

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism for a Child at Blessed Trinity Catholic Parish



Greetings!

Dear Parent(s),

On behalf of Blessed Trinity Catholic Parish, I would like to congratulate and commend you for making the wonderful decision to have your child baptized. We are excited for your child, for your family, for our parish community, and for the Church Universal!

In the conferral of this sacrament, as the rite of baptism says, “you are accepting the responsibility of training [your child] in the practice of the faith.” In other words, it will be your duty to ensure that the “seeds of faith, hope, and charity” that God will plant into your child’s soul at baptism are protected, nurtured, and cared for after the baptism so that the Holy Spirit can grow your child into a mature, committed follower of Jesus. As such, in seeking baptism for your child you are also taking upon yourself a great responsibility – to teach your child the ways of God by faithfully bringing your child to Mass on Sundays, by teaching your child to observe all of the commandments and how to pray, and by modeling the life of a Christian disciple in all that you say and do. Baptism is, then, both an awesome gift but also a serious responsibility!

Given this, we take baptism preparation very seriously here at Blessed Trinity Catholic Parish, and this is reflected in our preparation process and expectations which are designed to equip you for this noble responsibility. In what follows you will find all of the basic information that you might need to know in order to have your child baptized at our parish. If you have any further questions that are not addressed below, however, please don’t hesitate to contact us.

Having said all of this, please know of our prayers for you, for your child, and for your family in the days ahead!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Joseph Baker
Pastor

Requirements for the Baptism of a Child

Child

1. The child cannot have been previously baptized.
2. The child must be under 7 years of age. If the child is over 7 years of age please contact the pastor.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

3. The Sacrament of Baptism must be requested by at least 1 of the parents or legal guardians of the child (i.e., it cannot be requested by a grandparent, sibling, etc., unless in the case of a true emergency).
4. The person(s) requesting the Sacrament of Baptism must be a registered parishioner of Blessed Trinity Catholic Parish (if you need to register please contact the parish secretary).
5. In the event that you would like to have your child baptized at Blessed Trinity Catholic Parish because of family reasons (i.e., you live out of the area but your parents are registered parishioners and you grew up attending Blessed Trinity) please contact the pastor.
6. At least 1 of the parents (or legal guardians) must demonstrate a commitment to living the Catholic faith by attending Mass for 4 consecutive weeks (either at Blessed Trinity Catholic Parish and/or elsewhere). We ask that you demonstrate this commitment to weekly Mass attendance by collecting bulletins at these 4 consecutive Masses and delivering them to the pastor prior to the date of the baptism.

Godparents/Sponsors

7. You may have 1 or 2 Godparents (Sponsors).
8. At least 1 Godparent (Sponsor) must be a practicing Catholic who attends Mass faithfully on Sundays and Holy Days; the other may be a baptized non-Catholic Christian who will act as an official "witness" but not as a sponsor.
9. A Catholic Godparent (Sponsor) must be at least 16 years of age and fully initiated in the Catholic Church, having received the Sacraments of Baptism, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation.
10. A Godparent (Sponsor) may be either male or female, but if you have 2 Godparents (Sponsors) one must be male and the other must be female.
11. A Godparent (Sponsor) may not be the parent of the child to be baptized.
12. A Godparent (Sponsor) must be in a validly recognized Christian marriage if married; and if single he/she cannot be in a living arrangement that violates God's commandments and Church teaching.

The Baptism Preparation Process

1. Register for baptism by contacting our parish secretary or completing our online registration form (www.btcatholic.us/baptism-child). Please note that there is a \$25.00 registration fee to defray the cost of materials and facilities for baptism, which can be paid in the parish office or by mail. If you are writing a check, please make it out to Blessed Trinity Catholic Parish.
2. Schedule and attend an initial meeting with the pastor so that he can get to know you and describe the preparation process. At this time, a hoped-for date of baptism can be discussed.
3. Register for the pre-Baptismal classes online at CatholicBaptismPrep.com. This will take approximately 10 days to complete and cost \$65. Parents and Godparents will be required to take the online class as a group. Please include fr.joseph.baker@btcatholic.us as the parish contact, as the church will receive a copy of your participation certificate via email.



4. Obtain bulletins from Masses for 4 consecutive weeks (either at Blessed Trinity or elsewhere) and bring them to your follow-up meeting with the pastor.
5. Have each Catholic Godparent (Sponsor) complete the Sponsor Pledge Certificate (which can be found on our website: www.btcatholic.us/baptism-child) and **return it to the parish secretary at least 10 days prior to the date of the baptism.**
6. Schedule and attend a follow-up meeting with the pastor at least 2 weeks before the hoped-for date of baptism.

Frequently Asked Questions

When can we have the baptism?

Typically, baptisms are held in Lodi after the 10:00 AM Sunday Mass. But, if you have need for other arrangements we will work to make a reasonable accommodation. Please contact the pastor to set a date for the baptism.

When should I have my child baptized?

Children should be baptized as soon as possible after birth. You are even encouraged to complete the baptism preparation process prior to the birth of your child!

Must my child be given the name of a saint?

Though not required, it is a longstanding Catholic custom to give a child a Christian name (i.e., a saint's name). As such, it is highly desirable that either the first or middle name of the child be that of a saint or of other Christian significance, so that the child will come to know the saint as a holy model to imitate in Christian faith. Nevertheless, you are only strictly obliged to avoid names that are "foreign to a Christian mentality."

Are baptisms celebrated for individual families or will the liturgy include several children being baptized together?

Since Baptism is a celebration of the community of the Church it would be inappropriate to separate ceremonies artificially, celebrating one individual Baptism after another. In fact, however, there is seldom more than one child being baptized after any particular Mass so the ceremonies are in practice usually individual, although not always.

I am not married. Can my child be baptized?

Yes. A child may be baptized so long as there is a well-founded hope that he or she will be brought up in the practice of the Catholic Faith. This is present so long as one parent is willing to practice the Catholic Faith and share it with the child. A child is not penalized for having been born out of wedlock.

If the parents of a child are living together without the benefit of the sacrament of marriage or in a civil marriage not recognized by the Church (i.e., they were married on the beach, at a park, etc. and not in the Church), they would be encouraged to regularize their situation so that they can fully practice the Faith they are called to share with their child.

Questions about specific situations should be discussed with the pastor. If the parents are willing to do what they can in a given situation there is never an insurmountable obstacle to the Baptism of a child.

Can we have more than two sponsors for our child?

No. The Church does not want the responsibility of sponsors to be diluted. The maximum number of sponsors is two; and if there are two, one must be male and one female.

May we take photographs or video during the Baptism?

Yes, but anyone with an official role in the Baptism (parent, sponsor or witness) should give their attention to that responsibility and not serve as a photographer during the ceremony itself.