

## Thoughts in choosing a sponsor (godparent) for your child

Pastor Ingrid Wengert

+ **Somebody who identifies as Christian** – Because the purpose of a sponsor is to support and encourage your child in the faith as he or she grows up, it makes sense that a sponsor (godparent) should be a Christian who practices their faith. The denomination doesn't matter – we're all baptized into Christ!

+ **Consider a person outside of the family** - Trying to honor somebody in the family by choosing them as sponsor is a noble idea; however, there can be two drawbacks to this:

- You may short-change your child - What I mean is that your child will have that person in their life already as a family member. Also, if the sponsor doesn't practice their faith, they might not understand nor have experienced crises of faith, questions about God, church celebrations and practices that help form us all in the faith.
- It may be awkward for your family member if they don't identify as a Christian - Sponsors are asked publicly at the baptismal rite to profess their faith and promise to help raise the child in the faith. Since your relative may not want to disappoint you, this may be awkward for their sense of integrity, as they are forced to say publicly what they don't really believe.

+ **Doesn't need to live locally** – It's difficult to guarantee where one will live in the next 10 years! Local people may move and distant friends may return. Ideally, sponsors would be here for the Baptism, but even that isn't a requirement. You may also ask for a "day of" congregational sponsor if a sponsor cannot make it.

+ **Number & gender of sponsors** - Only one sponsor is necessary; however, many people choose a godmother and godfather. If you choose two people, they can be of the same gender, as well.

+ **Not legally binding** – Your last will & testament is the place to publicly state who will look after your child in the case of the parents' death. Godparents (sponsors) are simply chosen to support the child in their faith and there is nothing legally binding about it.

+ **Optional congregational sponsors** – The congregation, with your input, can offer a congregational sponsor. This is helpful if you're not close to many Christians and we can also provide a "day of" sponsor for distant godparents. A congregational sponsor may act either as the only sponsor OR in addition to a sponsor you've chosen.

+ **Expectations for the Baptism itself**

- If local, to meet with the pastor and parents usually a week or so before the Baptism to talk about the meaning of Baptism, your responses and role during the Baptism and a sponsor's role after the Baptism
- If not local, I will send a letter including all of the information they'll need to know for the Baptism. Also, they should arrive about 30 minutes before worship to meet briefly so I can show them where to stand so that they are not nervous, etc...