



# Guidelines

For  
Baptism Preparation  
At  
St. John the Baptist Parish

**Congratulations on the arrival of your new baby! Our Catholic Community joins you in thanking God for the gift of new life. As you are seeking the baptism of your child in the Roman Catholic Church, we look forward to journeying with you throughout this process.**

## **The Sanctifying Role Of The Church**

Through Baptism, God enables us to participate in his life in Jesus Christ and makes us his children. It is through this sacrament that we receive the Holy Spirit and become members of the People of God, of the Body of Christ, which is the Church. Baptism becomes our commitment to grow in this new life and to strive to acquire spiritual maturity. By baptism, God purifies us from sin.

Baptism is the sacrament of faith which has the Risen Christ as its source, and it is the offer of salvation for all people. Intimately linked to Confirmation and to Eucharist, Baptism is, with these two sacraments, Christian Initiation. The child is baptized in the faith of his/her parents, of his/her godparents and of the Church.

## **Basic Guidelines And Information For Infant Baptism**

Parents are responsible for bringing their child to the Sacrament of Baptism as soon after the birth as possible. Except in case of necessity, the church is the usual place of baptism.

*In order that a child be baptized, it is necessary that:*

1. the parents consent, or at least one of them, or someone legally standing in their place
2. and that there is a reasonable hope that the child will be brought up in the Catholic Faith.

*Godparents:*

A person may only have one or two godparents (also called sponsors); if two are chosen, they must be male and female.

In order for someone to be eligible as a godparent, these are the requirements:

1. they be chosen by the parents,
2. have the ability and the intention to fulfill the role,
3. be at least 16 years of age, and...
4. be a confirmed Roman Catholic, who has already received the Most Holy Eucharist, is leading a life in harmony with the Catholic Faith (including Marriage) and will be a good role model for the one being baptized,

5. and neither the father or the mother of the child.
6. A baptized person who belongs to another Christian community may be admitted only as a “Christian witness” (not a godparent) provided that there is at least one Roman Catholic godparent who fulfills the above criteria. A non-baptized person cannot be a witness.

### **Baptismal Preparation in Our Parish**

In order to respect your request for the baptism of your child, you are invited to follow closely the stages of preparation offered below:

1. Come in to the parish office and express your desire to have your child baptized. You need to be a registered parishioner of St. John the Baptist Parish to attend the Preparation classes. Your family information will be taken then and you will be registered for the Baptism Preparation Classes.
2. After Mass one weekend, introduce yourself to the parish priest if you do not already know him personally.
3. Open yourself to the invitation to actively join the faith community of your parish. Regular attendance of the Holy Mass is recommended. It is a blessing for your family throughout your lives.
4. You will be required to attend three Baptismal Preparation classes. Godparents may attend as well if they choose. A \$50.00 registration fee will be payable at the time of registration. The classes are held on Wednesday evenings at 7pm in the Church Auditorium. The topics are:

Session One - A New Creation: The Mystery of Baptism

Session Two - Entering The Mystery: The Rite Explained

Session Three - Nurturing The Life Of Grace: A Call to Mission, and we will also do a rehearsal

5. You will also be required to attend:

The Presentation of the Parents at a weekend Holy Mass.

The Welcoming Ceremony (First Anointing) at a weekend Holy Mass

The Holy Mass and Baptism Celebration (Holy Mass at 10am and Baptism Celebration at 11:15am)

### **Other Information**

*Are you living in a parish other than the one in which you wish to have your child baptized?*

You are required to take your Baptismal Preparation in the parish in which you reside and then receive a testimonial letter from your Parish Priest to have your child baptized in another parish. This requirement respects the reality that pastors normally have sacramental jurisdiction only over their own parishioners. Therefore, when one seeks a sacrament outside of one’s parish, the proper pastor’s permission is necessary. Furthermore, the invitation to connect with one’s own proper parish first is founded on the hope that the faith-life of the family and of the one(s) to be baptized will be lived in community and not in isolation.

## **Marital Status and Interfaith Marriages**

Your marital status will be clarified during the baptismal preparation process. You also be asked the denomination of each of the parents. Baptism is not denied if the parents are unmarried or not married in the Roman Catholic Church or if one parent is not Roman Catholic. However, there may be reason to postpone Baptism if parents are not practicing the Faith, or have no intention of living a Catholic life in harmony with the Gospel.

If your status is not in harmony with the Roman Catholic understanding of sacramental marriage, please inquire as to how we may help you enter into a proper sacramental marriage or, if need be, seek a declaration of nullity by the Church. If one parent is not Catholic, but is interested in joining the Church, please contact us for more information on how we can help you.

All of the above information applies to INFANT Baptism only.

If you have a child to be baptized who has reached catechetical age/the age of reason (Grade 2 or 7 years), or you are an adult wishing to be baptized, you and they will receive different preparation. Please contact the Parish Office for specific information