



## Information about the Sacrament of Baptism for Children

Sacraments are not just family traditions or symbolic events; sacraments are important sacred moments of grace in the life of a Christian. When parents ask the Church to baptize a child, they should do so fully aware that they are making a commitment to God to raise the child as a Catholic Christian; this means bringing the child to Mass each Sunday, ensuring the child attends religious education class during childhood, and being models of faith for the child by accepting and living the teachings of the Church.

The pastor needs assurance that you are ready to have your child baptized and that you will nurture the child's faith. One way in which he has this assurance is by the parents' regular attendance at Mass. We hope you can understand that, when strangers ask us to baptize a child, we need to have an understanding of this person's faith life and may question whether you will actually bring the child to church regularly. *So, if you do not now attend Mass regularly, we urge you to begin.* This is an important responsibility on your part.

Baptism is provided to children of parents registered at Holy Name Church or parents who live in the parish boundaries. Persons who are not parishioners should seek Baptism at their home parish unless there is a special reason to have the child baptized here. If you are from another parish, please let us know why you wish the baptism at Holy Name. Parents are the proper persons to request an infant to be baptized, however, another member of the family who can give assurance of rearing the child in the faith may request Baptism, as long as the parents promise not to interfere with the person making this commitment.

*If the child is seven years old or more,* Canon Law requires that Baptism be combined with the other Sacraments of Initiation (Eucharist & Confirmation); these sacraments are administered at the annual Easter Vigil. Thus, the child must be enrolled in the Rite of Initiation for Children or religious education classes that begin each September. In this case, the same Godparent is used for Baptism and Confirmation.

A Godparent is not a symbolic or honorary role. A Godparent should be a continuing part of the child's life and should give an example of living a good Catholic life. *Godparents must be mature and actively living a life consistent with the faith of the Catholic Church* as they will commit to assist in providing the training of the child in the faith. According to Canon Law, there may be one Godfather and/or one Godmother. Godparent(s) must have received the Sacrament of Confirmation, and must be 16 years old or older. The Godparent, *if married, must have been married in the church; if single, the godparent must be living a chaste life.* (Note that parents of the child to be baptized are not required to be married, although we encourage you to become married in the church.) A baptized non-Catholic Christian may serve as a witness to a Baptism but is not a godparent; one Godparent is still required in this case. If the Godparents are registered in a parish other than Holy Name, a letter from that parish is required that attests to their Catholic standing. We can provide you with a copy of that form.

**Baptism class:** Parents (including non-Catholic parents) and godparents must attend a baptismal class before the sacrament is administered so you understand fully your obligations. You may attend this class prior to the birth of the child. Instruction classes at Holy Name are provided upon request. Parents registered in other parishes who want their child baptized at Holy Name or godparents who are not living locally should attend class at their home parish; request that church to send Holy Name a certification from the pastor/deacon that they attended a class. Completion of the Eligibility Form that we can email you will be sufficient.

**Baptismal name:** We encourage you to use the name of a saint since it presents a positive role model for the baptized child to grow with and the child is assured of the saint's intercession throughout his or her life. The child's given name must not be "foreign" to the Christian sentiment (Canon #855).

**Fees:** There is no charge for Baptismal preparation or the Baptism, however, whenever possible, a stipend is often given to the priest or deacon completing the baptism.

**Please complete and send the Baptismal Form to Holy Name and you will be contacted.**

08/15