. It will also help you to support your godchild in developing their own faith. If you have any questions at all, why not speak to your Vicar or another Christian you know.

Does being a godparent mean I'm a legal guardian as well?

No. Your role as godparent is a spiritual one - to encourage and pray for your godchild. Perhaps you will be asked to be a guardian too, but that is separate from being a godparent.

I'm worried about doing the right thing on the day.

The priest will make sure the service goes smoothly and that everyone knows what to do and when. Why not ask if there's a rehearsal or any other preparation you could get involved in?

What happens in the baptism service?

Baptisms normally take place during a Sunday morning service, so the church congregation can welcome the child into the Church and declare their intention to support and pray for the child, parents and godparents.

When it comes to the baptism itself, the priest asks the parents and godparents to bring the child to the front of the church or gather around the font.

Before the baptism, the priest asks you to declare that you intend to do your best as a godparent. The priest asks you to say that you're 'prepared to walk with [the child] in the way of Christ' and will 'help them take their place within the life and worship of Christ's Church'.

Remember, if you've any doubts you can always discuss them with your Vicar.

After the baptism service

The Church may give you a special card to remind you of your godchild's baptism and the promises you have made. Keep it

somewhere you'll see it every day, so you remember your godchild each day and ask God to bless them daily as they grow up. Why not keep an up-to-date photograph alongside the card?



Building a relationship with your godchild

You're a godparent. Now what? Both you and your godchild will get far more out of this relationship if you can keep it alive. Children love to get letters, postcards and emails. Why not send a card or small gift on the anniversary of the baptism, to show you care about them and to remind you both of what's special about this relationship.

Keep in touch regularly as they grow up. Perhaps when they're older, they'll want to ask questions about faith or Christian life. If you've kept in touch, they might be able to ask you - and that's something special.

Growing in faith: confirmation

Hopefully, later on your godchild will want to make his or her own declaration of faith at a confirmation service.

Confirmation is an important occasion. Your godchild confirms the promises you made for them at the baptism service and the bishop leading the service prays for God's Holy Spirit to rest upon your godchild.

Before their confirmation, they attend a series of classes or meetings at their local church or school. They discuss what it means to be a Christian, so they can decide whether to make their own Christian commitment and how they'll express that in their own lives.



A prayer for godparents

Lord God,

*I pray that you will guide and support me in being a
godparent.*

Give me your wisdom and your love.

*Help me to be a good example of Christian living
and keep me mindful of my precious godchild*

[child's name]. Amen.

A prayer for your godchild

*Heavenly Father,
thank you for the gift of [child's name]
and for all the joy he/she brings us.
Be with her/him on her/his Christian journey
so she/he may come to know our Lord Jesus Christ
as Saviour and friend. Amen.*