

“Pray for them and let them and their parents know that you do. Pray with them. What a great reason to renew your regular prayer life!”

Being a Godparent

How amazing and honored do you feel when beloved friends or family ask you to be the godparent of their child? It is great to be a godparent, but what does it take to be a great one?

To stand as a sponsor is to make very specific vows in the liturgy for Baptism. For example, in the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer:

That with God’s help, you will be “responsible for seeing that the child you present is brought up in the Christian faith and life” and that you will “by your prayers and witness help this child to grow into the full stature of Christ.”

This simply means to be a godparent is to be one of the (hopefully many) adults sharing and living their Christian faith visibly in the life of that child, as an intentional mentor and friend. For a short but thorough primer with lots of godparenting ideas I recommend ***Godparenting: Nurturing the Next Generation*** by Nancy McLaughlin and Tracey Herzer.

The following are some broad and simple-but-sure thoughts to start or renew your godparenting relationship. You can use these ideas yourself, or share them with current/future godparents at your church. And remember, it’s never too late to rekindle your role as godparent.

5 Ways to Be a Great Godparent

1. Pray for Your Godchild

Some parishes offer godparents a helpful baptismal sponsor card including prayers for birthdays and baptism anniversaries. Pray for your godchildren out loud at worship. Pray for them and let them and their parents know that you do. Pray with them. What a great reason to renew your regular prayer life!

A Simple Prayer for Godchildren

Gracious God, cover my godchild _____ in grace, that they may know they are surrounded by love, yours, mine, and their family's, and most importantly that they abide in Jesus Christ our Savior, forever. Amen.

A Traditional Godparent's Prayer:

O Lord Jesus Christ, you embrace children with the arms of your mercy, and make them living members of your Church; give grace, I pray you, on my Godchild, _____, to stand fast in your faith, to obey your word, and to abide in your love; that, being made strong by your Holy Spirit, they may resist temptation, and may rejoice in the life that now is, and dwell with you in the life to come; through your merits, O merciful Savior, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

2. Take Your Godchild to Church

If you live near your godchild, count your blessings, and be in their life as they grow. Help celebrate milestones. Go with or take them to church. You don't have to be theologically trained or "have things figured out." In worship and out of worship, share how God is present in your life and what your faith means to you, as appropriate for the child's age and context.

3. Read Bible Stories with Your Godchild

Know their favorite Bible stories or scripture passages, and share yours with them. Ask open-ended questions and be willing to listen to their answers. Want to buy a Bible for your godchild? Building Faith has articles on **Choosing a Children's Bible**, as well as books for **Christmas** and **Easter**.

4. Keep in Touch With Your Godchild (Especially on a Baptism Anniversary)

If you live far away, you can still be an active and engaged godparent. Be intentional about praying for them and try extra hard to let them know you are thinking about them. Send cards, texts, or Facebook messages on special occasions. Make time to video chat or send videos and photos that remind you of the special relationship between godparent and child. Check in, share prayers, tell them you love them and are there for them. Letters and cards are lovely surprises too, especially in crayon.

5. Play to Your Strengths

A friend of mine plays guitar and is super creative, so for his godchildrens' birthdays or other special occasions, he'll write a touching, funny song for them and send a video singing it. For myself, I hope my constancy of prayer will be felt over the years, as well as my (forthcoming) funny letters. Anything can be special, offered just for them.

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