

Preparation for the Sacrament of Baptism For Children under the age of seven

The call....

Those who wish to receive the sacrament of baptism for their infant children should consider the reflection questions asked above. Confirming the decision the mother and father wants to share the beauty and grace of the Catholic faith with their child, the parents should call the parish office. With a warm hospitality, the names and telephone number of the family will be received, and the family will be mailed our invitation letter, a tri-folded brochure laying a foundation of what the Church teaches about baptism, information about the baptismal process and a two-sided baptismal registration form. The name and phone number will be give to one of the priests or deacons, or to the priest or deacon the family wants to work with and celebrate the baptism.

Evangelization

The priest or deacon will contact the family asking about baptism. In this, and follow-up contacts and/or meetings, the teachings and expectations of the Church regarding baptism forms the “agenda” for this part of the preparation. For example, the family will be asked about their participation in Sunday worship, how they (how why they do not) participate in our parish specifically, and what are their hopes for their child in being baptized. Please know, we only want to address these concerns with the people who are responsible for the rearing of the child. So, if the call comes from a grandparent, aunt, etc., these family members will be asked to encourage the parents to consider celebrating the sacrament by approaching the parish themselves. Depending on this discussion and sharing, a number of meetings may very well be appropriate. Factors for discussion include the faith history of the parents; confirm at least one parent is Catholic; learn if the parents are married, and if so, was their marriage celebrated in our faith---the faith they desire to celebrate with their child; learn what is the relationship the Catholic parent has with the parish; etc., etc. The goal of all of this effort is to inspire and confirm an awareness on the part of the family that baptism is the initiation of an individual into a life in the faith, which includes a commitment by the Catholic parent to participating in the community of faith with a stewardship of time, talent and treasure. When there is a basis of understanding regarding these expectations, and there is an understanding of the Church's teaching about Baptism (such as participating in worship, and what is means to be Catholic --- and not simply a cooperation with the preparation process), the family will then be invited to a family baptism preparation session.

The Priest – The Deacon – Parish Sister – Pastoral Minister

Someone from our parish will contact the family asking about baptism. In this, and follow-up meetings, there is the opportunity to form a personal and pastoral relationship. The minister will explore, in addition to what has already been described, what does being Catholic mean to them, how they participate in the parish specifically, and what are their hopes for their child in being baptized.

The Parents

The parents are expected to enter into a dialog with the parish minister, so as to reflect on the meanings and responsibilities of what they want for their son or daughter. They will complete the baptismal registration form, giving serious consideration regarding the responsibility and commitment involved in celebrating this sacrament. The parents will have the responsibility to return the form to the priest or deacon or parish sister or pastoral minister with whom they are working. Finally, the parents are expected to participate in the family preparation meetings, held here in one of the rooms of the parish.

The Baptism Preparation

The family is expected to participate in a formal group preparation meeting. (Please note: the baptism preparation meetings with our families take place in every month, except for December, during Lent, or July.) At the conclusion of the session, the preparing family completes the baptismal registration form, and returns it to the parish office. The priest or deacon or parish sister or pastoral minister will then make contact with the family to discuss the celebration of the *Sacrament of Baptism*.

The Sacrament

In this next contact with the family, the minister will set a convenient date to celebrate the sacrament. As a principle, baptisms are scheduled for a Sunday Mass, or in groups on Saturday, except during Lent when no baptisms will be celebrated. In setting a date, most consideration is paid to the needs of the extended family and friends for the family. Relatedly, at this time, only one baptism is scheduled per Sunday Mass, thus highlighting the uniqueness and specialness of the individual family in their offering of faith, their lives, and their child, to and with us all!!!

Preparation for the Sacrament of Baptism For Children OVER the age of seven

The decision to baptize a child over the age when, in our culture they would be receiving their First Holy Communion, poses several questions which need to be explored with the family. Examples: what is the nature of the unique circumstances which motivates the decision to celebrate baptism now as opposed to earlier; explore why the family feels the child is now ready; and the need to help the child begin an appreciation of the meaning of baptism, and the sense of belonging to a family/community larger than just his or her immediate family. In the preparation and celebration of the child, there will be discussions on these and many other particular issues, all depending on the life and intentions of the child and family. Please talk with one of the priests, deacons or Parish Sister.