

Dear Padre,

My child's godparents make no attempt to build a special relationship with her. I've talked to them about it, but it didn't help. Can I replace them?

When my niece, Hayley, was five, she asked me to be her "step-godfather" because she didn't know who her godfather was. The family friend my sister invited to be Haley's godfather has moved out of state and seems to have forgotten that Haley is his godchild.

Godparents have responsibilities beyond baptism day. The Code of Canon Law says a godparent also "helps the baptized person to lead a Christian life in keeping with baptism and to fulfill faithfully the obligations inherent in it" (872). A godparent should be present for the child's first Communion and encourage the child to live a Christian life as he or she grows older.

While neglectful godparents may not be replaced, parents are not limited to asking only two godparents to help their child grow in the faith.

"The whole ecclesial community bears some responsibility for the development and safeguarding of the grace given at baptism" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1255). Parents can and should ask others to help support their child's

faith development as he or she grows up: a teacher, a grandparent, or a friend in the town where your child has gone away to college. After all, children are baptized into a community of believers, and we all have the responsibility to help children—and one another—lead Christian lives.



WITAYA RATANASIRIRUCHAI/SHUTTERSTOCK

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Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to DearPadre.org to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.



A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

Your children will receive their Christian identity today. And you, parents and godparents, must safeguard this identity. This is your task throughout your lifetime: to protect the Christian identity of your children. It is a daily commitment: to make them grow with the light they will receive today.

ADMINISTRATION OF BAPTISM, JANUARY 9, 2022

Calendar

Monday

SEPTEMBER 12

Weekday

1 Cor 11:17–26, 33

Lk 7:1–10

Tuesday

SEPTEMBER 13

*St. John Chrysostom,
Bishop and Doctor
of the Church*

1 Cor 12:12–14, 27–31a

Lk 7:11–17

Wednesday

SEPTEMBER 14

*Exaltation of the
Holy Cross*

Nm 21:4b–9

Phil 2:6–11

Jn 3:13–17

Thursday

SEPTEMBER 15

Our Lady of Sorrows

1 Cor 15:1–11

Jn 19:25–27 or

Lk 2:33–35

Friday

SEPTEMBER 16

*Sts. Cornelius, Pope, and
Cyprian, Bishop, Martyrs*

1 Cor 15:12–20

Lk 8:1–3

Saturday

SEPTEMBER 17

Weekday

1 Cor 15:35–37, 42–49

Lk 8:4–15

Sunday

SEPTEMBER 18

*Twenty-fifth Sunday
in Ordinary Time*

Am 8:4–7

1 Tm 2:1–8

Lk 16:1–13 or 16:10–13