

**ST. BERNARD CHURCH**  
**275 Tower Hill Rd..**  
**No. Kingstown, RI 02852**

## HOW TO CHOOSE GODPARENTS

The Baptism of your child is an important day for your family and you want to do the right thing. Choosing godparents (sponsors) is a decision not to be taken lightly. Often parents want to honor a special friend, repay a favor, or encourage a relative to have a closer relationship with their child. While all of these motives are well intentioned, they are not ideal. If you want to make the right decision, consider the following:

A godparent serves a special role for the one to be baptized, whether it be a child or an adult. Godparents represent the Christian Catholic community, the Church. They are to assist in the preparation of adult candidates for Baptism and to be supportive of them afterwards.

Baptism gives a person both a new and special status as a child of God and it makes a person a member of the Body of Christ, the Church. What you are looking for, therefore, are godparents who can truly represent the Catholic Community. This means that the Godparents must be active and committed Catholics. Parents must choose a firm believer, someone who is truly committed to the Catholic faith in which their baby will be baptized. The task of choosing godparents is one which should be performed with much prayer, careful thought, and with great concern for the precious spiritual life of your child.

### **GODPARENTS:**

Godparents represent the Catholic Faith Community, therefore, they must be baptized and confirmed Catholics and registered members of a parish. Both genders are represented, they must be one male and one female (you cannot have 2 godmothers or 2 godfathers). **An infant or child must have at least one godparent, although it is our custom to have two.** A person fulfilling the role of a godparent must be:

- ✓ A practicing Catholic (with a signed sponsor certificate from their proper pastor or his representative)
- ✓ Have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation
- ✓ Be at least 16 years of age.
- ✓ If married, must be married validly in the Catholic Church

### **CHRISTIAN WITNESS:**

A Christian Witness is a non-Catholic baptized in a non-Catholic Church. This person is not a godparent, but participates actively in the Baptismal Rite. There can be only one Christian Witness and he/she must be of the opposite sex of the godparent.

### **PROXY**

If a Godparent is unable to be present for the Baptism ceremony, a person designated as a "Proxy" may "stand in" for an absent godparent. The Proxy must be a practicing Catholic and be of the same gender as the godparent.