# Godparents: Your undertaking

Christening marks the beginning of a journey with God which continues for the rest of our lives, the first step in response to God’s love. For all involved, it is a joyful moment when we rejoice in what God has done for us in Christ, making serious promises and declaring the faith. The family welcomes often quite a new member, and the wider community of the local church welcome the new Christian, promising support and prayer for the future. Hearing and doing these things provides an opportunity to remember our own Christening, and to reflect on the progress made on that journey, which is now to be shared with this new member of the Church.

Historically, godparents have been a significant part both of the service and of those networks that bind families one with another. While there is no longer any legal reality to the *in loco parentis* tradition, it lies on an expectation that godparents will be there throughout the child's life to support and encourage them in good times and in bad.

The service paints many vivid pictures of what happens on the Christian way. There is the sign of the cross, the badge of faith in the Christian journey, which reminds us of Christ’s death for us. Our ‘drowning’ in the water of baptism, where we believe we die to sin and are raised to new life, unites us to Christ’s dying and rising, a picture that can be brought home vividly by the way the baptism is administered. Water is also a sign of new life, as we are born again by water and the Spirit. This reminds us of Jesus’ baptism. And as a sign of that new life, there may be a lighted candle, a picture of the light of Christ conquering the darkness of evil. Everyone who is baptized walks in that light for the rest of their lives.

As you pray for the candidates, picture them with yourself and the whole Church throughout the ages, journeying into the fullness of God’s love.

“The godparents shall be persons who will faithfully fulfil their responsibilities both by their care for the children committed to their charge and by the example of their own godly living.” *Bishop’s Guidelines*

*In the Baptism service Godparents promise –*

Parents and godparents, the Church receives these children with joy.
Today we are trusting God for their growth in faith.
Will you pray for them,
draw them by your example into the community of faith
and walk with them in the way of Christ?
With the help of God, we will.

In baptism these children begin their journey in faith.
You speak for them today.
Will you care for them,
and help them to take their place
within the life and worship of Christ’s Church?
With the help of God, we will.

## And they affirm their faith in the Christian teachings –

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?
I believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?
I believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?
I believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.
This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.