Baptism

St. Stephen Catholic Church

Oak Creek, WI

Welcome

Baptism is our privileged opportunity to welcome your family into the parish community. From the earliest times, the Church has baptized children as well as adults.

At baptism your child will be claimed for Christ and become a child of God and member of God’s People, the Church. All who are baptized are united as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Baptism is the first of three sacraments of Initiation- Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. Baptism reaches fulfillment when the baptized person receives Eucharist. The baptism is sealed at Confirmation. Parents are the child’s first catechists. Along with the faith formation your child will receive through the years, it is the habits and customs that you offer at home that your children will continue when they have families. It is important to you; it is important to your child. Godparents promise to assist parents in forming the child in the faith.

Preparation

1. Register as a member of St. Stephen Parish. Pick up a new member registration packet at the Parish Office, or find the packet online.
2. Call the Parish Office for a Baptism Packet.
   1. Make sure all the information on the Baptism Packet is completed and accurate.
   2. Godparents must be 16 years of age or older, be fully initiated (baptized, first eucharist, confirmed) and a practicing Roman Catholic. A practicing Catholic attends Mass on a regular basis, volunteers within the parish community, and helps support the parish. Godparents provide a Confirmation Certificate; a Christian Witness provides a baptismal Certificate.
   3. Make sure that both Godparents have filled out the Baptismal Sponsor Certificate.
   4. Make sure that the Godparent’s parish priest has signed and sealed the Certificate.
   5. Return all the paperwork to St. Stephen’s.
3. Schedule the Baptism Class which are held on Sundays immediately after attending Mass prior.

The Ritual

Arrive 20 minutes before Mass. Pews will be reserved for your family and friends. Pictures may be taken during the baptism.

After the Procession, the priest will say:

What name have you given your child?

What do you ask of God’s Church?

You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training him/*her* in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him/*her* up to keep God’s commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor.

Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking? **WE DO**.

Godparents, are you ready to help the parents of this child in their duty as Christian parents?

**WE ARE**.

[To the child] The Church of God receives you with great joy. In her name, I sign you with the Sign of the Cross of Christ our Savior; then, after me, your parents and your godparents will do the same.

After the homily the priest invites the people to rise and leads the Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith.

Renunciation of Sin

**Presider:** Do you reject Satan?   
**Response:** I do.   
**P:** And all his works?   
**R:** I do.

**P:** And all his empty promises?   
**R:** I do.

The Profession of Faith

**P:** Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth?   
**R:** I do.

**P:** Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

**R:** I do.

**P:** Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?   
**R:** I do.

**P:**  This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it, in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen

The priest will invite the family and friends to follow and join him around the font. The celebrant will ask again if it is your will to have the child baptized.

A Brief History of Baptism

The following is the Blessing and Invocation over Baptismal Water at the Easter Vigil each year. It is a brief history of baptism through salvation history:

“Father, you give us grace through sacramental signs,

which tell us of the wonders of your unseen power.

In baptism we use your **gift of water**, which you have made a rich symbol of the graceyou give us in this sacrament.

At the very dawn of creation your Spirit breathed on the waters, making them the wellspring of all holiness.

The **waters of the great flood** you made a sign of the waters of baptism, that make an end of sin and a new beginning of goodness.

Through the **waters of the Red Sea** you led Israel out of slavery, to be an image of God’s holy people, set free from sin by baptism.

In the **waters of the Jordan** your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Spirit.

Your Son willed that **water and blood** should flow from his side as he hung upon the cross.”

The Symbols of Baptism

The Sign of the Cross: The priest will trace the sign of the cross on the child’s forehead as a sign that the child is being claimed for Christ. All those who are signed by the cross are claimed as disciples of the Lord. The parents and the Godparents will be asked to do the same.

Baptismal Water: The water is the central symbol in the sacrament. Your child is washed free from sin and raised to new life with Christ. In baptism, the child is raised up to new life in Christ.

Anointing with Oil: The child is anointed during the baptismal ceremony. He or she is anointed Priest, Prophet and King with the Oil of Chrism, which is blessed at the Chrism Mass (during Holy Week before Easter).

St. Stephen supplies the white garment and baptismal candle.

White Garment: The white garment symbolizes being clothed in Jesus. It recognizes that we all share the life of the risen Christ. It also symbolizes Christian dignity and our spotless condition when all sin has been removed. The Godmother places the garment on the child.

Baptism Candle: The baptismal candle is lit from the Easter Pascal candle, which is the candle of the risen Christ. The lighting of this candle is done by the Godfather to show that the child possesses the light of Christ in his or her heart. It is the responsibility of the parent and the Godparents to keep that light alive for the child.

Prayer over Ears and Mouth, or “Ephphetha”: The word “ephphetha” means “be open” in Aramaic. This blessing is used as the priest blesses the ears and the mouth of the child so that the child will be open to hear the good news of Jesus and proclaim it to others.

Stewardship

The Church is your spiritual home and needs your support in the form of time, talent, and treasure. We are the collective Body of Christ! Similar to our Religious education parents, we encourage a minimum of $5 per week (52 weeks X $5 = $260/yr.) All donations to the Church are deductible for tax purposes.

Stipends

The recommended stipend amount, set by the bishops of the State of Wisconsin, for the presiding priest or deacon is $10. This would be the minimum amount that the presider would be responsible for reporting for tax purposes. Any amounts above that are gratuitous and appreciated.

Questions or Concerns

Call (414) 762-0552