

Celebrating the Sacrament of Baptism

Congratulations on the birth (or upcoming birth) of your child(ren). We are pleased to welcome you to the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism. In order to help you prepare for the sacrament, here are a few things to keep in mind:

1. In order to have your child baptized in the parish, please ensure that you are a registered member of the parish. Once you are registered, you must enroll in the baptismal preparation class offered by the parish. Please consult the office for times and dates to make your reservation. Please note that children should not attend the class. The class is intended for adults and disruptive children can be a distraction to the instructor and other participants.
2. If you are just registering in the parish, you must have been a registered parishioner for at least three months prior to setting up the date of your baptism. If you desire to have the baptism prior to the three month period, you may elect to obtain a letter from your prior parish stating that you were registered parishioners in good standing. This letter should be submitted to the office with the rest of the required documentation.
3. If you are married, it is the expectation of the Church that you are married with the blessing of the Catholic Church. If you are not married in the Church or are not married, you are required to speak with one of the priests prior to establishing a date for the baptism so that the priest(s) can assist you in regularizing your situation.
4. If you are a Catholic and not practicing the Catholic faith, it is the expectation of the Church that you return to the sacraments immediately (e.g. Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist) so that the priest has a founded hope that the child(ren) to be baptized will in fact receive a Catholic upbringing. You may want to discuss this further with one of priests if questions arise.
5. Baptisms are celebrated after the 12:15pm Mass and no earlier than 1:15pm on 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. Private baptisms are not permitted.
6. Please note that we only accept 3 children per Sunday baptism.
7. Children seeking baptism who are seven years old and above must complete their sacraments of initiation (baptism, confirmation, Eucharist) at the Easter Vigil in the Spring after undergoing special preparation in the religious education program of the parish. Please speak with the Religious Education Office to register for this program. Please call 540-659-5705.
8. The selection of Godparents and/or Christian witnesses is an important component of the preparation process. At least one Godparent must be a Catholic (see qualifications next page). The parent(s) may choose a non-Catholic Christian to serve as a Christian witness. Please keep in mind that the sponsor's (Godparent's) role is to ensure the Catholic upbringing of the child to be baptized in case the parents are unable to do so. Therefore, sponsors need to meet the qualifications on the next page. We recommend that you do not select Godparent(s) (sponsor[s]) until you have ascertained that the proposed sponsor(s) are qualified.
9. Parents of the child to be baptized are requested to notify their guests attending the baptism of the need for appropriate attire when coming to church. Immodest and/or revealing clothing is inappropriate attire for the celebration of sacraments.

Qualifications for Baptism Sponsors (aka Godparents), Christian Witnesses and Proxies:

Pursuant to Canons 873 and 874 of the *Code of Canon Law*, baptism **sponsors** must be:

1. Designated by either the parents of the candidate, by the one to be baptized or by the pastor and must intend to fulfill the role of sponsor.
2. At least 16 years old.
3. A Catholic who has received the Sacrament of Confirmation and the Sacrament of the Eucharist and who practices the Catholic faith (i.e. Mass attendance on all Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, in a valid marriage (if married), follows all of the teachings of the Church).
4. Free of any canonical penalty, either imposed or declared.
5. Someone other than the father or the mother of the candidate to be baptized.

In order to serve as a **Christian witness** (non-Catholic Christian), the proposed witness must have been baptized according to a valid Trinitarian formula using water either poured, sprinkled or by immersion.

Proxies for either role must also meet the qualifications of either a sponsor or Christian witness. *Proxies must obtain a letter from their parish stating that they are practicing Catholics in good standing.*

Required documentation:

1. **Completed Baptismal Information document (colored paper)**
2. **Sponsor form(s) for Godparent(s) from the sponsor(s)' parish of registration**
3. **Completed Parental Intention Form for parents not married in the Church (if applicable)**

Please note that all documentation must be submitted to the office *no later than 10 business days prior to the baptism – no exceptions.* Incomplete paperwork will result in a delay of the baptism until the paperwork is complete and another baptismal date is assigned. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the office. Congratulations and may God bless you!