

Things to Know Before Infant Baptism

We rejoice with you and your family at the birth of your child! As you present your child for baptism in the Catholic Church, here are some preparatory considerations:

The Age of your Child. Children are usually baptized a few weeks after birth, when the family has adjusted to life with this new member. For various reasons, some children are baptized when they are older. Children up to the age of reason (around 7 years old) may be presented for baptism in the usual way. Children who are old enough to have a basic understanding of faith and eucharist (age 8 and older) should plan to participate in the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) for children.

Church Attendance/Membership. Some parents hesitate to request a baptism because they do not regularly attend mass. If this is you, you may want to evaluate the reasons you are seeking baptism for your child. The pastor or his designated person may recommend that the baptism be delayed if a well-founded hope that the child will be brought up in the faith is lacking.

The Eucharist is at the heart of Catholic belief and regular participation is the most important sign of our commitment to what we believe, and will set a great example for your child.

If you have not yet done so, now is the time to become a registered member of the parish. If you are a registered member at another parish, we will need the permission of your pastor to baptize your child.

Single Parenthood/Marriage outside the Church. Regardless of the reason for single parenthood, your child may be baptized. If you are an unmarried parent, your pastor may ask for a fuller conversation with you about how the child will be brought up in the faith.

Parents married outside the Church may request baptism for their child. Now would be a good time to talk to your pastor about having your marriage recognized (convalidated) in the Church.

Parental/Guardian Consent. In order to baptize, your pastor needs the consent of at least one of the parents or legal guardians. They need to be the ones to request baptism for the child.

Classes. You will be required to attend one or more sessions to prepare for the baptism of your child. At this session you will hear about the importance of baptism, go through the baptismal rite and complete paperwork. You do not need to wait until after the birth of your child to do so.

Godparents. For some families the choice of godparents is easy. For others it may be a struggle. Godparents play a significant role on the day of baptism and throughout the child's life. In the past godparents were expected to raise the child in the event that the parents died. This is no longer the case, unless you specifically designate it in a legal document (will). Before choosing godparents, you should discuss what role you expect those people to take in the life of your child and family.

Preconditions for Godparents.

† Parents must designate them and they must be willing to help your child lead a Christian life in

harmony with baptism and fulfill the obligations connected with it;

- † Must be at least sixteen years of age;
- † Must be a fully initiated Catholic (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist);
- † Must lead a life “in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken”;
- † Must not be bound by any imposed or declared penalty under church law;
- † Cannot be the child’s parents.

Only one Catholic godparent is required. However, if you choose two, they must be of different sexes. Officially, a non-Catholic cannot be a godparent, however they may stand as a Christian witness to the baptism. The pastor may request a letter from the godparent’s pastor confirming the membership of the future godparent.

When to Baptise. Baptisms may take place during Mass or privately, usually after Mass.

How to Schedule a Baptism and Register for Classes. Contact the parish office.

