



Saint Aidan
Est 2020

St. Aidan Parish Baptism Guidelines

(Updated: October 2020)

From the Pastor

Dear Parents,

Following the resurrection and before his glorious ascension into heaven, Jesus gave a mandate to his disciples. He said, "Go therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I have you." (Matthew 28:19)

In the name of our clergy team, Fr .Will, Deacon Jeff, and Deacon Al, our parish staff, and the faith community of St. Aidan Parish, I thank you for embracing this Great Commission. I extend to you our heartfelt prayers and genuine support as you will soon make a promise to God and his Church to do all in your power to bring your child up into the ways of the faith.

Before the celebration of baptism, the parents are expected to attend a pre-baptism class. For more information, please contact our Director of Faith Formation, Darcy Osby (dosby@saintaidanparish.org). To schedule a baptism, please contact our office manager, MaryEllen Pendel (mependel@saintaidanparish.org). Baptism cannot be scheduled until the child is born and all of the paperwork is completed.

As Mary and Joseph brought an offering of two turtle doves when they presented Jesus in the temple, it is also customary that on the day of the baptism to give a donation to the Church.

If there is anything that our clergy team, parish staff, and I can do for you and your family, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are here to serve you. In the meantime, please be assured of a remembrance in my prayers. I hope that you will do the same for me.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David J. Bonnar".

Fr. David J. Bonnar
Pastor

Baptism Guidelines

Becoming Registered Members of the Parish

We want you and your child to be a part of our parish family. So we ask families presenting their child for baptism to be registered members of St. Aidan Parish.

If you are **not a registered member of St. Aidan**, please visit our website at <https://saintaidanparish.org/registration-forms> or view the guideline for non-parishioners below under "Special Circumstances."

When the Child Should Be Baptized

Although there is no set age for baptism, The Code of Canon Law strongly encourages you to have your baby baptized within the first few weeks of birth.

Who Can Present a Child for Baptism

The Code of Canon Law requires that only parents (or legal guardians) can present a child for baptism. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, etc. are not permitted to request or bring a child to be baptized. All correspondence must be with the parents of the child.

Baptism Preparation Session

Baptism is a very important moment in the life of your child. We want the celebration of this beautiful rite to be meaningful and engaging. We also want to assist you in your preparation as Catholic Christian parents.

If this is your *first child*, please register for a baptism preparation session here:

<https://saintaidanparish.org/baptism-preparation-registration>

Sessions are typically offered on the 3rd Thursday of every odd month at 6:30 PM.

Currently, sessions are being held virtually via Zoom during the pandemic.

We strongly encourage parents to contact us before baby is born so that the baptism can be scheduled soon after birth.

Strengthening the Domestic Church Retreat

You only need to attend the Baptism Preparation session once for your first child.

As you add additional children to your family, we invite you to participate in a retreat to strengthen your family in faith as your Domestic Church grows. These retreats are

offered 3 times per year: October, February, and June and can be attended before or after your baby's baptism.

This session is *required* if it has been more than 4 years since you attended the original baptism preparation session.

Register here: <https://saintaidanparish.org/domestic-church-retreat>

Scheduling Your Child's Baptism

Baptisms can be scheduled after registering for a Preparation Session if this is your first child, or at any time if you have already participated in the Preparation Session.

Currently, baptisms are held on Sundays following the 10:00 AM Mass at St. Alexis Church during the pandemic.

To schedule, please fill out the Request Form on the parish website:

<https://saintaidanparish.org/baptism-for-a-child-request>

Contact the Parish Office with any questions: (724) 935-4343

*The scheduling of your baby's baptism is not finalized until the sponsor (Godparent) forms and birth certificate have been received by the parish office.

Choosing Godparents for Your Child's Baptism and Godparent Requirements

Godparents are a beautiful tradition of our Catholic faith. By selecting Godparents for your child, you give your child the gift of a couple who can not only support the faith development of your child but provide your child with an example of how the Catholic Christian life is lived. To qualify for this very important role, Godparents must not only be persons of good character and good faith but be persons whose faith is *visible* in the way that they live their life. Godparents who have made their faith a priority are already equipped to truly assist you and your spouse as Catholic Christian parents.

The Church wants what is best for your child and has set qualifications that apply to all Godparents. They are required by the Code of Canon Law and apply universally to Catholic parishes. These qualifications are not meant to be restrictive. They are not simply a set of rules. Instead they are guidelines that we, as a Church, use to help you pick the most effective and appropriate persons for this role. In good faith, the Church relies on you and your spouse to prayerfully consider the selection of Godparents for your child. Below are the canonical requirements:

❖ **Only one male and one female may serve as Godparents.** It is possible to have just one Godparent, but two Godparents (one male and one female) are the norm in Catholic tradition. No more than two Godparents are allowed, and never two of the same sex. Parents may not serve as Godparents to their own child.

❖ **Godparents must be at least sixteen years of age.** This requirement may be waived by the pastor only if the prospective Godparent has already been Confirmed and meets all other qualifications. The role of Godparent is an important one, and a certain level of maturity and faith experience is therefore necessary.

❖ **Godparents must be Catholics who have received all three Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Holy Eucharist, and Confirmation.** Before Confirmation, a Catholic has not been fully initiated into the Church, and cannot therefore sponsor a new member to join the Church at Baptism. Only a fully initiated Catholic has this privilege.

❖ **Godparents must be practicing Catholics who are registered members at their local parish.** They must be in good standing, meaning their lifestyle is in harmony with the teachings of the Catholic faith. Minimally, this means that they should be attending Sunday Mass on a weekly basis and are living a life in harmony with the faith. Remember – a Godparent is not just a good or faith filled person. They are asked to serve as a visible role model of *Catholic faith* and *moral teaching*.

❖ **Catholic Godparents, if married, must be in a valid marriage.** This means that the Godparents were married in a Catholic Church by a priest. If they are not married in the Church, they are unable to be Godparents.

❖ **Christian Witness: Provided at least one Godparent is a qualified Catholic, the other may be a baptized member of a different Christian denomination.** Such an individual is referred to as a “Christian Witness”. A Christian Witness is a non-Catholic member of another Christian religion. (**Catholics who are non-practicing, not Confirmed, or otherwise do not qualify to serve as Godparents may not serve as a Christian Witness. A former Catholic may not serve as a Christian witness either**). During the Baptismal Ritual, Godparents and Christian Witnesses publicly renew their own Baptismal Promises and

commitment to Christ. Therefore, non-Christians (Jews, Muslims, etc.) may not serve as Christian Witnesses. To ask them to do so would not be respecting their own faith choice and traditions.

❖ **Orthodox Christians may be Godparents.** They are bound by the same qualifications as Roman Catholic Godparents.

❖ **If a Godparent is unable to be present at the baptism, a proxy may stand in their place.** A proxy must meet all of the same requirements as a Godparent. The Godparents will still be listed in the sacramental record. Please inform the parish office before the baptism if a proxy will be used.

Special Circumstances

Adoption

When a child is being adopted, the adoption must be finalized before the child can be presented for baptism. If a notarized letter from the birth mother (or parents) of the child is received by the parish, the child may be presented for baptism prior to the finalization of the adoption.

When a Child is in Danger of Death

Unfortunately, unexpected complications can arise during the labor, birth, and the period before the child is baptized. If such an emergency should occur, contact the hospital chaplain or our parish priests. They will baptize the baby in the hospital. This does not mean that you cannot present your child for baptism at the church. We will “supply the ceremony” and your child and family will participate in the entire baptismal ritual without the water being poured over the child’s head since that would have already occurred at the hospital.

Baptism for Non-Parishioners

If you are not a member of St. Aidan Parish but would like to have your child baptized here, you must meet the following requirements:

- Belong to a Roman Catholic Parish
- Have attended your parish’s Baptism Preparation Class and have the parish send us a letter verifying that you have attended the preparation class
- Give us assurance that you will raise the child in the Catholic faith
- A letter of permission from the pastor of your parish

- Sponsor (Godparent) forms
- A copy of your baby's birth certificate

A date will not be finalized until the paperwork has been received by the parish.

Baptism for Older Children

If your child has reached seven years of age or second grade (whichever occurs first), contact us about the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. dosby@saintaidanparish.org

Having a Priest or Deacon Not Assigned to St. Aidan Parish Baptize Your Child

If you would like a priest or deacon who is not assigned to St. Aidan parish to baptize your child, please contact the rectory office. If the priest or deacon is from outside of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, he must present a letter of good standing from his diocese to St. Aidan Parish. If the priest or deacon is from a religious order, he must have a letter of good standing sent from his superior to St. Aidan Parish.

Prayer of Thanksgiving for a Newborn or Newly Adopted Child

(from Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers)

Source of all blessings, protector of infants,
look with favor on this child, *(Insert Name)*

Hold him/her gently in your hands.

When he/she is reborn of water and the Holy Spirit,
bring him/her into the Church,
there to share in your kingdom
and with us to bless your name forever.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

The parents trace the sign of the cross on the child's forehead.

(Insert Name) may the Lord Jesus, who loved children,
bless you and keep you in his love,
now and forever.

Amen

Baptism Checklist

- Registered as members of St. Aidan Parish

- Attended the Baptism Preparation Session (for your first child only)
 - OR - Registered for a Strengthening the Domestic Church Retreat (2nd and future children)

- Sent sponsor (Godparent) forms to the parish office

- Sent a copy of the child's birth certificate to the parish office

- Scheduled the baptism with the parish office