

**Preparing for Baptism**  
**at**  
**St. Joseph Church**  
*Godparent Reflection Book*

## PRAYER FOR BAPTISM

*While making the sign of the cross, pray:*

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

We have been called by the Lord to be a royal priesthood,  
a holy nation, a people he has acquired for himself.

Let us ask him to show his mercy on my godchild,  
who is to receive the graces of Baptism,  
to myself as a godparent and to all the baptized everywhere.

Through Baptism may my godchild become one of God's own children.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## STEPS TO COMPLETE

- Watch the videos found at [baptism.stjoeschurch.ca](http://baptism.stjoeschurch.ca). You may even wish to watch the videos together with the parents.
- Read the reflections found in this booklet and record your thoughts in the space provided.
- Complete the Commitment Letter found within this booklet and send a copy of it to the parents of your Godchild.
- Send a copy of your Baptismal Certificate, including details about your Confirmation, to the parents of the one to be baptized. If you cannot find your Baptismal Certificate, contact the parish where you were baptized and request a copy. Electronic copies may also be sent directly to St. Joseph Church at [office@stjoeschurch.ca](mailto:office@stjoeschurch.ca).

## THE BAPTISMAL PROMISE

Before a child is baptized, parents and Godparents make a solemn promise before the child, the Church and God. Godparents must be willing and able to make this promise. Here is the promise that parents and Godparents are asked to make in the baptismal ritual:

*The celebrant speaks to the parents in these or similar words:*

**You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training him (her) in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him (her) up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?**

Parents: **We do.**

*Then the celebrant turns to the godparents and addresses them in these or similar words:*

**Are you ready to help the parents of this child in their duty as Christian parents?**

Godparents: **We are.**

## REQUIREMENTS TO BE A GODPARENT

### **Godparent Requirements:**

- Must have only one male sponsor or one female sponsor or one of each.
- Must be chosen by the one to be baptized or by the parents
- Must be at least 16 years of age
- Must be a practicing Catholic and lead a life in harmony with the Roman Catholic faith
- Must have received the Sacraments of Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation within the Catholic Church
- Must not be under any canonical penalty
- Must not be a parent of the one to be baptized
- Must be willing to make the promise found in the Baptismal Ritual. This promise can be found on the second half of page 4 of this booklet.

### **Christian Witness**

When parents are considering who to select as Godparents for their child, sometimes they recognize qualities within a non-Catholic that would make for a good Godparent. A baptized person belonging to a non-Catholic Christian community may be included as a witness to a baptism so long as the one to be baptized also has a Catholic Godparent. This Christian Witness makes the same promises as a Godparent would, participates in the ritual in the same way as a Godparent and are recorded in the baptismal register along with the Godparent as a Christian Witness. A Baptized Catholic who has not made their First Communion and received the Sacrament of Confirmation is not eligible to be a Christian Witness.

## ACCESSING THE VIDEOS

1. Visit “[baptism.stjoeschurch.ca](http://baptism.stjoeschurch.ca)”
2. Click on the green coloured button labeled “Watch the Preparation Videos”
3. When prompted, enter the password “baptismprep”
4. Enjoy the videos

Dear Godparent,

If you made a list of the most important moments and experiences in your life so far, what would you include? Maybe key events like graduations, places you've been, people you've met, new jobs, getting married, the birth of a child, etc. Few of us would think to include our birth - though obviously without that crucial moment, nothing else could follow.

But what about your *spiritual* birth? In the Gospel of John, Jesus tells Nicodemus, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Your spiritual birth happens in the Sacrament of Baptism, which is the first Sacrament a Christian receives. It is the access point for the other Sacraments and for the very Kingdom of God.

Most organizations have a mission statement of some sort. It helps ensure that everyone is on the same page about the purpose, goals, and identity of the group. The Church, as the Body of Christ, has as her purpose and identity Christ's own mission - and each baptized Christian shares in that mission.

Those who are baptized receive gifts to fulfill a holy mission: to share in the work of Jesus Christ as Priest, Prophet, and King. The parents and godparents will play the primary roles in helping the newly baptized learn and live out this mission, but the whole family of the Church shares the responsibility of helping the new Christian along the way.

Becoming a godparent is not only an honour, but a promise made to your godchild to do what you can to plant and nourish the seeds of faith. This time of preparation is also an opportunity to reflect on your own baptism, on how the gift of your baptism and membership in our Church has drawn you closer to Jesus and made a real difference in your life.

As your godchild and his or her parents prepare for the Sacrament of Baptism, the reflections found on the following pages of this booklet are offered to assist you in your own preparations to be a godparent; as your godchild takes their first steps of faith through their baptism, may this time of preparation further your own faith and journey towards Jesus.



## GODPARENT REFLECTION ONE

In the Exodus, God saved his people Israel from slavery in Egypt and brought them to the Promised Land with many signs and wonders. He also used many human leaders to teach and guide his people. Moses led the people and gave them God’s law. Moses’ brother Aaron led the people in worship as High Priest. Moses’ sister Miriam led the people in praising God as a prophetess. At God’s command, Moses appointed 70 elders to help him govern the people in the wilderness.

By agreeing to be a godparent, you are answering the call to guide and protect the newly baptized as God’s chosen leaders guided the Israelites during the Exodus. Consider the following prayer from the Rite of Baptism:

Almighty God you sent your only Son to rescue us from slavery of sin, and to give us the freedom only your sons and daughters enjoy. We now pray for this child who will have to face the world with its temptations, and fight the devil in all his cunning. Your Son died and rose again to save us. By his victory over sin and death, cleanse this child from the stain of original sin. Strengthen him (her) with the grace of Christ, and watch over him (her) at every step in life’s journey. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The prayer makes it clear that although the newly baptized child will immediately enter into the freedom of the sons and daughters of God that freedom is not without challenges and temptations. It is your mission as godparent to be an instrument of God in strengthening and supporting your godchild, watching over him or her “at every step in life’s journey.”

What will you do to help your godchild walk in the freedom of his or her identity as God’s child? How will you help him or her resist the temptations of the world and the devil’s cunning? How can you start fulfilling this mission even now?

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## GODPARENT REFLECTION TWO

As a godparent, you are participating in a life-changing event for your godchild. Preparing for this momentous event should include a deepening of your own understanding of Baptism, the impact you will have on your godchild's future as a member of the family of God, and the meaning Baptism holds for you personally.

One way to make your godchild's Baptism real for you is to reflect upon your own baptismal vows as you are asked to renew them in the rite itself:

“Do you reject Satan? And all his works? And all his empty promises?”

After rejecting sin, you will be asked to make a profession of faith along with the parents and the rest of the congregation gathered for the Baptism. Afterwards the priest or deacon says:

“This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it, in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

The growth of your godchild will involve both a unique, individual relationship with Christ and a communal relationship with his Church. As a godparent, you are in a special position to nurture those relationships— now and in the years to come. You will have a very real impact on the fruits that the baptismal grace will bear in the life of your godchild. Your prayers and example will play an important part in your godchild's spiritual development.

Consider the effects of your Baptism and your own life of faith, the faith you will profess at your godchild's Baptism. What is going well in your spiritual life? Where could you use some improvement to be the best possible model and guide for your godchild?

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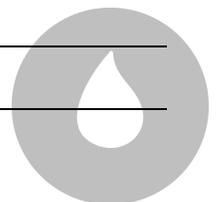
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## GODPARENT REFLECTION THREE

At his or her Baptism, your godchild will be anointed with the Holy Spirit and receive the same calling and mission that Christ received: to be Priest, Prophet, and King. As a godparent, your responsibility to set an example of faith and teach your godchild about the Christian life comes second only to that of the parents. It's a daunting task, but you are perfectly equipped for it; you have already received the anointing of the same Holy Spirit and been called into this same mission.

Consider the following words from St. John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation to the Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People (*Christi fideles Laici*):

“A new aspect to the grace and dignity coming from Baptism is here introduced: the lay faithful participate, for their part, in the threefold mission of Christ as Priest, Prophet and King.... Clearly we are the Body of Christ because we are all ‘anointed’ and in him are ‘christs,’ that is, ‘anointed ones,’ as well as Christ himself, ‘The Anointed One.’ In a certain way, then, it thus happens that with head and body the whole Christ is formed.”

By virtue of your own Baptism, you are a little “christ,” anointed with the same Holy Spirit in whom Jesus accomplished his mission. What your godchild needs from you is for you to let the Holy Spirit do his work that you may faithfully live out your part of the mission of Christ as Priest, Prophet, and King. It is simple, though not easy. What can you start doing now to live your baptismal mission more faithfully? What can you begin doing now and in the years to come to support and encourage the parents of your godchild? What can you do to help teach your godchild about his or her priestly, prophetic, and kingly calling?

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## PERSONAL COMMITMENT LETTER ACCEPTING THE ROLE AND DUTIES OF GODPARENT

After careful prayer and reflection, I, \_\_\_\_\_,  
affirm that I meet the requirements needed to be a godparent for my godchild  
\_\_\_\_\_. I further promise to encourage and  
support my godchild and his or her parents to live out this Sacrament faithfully  
both during this time of preparation and beyond.

Signed, \_\_\_\_\_

Date, \_\_\_\_\_

