

Guidelines for Infant Baptisms

St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church

2281 State Road 580
Clearwater, FL 33763
(727) 797-2375

We welcome you and your family with great joy to St. Michael the Archangel parish for the preparation and celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism for your child. We hope the following information will be helpful as you begin this process.

1. Parents who seek baptism for their infant are encouraged to register in the parish if they have not already done so. The parish becomes a spiritual home to them and their child, and which offers support to the family in living the Catholic faith.
2. The "Request for Baptism" form can be downloaded from the parish website (www.stmichaelfl.org) or obtained from the Baptism coordinator at the Church Office. Sending this form to the Baptism coordinator begins the process of application.
3. Six weeks before your desired date for the Baptism, request a conference with the Baptism coordinator in the Church Office to establish the date of Baptism, make arrangements for the Pre-Baptism instruction class, and review the paperwork needed for parents and sponsors. This includes applicants who have spoken with one of the priests personally.
4. Baptisms in English are held on the first Sunday of every month either during or after the 11:00 Mass. Baptisms generally are not celebrated during Lent. Parents are required to attend a pre-baptism instruction class at St. Michael before the Baptism or provide proof they have attended elsewhere. If parents have taken the class within the previous three years, they do not need to repeat it.
5. Baptisms in Spanish are held after the Hispanic Mass twice monthly on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. Baptisms generally are not celebrated during Lent. Parents and godparents of the infant are required to attend a pre-baptism instruction class at St. Michael before the Baptism or provide proof they have attended elsewhere. The Hispanic pre-baptism class is held the week before the Baptism and need not be repeated if taken within the previous three years.
6. Godparents (Sponsors): Canon Law # 874 requires one Catholic sponsor, but there may be two, a godfather and a godmother. Sponsors must be designated by the parents and have the qualifications and intention of fulfilling this role: They must:

- a. Be 16 years of age unless the pastor makes an exception for a just cause.
 - b. Have received First Communion and Confirmation.
 - c. Lead a life in harmony with the faith and role of a Catholic sponsor.
 - d. Not be a parent of the child to be baptized.
7. If a Godparent cannot be present, a proxy may stand in for that person at the ceremony.
8. A practicing member of another Christian denomination may serve as a witness along with one Catholic sponsor. This person will be listed as a witness on the baptismal certificate.
9. Godparents must provide a sponsor's certificate and is obtained from the Godparent's current parish. It states that the sponsor is qualified to be a Godparent; i.e. Godparent has received the three sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Holy Communion, and Confirmation) and also attests that the sponsor is an active practicing Catholic in that parish. The sponsor should forward the sponsor's certificate to the parents of the child being baptized. There is no need for the sponsor to present certificates of Baptism, Communion, and Confirmation to the parish where the child is being baptized.
10. If the Godparent(s) have not been registered in a parish, or if they are newly registered at St. Michael (within the last three months), they are requested to obtain a copy of their certificates of First Communion and Confirmation and sign a sponsor's certificate of eligibility provided at St. Michael church office testifying they are leading a life in harmony with the faith and role of a Catholic sponsor. These documents must be received at our church office before the date of the baptism can be affirmed.
11. Policy on photography: Generally, photographers may take pictures from the side aisles but not in the sanctuary. Photographers should not be intrusive, disruptive or distracting during the sacred rite of Baptism. You are invited to take photos in the sanctuary after the ceremony.