



What are Sponsors?

Sponsors are people who are chosen to attend and witness the baptism of a person, both children and adults. In the case of a child, Sponsors speak for that child in confessing the faith. Throughout the person's life, his or her Sponsors ensure the person continues to grow and mature in that faith.

Do I need to choose sponsors?

While it has been a long standing tradition to do so, many people who are baptized do not have any Sponsors. But there are many benefits to having Sponsors and it is encouraged that you select faithful Christian people as your Sponsors. There is no requirement on the number, however most people choose two Sponsors (one male and one female) for each person being baptized. In the Early Church, and in some modern churches, Sponsors are assigned by the congregation.

What is the difference between Godparents and Sponsors?

There is no real difference between the two in the practical sense. The term *Sponsor* originates at the time of the Early Church, while *Godparent* is a more modern term. Both titles carry the same responsibilities. The usage of *Godparent* emphasizes that these people take upon themselves the responsibility to help raise

the child, and support the adult in the faith should biological parents be unwilling or unable to do so

How do I choose sponsors?

This is probably one of the hardest parts about the process. While some people simply pick relatives or friends because they are close to the parents, a Sponsor is more than this. A Sponsor should be someone who confesses the faith expressed in the Apostles' Creed and taught in the Small Catechism. They should be in worship regularly and be a good model of the Christian life. It is also helpful for them to live near the person they sponsor as this allows for a close relationship from the beginning.



What are the responsibilities of sponsors during the baptism?

During the Baptism service, Sponsors witness the baptism, and in the case of an infant, speak on behalf of the child along with the parents.

There is only one question asked of the Sponsors directly and then a series of questions put to the person being baptized, which the Sponsors answer on their behalf. The responses are all written in the hymnal.

What are the responsibilities of the sponsor after the baptism?

After the baptism is when the work of a Sponsor really begins. Sponsors are to pray for the baptized daily. They are to support the baptized's instruction in the Lutheran faith, encouraging, and taking them to worship, Sunday School, Bible Class, and Confirmation. Sponsors are to encourage the baptized to faithful reception of the Lord's Supper. In everything they are to be an example of faithful living toward God and their neighbor.

What are some ideas for sponsors throughout the person's life?

There are many practical things that a Sponsor can do throughout the life of the person. The biggest thing you can do for the baptized is pray for them. Pray that they will continue in the faith and grow and mature. Pray that they would come to faithful reception of the Lord's Supper. Pray that they would be blessed with good friends, teachers, and a Godly spouse one day. Pray for their parents. Pray with them as they get older. Continue to pray for them throughout their whole lives.

Other ways to support your Godchild:

Continue to remind them of their baptism by sending cards, gifts, and letters on the anniversary of their baptism.

Teach them the faith as they grow up by talking about your own faith, reading Bible stories to them, and teaching them the basics of what we believe – the Ten Commandments, Apostle’s Creed, and Lord’s Prayer.

Place the Scriptures in their hands by giving them age-appropriate Bibles as they grow up. And most of all, by taking them to church to worship with you and their family. All of these things will help the parents to bring up the child in the faith.

Remember always to model the life of faith for those that you sponsor. They will be looking to you as an example of what it means to be a Christian. The Pastor who did the baptism is your ally in this task, and a conversation with him is great place to start thinking of ways you can fulfill your baptismal vow as a Sponsor.



Should adults being baptized have sponsors?

It is not required but it is encouraged that any adults being baptized would have Sponsors. In this case, the Sponsor would not need to speak on behalf of the baptized, but still serve as a witness to the baptism. They would also be a source of knowledge and support to mentor the baptized as they continue to grow in faith in Jesus Christ.

What if the sponsors do not fulfill their responsibilities?

This is really up to the parents. If Sponsors are not performing their duties or have wandered from the faith, new Sponsors can be selected. Often old Sponsors are not “removed” as this would only cause unnecessary problems. If there are people who have stepped up into the role of Sponsor and you would like them to be officially recognized, they can easily be added.

What if the parents do not fulfill their responsibilities?

This is a very difficult problem that puts a lot of Sponsors in awkward situations. Usually the Sponsors do not want to offend the parents or cause a rift in their relationship. But the Sponsors took a vow that they would see to the spiritual well-being of the baptized, especially if the parents could not or would not do so. Even if the parents refuse to do anything, it is the responsibility of the Sponsor to try to fulfill their vow to raise the child in the Christian faith.

Questions about Baptismal Sponsors & Godparents?



Sponsors in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

A simple answer guide to the common questions that people ask.

“They are to pray for them, support them in their ongoing instruction and nurture them in the Christian faith, and encourage them toward the faithful reception of the Lord’s Supper.”

– Lutheran Service Book
Rite of Holy Baptism