

Church of St. Benedict, Bronx, New York 10465

Certificate of Eligibility

The role of sponsor is an important one for the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. Today some may see the role as honorary, but the Church sees the sponsor, popularly called a godparent, as a fully-initiated Catholic who actively supports the newly Baptized or Confirmed by good example and instruction in the Christian life.

In order to be admitted to the role of sponsor, the law of the Church directs that a person must be designated specifically by the parents of the infant or the individual who is to be baptized or confirmed. To be a sponsor, a person must be a Catholic, at least sixteen years of age, and have already received the Sacraments of the Most Holy Eucharist and Confirmation. In addition, he/she must be leading a life in harmony with the faith and not be bound by a canonical penalty (see reverse side).

I, _____ have been asked to be the
sponsor at the Baptism Confirmation of _____
on _____ at _____ Church

Before Almighty God, I am

_____ at least sixteen(16) years of age

_____ have *received the* Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation

_____ practicing the Catholic faith by attending Mass each Sunday and
Holy Days of Obligation

_____ (if married) Married in a Catholic Church

Sponsor's Name (*please print*) _____

Sponsor's Signature _____

Priest/Deacon Signature _____

_____ I have difficulty with one or more of the above statements and would like to
make an appointment to see a priest to discuss the matter further.

Requirements of the Sponsor

The role of the sponsor is an important one for the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. The Church sees the sponsor as a fully-initiated Catholic who supports the one receiving the sacrament with example and instruction. Because of the seriousness of this ministry, the Church has the following requirements:

- The sponsor must be a fully-initiated member of the Catholic Church through Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.
- The sponsor must be at least sixteen (16) years of age.
 - a. In this case, the Catholic who is younger than 16 must be fully initiated.
- The sponsor must have an active life of faith in the Church and provide good example
 - a. Someone married outside the Church is not able to receive Communion and is not able to be a sponsor.
 - b. Also, a Catholic who has left the Church is not able to be a sponsor of a new member into the Church.
 - c. Therefore, a Catholic who has left the Catholic Church cannot be a sponsor, and cannot be a “Christian witness” if they join another Christian communion.
- The sponsor cannot be either parent.

When there are two sponsors, they are “spiritual parents” and are to be a godfather and godmother.

Christian Witness - (A baptized non-Catholic Christian)

Provided there is one Catholic sponsor, a baptized non-Catholic Christian may serve as a Christian witness for Baptism only. This person is a *Christian witness* and not a *sponsor*.

- Requirements to be a Christian Witness:
 - a. At least sixteen years old
 - b. A validly baptized Christian
 - c. Living an upright life
 - d. Cannot be either parent
 - e. Cannot be a Catholic who has left the Church
- A Christian witness may never be a non-baptized person. For example, Jewish or Muslim godparents are not permitted by universal church law.
- The notation “Christian witness” is placed under the name of the non-Catholic Christian witness in the baptismal register.

