

Baptismal Preparation Information



Congratulations!

We at St. Theresa Catholic Church are so pleased that you desire to have your baby baptized! The Baptism of your child provides an opportunity to renew your own Christian life and spirituality. In bringing your child to be baptized, you are saying that you want to share your living Catholic Christian faith with your child; this is a serious commitment to raise your child within the community of believers and to educate them in the truths of the Catholic faith.

How old should my child be to be baptized?

Under ordinary circumstances, parents should see to the Baptism of their infants within the first few weeks/months: “As soon as possible after birth, even before it, they are to approach the parish to ask for the sacrament for their child and to be themselves prepared for it” (Canon #876). The first consideration in determining the time is the welfare of the child. If the child is sickly, the Baptism should not be unduly delayed.

What if my child is no longer an infant?

As long as your child is less than seven years of age, the process and requirements are the same. Depending on the understanding and maturity of your child, this might be a wonderful opportunity for them to share in the preparation for the Sacrament.

If your child is seven years or older, we will work with you to find the best pathway that leads your child to the Sacrament of Baptism—and the other Sacraments. (Please contact Mary Chapman- Faith Formation Director, if your child is seven or over)

Do we need to be registered parishioners?

As mentioned above, it is presumed that you are practicing your faith and registered in the parish, if not, now is the time!

If you are called to worship here at St Theresa and have a desire to be a part of our parish faith community then you are welcome to register with us. Once your family is registered then we ask that you begin your journey to Baptism.

However, there are always special cases, and for good reasons we are happy to work with nonmembers to provide the Sacraments of the Church to their children. In the case of nonmembers, we ask for a letter of permission and delegation from the pastor of their home parish.

~Baptismal Preparation Classes~

When are Baptismal preparation classes for parents?

A Baptism preparation class is scheduled privately with the priest or deacon performing the Baptism.

Do both parents have to attend a Baptismal preparation class?

It is preferable that both parents attend a Baptism class if this is their first child being baptized. If both parents have attended the Baptismal preparation class within the last three years, we would welcome their participation but do not require that they attend again. Godparents are welcome to attend, but not required.

~Requirements for Parents~

Are there requirements of the parents who want to have their child Baptized?

Yes, at least one of the parents should be a practicing Catholic willing to commit to the task of rearing their child in the faith of the Church. Parents should accept that they are the first and foremost teachers of the faith.

What does it mean to be a “practicing” Catholic?

It means that not only do you hold true all that the Church teaches and proclaims, but that you are active in worship and liturgical celebrations of the Church. Oftentimes the Baptism of the child evangelizes the parents to participate fully in the practice of their Catholic faith. The birth of the child and the desire to have that child Baptized serves as a catalyst for the parents to return to the practice of the faith.

~Requirements for Godparents/Sponsors~

What is the role of the godparents/sponsor?

Godparents need to be actively involved in the Catholic tradition because they serve as models and guides to the child and the parents. They, along with the priest and parents, welcome the child to the community and signify that welcome by marking the child with the Sign of the Cross. The godparents promise to support the parents in raising the child in the practice of the Catholic faith. A godparent is encouraged to send a spiritual card to their godchild at Christmas, Easter, Birthday and Baptism “birthday”.

Whom should I choose as godparents/sponsors for my children?

This is a very personal decision. However, the Church does ask that certain requirements be met: In order to be a Catholic godparent, a person must be:

- At least 16 years of age
- A practicing Catholic who is Baptized and Confirmed and has received First Holy Communion
- If married, the marriage is sacramentally blessed by the Catholic Church
- Someone other than the parents of the child to be Baptized
- Leading a life in harmony with the Catholic faith and the role they are about to assume
- Attending weekly Mass

How many Godparents may (must) I have?

It is only required that there be one godparent, so you must have at least one. It is customary to have two godparents – in this case one must be female and the other male. The Church does not make any provisions for more than two.

Do both godparents have to be Catholic?

Yes, a godparent, by definition, is Catholic – thus, all godparents are Catholic. But remember that only one godparent is required. Baptized, participating Christians of other denominations may serve as a “Christian Witness” and be so designated in the Baptismal Register. If you choose to do so, you may have one Christian Witness and one Godparent. Non-Christians may not serve either as godparents or Christian witnesses, but are always welcomed to participate in the celebration.

~Questions about the Baptism Ceremony and Celebration~

Are there costs associated with the Baptismal preparation and ceremony?

There are no fees for the preparation program, or for the ceremony. However, it is permissible to offer a stipend to the priest/deacon who performs the Baptism but only if you choose to do so.

When are Baptisms scheduled?

Baptisms are scheduled after you attend the class and we receive your Sponsor / Godparent letters. We avoid the Liturgical season of Lent except for emergency. Baptisms are scheduled by the priest or deacon performing the Baptism.

What should my child wear for Baptism?

We suggest that you dress your child in a white garment to represent the purity and new birth into their faith.

~Further Questions? Please contact our Parish Office: 352-683-2849 x231

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