

YOUR CHILD'S BAPTISM - Welcome into the Body of Christ

The Parish Family of Mary Immaculate is happy to welcome your child as our newest members and as part of the Holy Catholic Church.

Please call the rectory office to start the process of having your child baptized. If you are new to our parish, please complete a parish registration form which can be found on our website and at both entrances to our large Church.

You can phone the rectory office during business hours to make arrangements for your child's baptism.

Frequently asked Questions about the Sacrament of Baptism

When should I start making arrangements for my baby's baptism?

It is never too early. Many families start planning for the baptism while they are pregnant.

How soon after my baby is born should we have our child baptized?

Babies can be baptized as soon as they are born. Please keep in mind it does usually take several weeks to complete the paperwork and attend the "gathering rite" prior to the date of baptism. The Church encourages families to baptize their children as soon as possible.

My child is over 7 years old, is it too late to baptize them?

It is never too late to baptize your child. Children thru the age of 7 are baptized in the Infant Baptism program. Older children are taken thru the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation) process adapted for children. For more information, please contact the Coordinator of Faith Formation Fran Bursztyn at the rectory office.

Does the father of my baby need to be on the certificate if he is not part of her life?

The Baptism Certificate need to reflect the same information that the Birth Certificate does. If the father is listed on the Birth Certificate, he must be listed on the Baptism Certificate.

What is a Godparent? The role of a Godparent (also referred to as the Sponsor) is to set a good Catholic example for your child and encourage your child in their faith journey. It is not an honorary title. Godparents serve a special role and must be selected carefully. It should be someone that lives their faith in accord with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Their role is an important one throughout your child's life.

Are there requirements/qualifications for Godparents/Sponsors?

Yes. According to Canon Law, all Godparents/Sponsors must meet the following qualifications:

1. A Godparent/Sponsor must be fully initiated in the Roman Catholic Church. This means they have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation.
2. They must be at least 16 years old.
3. They cannot be the parents of the child.
4. They cannot be bound by any canonical penalty. An example is that if they are married, they need to have been married in the Catholic Church or had a dispensation to get married outside the Catholic Church. They also cannot be cohabitating unless married.
5. They attend Mass on the weekends and Holy Days of obligation and regularly receive the Sacraments of Holy Communion and Reconciliation. This also means they are registered in a parish.

Prior to the baptism, the Godparents will complete a sponsor certificate which must be signed by the parish priest where they attend Mass. The pastor will also affix their Church seal to this document. We must receive this completed document ahead of the baptism date.

How many Godparents can I have or do I need?

You only need one Godparent. It doesn't matter if it is male or female. If you choose two Godparents, then it needs to be a male and female that meet the requirements/qualifications for Godparents. You may not have more than that in the baptismal registry.

What is a Christian Witness?

One Godparent must meet the qualifications listed above as a fully initiated, practicing Catholic. If it is not possible for you to have two Catholic sponsors, a baptized non-Catholic may serve as a Christian Witness. This baptized witness is one that was baptized into a faith that shares our belief about the Trinitarian nature of God. This means they were baptized with water and the minister used the words "In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." On the Baptism Certificate, next to the name of the witness you will see "witness" and not Godparent. The Christian Witness cannot be someone that was baptized Catholic but has not completed their Sacraments of Initiation.

Can a divorced person be a Godparent?

Yes they can as long as they are in good standing with the Catholic Church. To be in good standing they cannot be remarried, or in a serious relationship, unless the previous marriage has been granted an annulment.

Does a Godparent become the legal guardian if something happens to the parents?

There is a difference between church and state. A Godparent agrees to guide your child in their faith journey. Parents, through a will or other legal means, appoints a "legal guardian" who would take care of your children if you should die.

What is a Proxy?

A proxy is someone that stands in for a Godparent that is unable to be present at the Baptism ceremony. The proxy will only be noted in the baptismal registry and not on the certificate.

Is there a Baptism Prep Class?

Here at Mary Immaculate we hold a "Gathering Rite" which explains the baptism rite and prepares the parents and Godparents for the sacrament. These are held on the 3rd Sunday of the month following the 11:00 Mass. You must call the rectory office to arrange to attend a gathering rite.

When are Baptisms held?

We encourage all parents to have their child baptized at a weekend Mass. It is a moving experience to have our entire parish family celebrating with and praying for your child on this very special day. If this is not feasible, we do offer baptisms once a month at 1 pm on the 3rd Sunday of the month.

What do I need to bring to the Baptism?

You should bring your child you wish to have baptized. They should be dressed in white, representing purity. The Church provides the candle and the oil.

Is there a fee for baptism?

No, there is no fee. Many people choose to give the priest or deacon a stipend as a token of appreciation, but it is voluntary and not required.

How early do we need to arrive for the baptism?

You should arrive at least 15 minutes early for the baptism if it is being done at Mass. The usher will greet you and walk you thru the process.

Who can attend the baptism?

Invite everyone! By baptizing your child, you are modeling the Catholic faith to all in attendance. Bring family, friends, and neighbors.

If we, as parents, do not meet all the requirements as expected of Godparents, can we still have our child baptized?

Most definitely! At your child's baptism you are stating publicly that you will raise your child in the Catholic faith.