

# **Help for those asked to be Godparents**



**Putnoe Heights and  
St Mark's Church, Bedford**

## Godparents Certificate

This is to certify that .....

has undertaken to act as Godparent for .....

at their baptism at St Mark's Church, Bedford.

On .....

My Christian responsibility as a Godparent means that I should:

1. Pray regularly for him/her.
2. Set him/her an example of Christian living.
3. Help him/her to grow in the faith of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
4. Give every encouragement to him/her to follow Jesus and to fight against evil.
5. Help him/her to look forward to his/her confirmation.

## **Baptism and Godparents**

Christian parents have always wanted their children to follow in the Christian faith themselves and they can be welcomed into membership of the Church as babies. When a baby is baptised they are obviously not able to confess their own Christian faith. Instead Godparents answer the questions for them and take on a duty to be there to support the child as they grow. Since Godparents are taking on the responsibility of encouraging the child in the Christian faith they should be Christians themselves.

Being a Godparent does not mean that you are taking on the role of legal guardian as well. This is something which every parent has a duty to decide and you may be asked to be a guardian too, but it is not automatically your role as a Godparent. Your responsibility is a spiritual one - to encourage and pray for your Godchild. Eventually a child who has been baptised will have an opportunity to be confirmed and make a public commitment about their own faith. An ideal Godparent is somebody who will provide a great example to the child of Christian living. The Godparent will pray for the child and encourage them to follow the teachings of Jesus.

Traditionally the law of the Church states that there should be at least three Godparents, of whom at least two shall be of the same sex as the child and of whom at least one shall be of the opposite sex. It is good to ensure one Godfather and Godmother. There can of course be as many as the parents would like, often royal baptisms have lots! Parents may be Godparents for their own children provided that the child has at least one other 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 and encourage them in their Christian faith. As a Godparent, you have a special role. It's about helping a child and encouraging them in their spiritual life and supporting them as they grow up and share in the life of the 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.

### **What happens in the baptism service?**

Baptisms take place during the 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. Parents and Godparents will be asked to stand up and declare their own Christian faith.

It is important to make sure that you can make these promises and only you can truthfully know that. Parents and Godparents are invited to gather around the font, one family at a time and make the following declarations

Question Do you believe and trust in God the Father, who made the world?

Answer: I believe and trust in him

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ, who redeemed mankind?

Answer: I believe and trust in him

Do you believe and trust in his Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God?

Answer: I believe and trust in him

There are then three questions about the way you intend to live your life. Parents and Godparents make the promises for themselves and also for the child. Here are the questions with a short explanation;

Question 1 Do you turn to Christ?

You will be asked to answer - I turn to Christ

I want to change direction. I accept that my life is not totally my own. I acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and I will try to follow his teaching and his guidance for my life day by day.

Question 2 Do you repent of your sins?

You will be asked to answer - I repent of my sins

I'm sorry about the past and I know that I am accountable to God for my actions and thoughts. I can never be perfect but as I admit what is wrong he forgives and accepts me.

Question 3 Do you renounce evil?

You will be asked to answer - I renounce evil

I know that I sometimes have to make choices between good and evil. I want to set the evil behind me and from now on I will always try to choose the good.

All of this is a big responsibility. Take some time to think through the commitments you make when you answer them. But don't forget that the Church will support you in encouraging and praying for your Godchild.

You may not have thought much about your own 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. If you have any questions at all, why not speak to your minister or another Christian you know.

## **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 when 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.

## **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.

Parents should not feel pressure to choose certain friends, but try to find people who can make the promises and mean them.

The names of Godparents will be included in the Church register and the baptism certificate.

## **Prayers for Godparents**

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 Amen.

Heavenly Father,  
thank you for the gift of my Godchild  
and for all the joy which they brings us.  
Be with them on their Christian journey  
so that they may come to know  
our Lord Jesus Christ  
as Saviour and friend. Amen.

If you have any questions then please do not hesitate to contact one of the ministers of our Church.

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