

St. Nicholas Orthodox Christian Church On Choosing Godparents/Sponsors

Guidelines for Choosing a Godparent/Sponsor

1. Must be Orthodox Christians of good standing in his/her parish.
2. Must live according to the Orthodox Faith and Creed.
3. Must consider the relationship between Godparent/Godchild to be of the highest and most profound nature, **NOT** an honorary title but a salvific responsibility.
4. Must pray you daily, foster a relationship with you, and remember your Nameday and other important occasions.
5. Catechumens must receive the blessing of the priest **BEFORE** asking potential Sponsors if they will sponsor him/her.

On Godparents: From the Counsels of Fr. Cleopa of Romania

Godparents should be chosen from among the most serious and pious of Orthodox Christians, regardless of what their social standing may be, for the Godparents are the spiritual guides for the Godchildren and have a greater responsibility than the biological parents. A Godparent must be a moderate person, of good moral character, gentle, and a good example in the society in which one dwells. He should know the Orthodox faith well, be faithful to the Creed, knowledgeable of Orthodox catechism and Holy Scripture and should attend church regularly.

This is why it is not permitted to have Godparents at a baptism or wedding (sponsors) who are of another faith or who are not married in the Church, nor those who are sexually immoral, who refuse to bear children in their marriage, are drunkards, divorced, or who have a bad reputation. A great deal of care must be used in choosing Godparents, and the choice must be approved by the parish priest since it is before him that they will vow to care for and instruct the Godchildren in the fear of God, promising to watch over them, bring them to church, be sure that they confess their sins, and strive in virtuous deeds.

The Godparents are to regularly visit the Godchildren in their home, admonishing the child [no matter what the age] when necessary, and giving them Orthodox books to read, for the Godparents have a tremendous responsibility as the guarantor of the child both before God and men.

The Godparent forms a bond with the Godchild and the parents of the child "through a spiritual relationship, which surpasses the relationship of flesh, since he is the spiritual father" according to Canon 53 of the Sixth Ecumenical Council. St. Dionysius the Areopagite says "the parents according to the flesh entrust the child to a baptized Christian who is a good teacher in spiritual things, since the child will be under that person's direction for his entire life, as a spiritual father and a guarantor of that person's life to God..." The Godparent should live as close as possible to the Godchild in order to guide and assist in teaching him the commandments of God.