



Nativity Church of Fargo
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Catechesis for Baptismal Sponsors

It is a great honor and privilege to be chosen as a sponsor. This task is an important and lifelong responsibility. Your duty will be to help a child on the road of Christian life, to follow Christ. It is not just about an honorary title to signify your close relationship with the person or family but about your relationship with Christ and the Church. Similar to the parents, you are to be a role model and mentor in the practice of the Catholic faith. Parents are the primary educators in forming their child's faith. You are to assist the parents in this important ministry. Are you a firm believer in Christ and ready to help guide this child to live a life of holiness as a Catholic?

For Baptism, the Church asks for one or two Catholic sponsors, one man and one woman. These Catholic sponsors are sometimes called godparents. At the request of parents, a baptized and believing Christian may act as a Christian witness along with a Catholic sponsor. Similar to the sponsor, the Christian witness is a good role model and mentor in following Christ, living a life that is in accord with the Christian faith.

For Confirmation, the Church encourages (but does not require) having the Catholic Baptism sponsor be the Confirmation sponsor in order to reaffirm the connection between Baptism and Confirmation. Confirmation continues the work of Baptism by strengthening the life of grace at work in the child. Confirmation sponsors, like in Baptism, become mentors who walk beside the child and assist them in practicing the Catholic faith. Hence, the sponsor is simply re-affirming their commitment to help the child mature in the practice of the Catholic faith.

In order to fulfill this valuable role as sponsor, it is important to understand the qualities of the person chosen. Here is what the Church requires for sponsors (Canon 874):

Appointment:

The sponsor must be invited to take on this responsibility freely, knowing what it entails. The sponsor is specifically appointed or chosen because he/she is suitable for this role and has the intention of fulfilling it. Are you able to stay in touch with this child over the years to guide them in Catholic faith?

Other than the natural or adoptive parents:

The sponsor cannot be the parent. The sponsor represents the broader community of faith which is distinct from the child's parents. Sponsors assist parents in being spiritual parents to the child. Are you willing to be a spiritual parent to this child?

Maturity:

The sponsor needs to be at least 16 years old and have enough maturity in the faith to be capable of leading another in knowledge and practice of the faith. Are you mature enough to guide and help this child grow in their relationship with Christ and His Church?

Fully initiated into the faith:

The sponsor must have received Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, the Sacraments of Christian Initiation. Sponsors hand on the faith that they have received. To model the Catholic faith, sponsors must be initiated into the Catholic Church by means of these three sacraments.

Living a life of faith which befits the role:

The sponsor must be a practicing Catholic and living in full harmony with the Church. The Church requires sponsors and Christian witnesses to be aware of what they are taking on. The following questions will assist you in examining your life in preparation for accepting the Christian duties of serving as a sponsor or Christian witness:

For a Catholic:

Do I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church?
Have I received the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist and do I regularly participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation?
Do I practice my Catholic Faith by faithfully attending the celebration of the Mass every Sunday and Holy Day? Am I free to receive Holy Communion?
If married: Has my marriage been celebrated in accord with the laws of the Catholic Church?
If not married: Am I living a chaste life (not living with anyone in a sexual relationship)?
If I have children: Am I raising my children in the practice of the Catholic faith?

Am I a registered member of a Catholic parish?
Name & Place of Parish _____ (see below)
Sponsor's Confirmation Date and place _____

For a Christian witness:

Do I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Am I baptized? Do I belong to a Christian congregation?

Do I practice the Christian faith in my life, work, and marriage in accord with the scriptures and the practices of my religious denomination?

The above questions are meant to offer the beginning of a discernment process that every Christian should undertake in order to assume the role of sponsor or Christian witness. If you feel uncomfortable with our honest answers, you should politely decline the invitation to be a sponsor or Christian witness. If you have questions, we encourage you to ask the counsel of your local Catholic priest to seek answers. Christian witnesses are encouraged to visit their pastor or a fellow Christian in a similar manner.

If you can affirm that you are qualified to take on this role of sponsor or Christian witness, sign below so that the pastor of the parish can count on you to take on your role.

_____ I am a practicing Catholic wishing to be a sponsor.

_____ I am a practicing Christian wishing to be a Christian witness.

Printed Name Person receiving Baptism/Confirmation:

_____, _____
Signature Today's Date

Parish
Seal

Sponsor's Printed Name

Catholic Sponsors present this to your pastor for his signature:

I, _____, pastor of _____, certify that
_____ is a registered and practicing member of my parish.