



Infant through Age 7 Baptism Guidelines St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church

Congratulations! New life is in your midst and it is truly a gift from God. How blest are you and your family to experience the love of God in such a special way! We hope that through this experience, you and your family will grow in the Faith of the Church and be open to receive all the graces so freely given by the Holy Spirit at this time.

The universal Catholic Church, along with the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, provides guidelines that govern how, when, and where baptism is celebrated. Ideally, parents who are requesting baptism for their young children are themselves fully initiated Catholic Christians and are properly married in the Catholic Church. If you are not fully initiated or are not married in the Catholic Church, it is our commitment to help you prepare for these sacraments so that you, too, can share fully in the life of the Church. Parents are the first and most important teachers of the faith and teach most profoundly by their good example. We wish to provide you with all that you need to live out your Catholic faith, properly teach your children the extraordinary beauty of this faith, and raise them in the Church.

First Steps for Parents

Meet with the pastor: Fr. Wencil and other clergy members meet individually with parents on the first Tuesday of the month beginning at 7 p.m. You do not need an appointment. Parents show up, sign in, and are seen on a first-come, first-served basis. Please bring the following to this appointment:

- A copy of both parents' photo ID (driver's license, passport, visa, etc.)
- A copy of the godparent's photo ID (driver's license, passport, visa, etc.)
- State-issued birth certificate for the child being baptized
- Godfather and/or Godmother Covenant Form(s), if godparents have been decided upon.
- Materials fee to cover the cost of items you'll be given at the baptismal class. The fee is \$25 for registered parishioners and \$50 for non-parishioners.
- If you do not have all these forms at the time of your clergy interview, you will be given an envelope to take home and use to collect the forms. Once all forms have been collected, you can turn in your envelope at the front office to be scheduled for a class. No baptism classes are scheduled without all forms turned in.

Both parents are required to complete a baptism class prior to choosing a baptism date for their child. Godparents are also expected to attend. **Parents can attend baptism classes at another Catholic Church, but we must receive proof stating that you did so.** Baptism classes in English take place the second Saturday of the month from 12:30-4:30 p.m., several times a year. Our nursery, however, is not well-equipped to care for infants younger than 6 months of age. For this reason, newborns are more than welcome at the baptism preparation classes with you if you don't have someone else to care for them. Children are a precious gift, and we recognize them as such. If you do plan to use our nursery for children older than six months of age, please let us know so that we have the appropriate number of workers scheduled. Contact Heidi Clark at 281-333-3891, ext. 328 or email hclark@stpaulcatholic.org by noon of the Thursday before the class date to reserve your child's spot in the nursery. The sacrament of baptism itself is celebrated on second Sundays of the month several times a year.

One of the reasons that so many people love being parishioners at St. Paul's is that we are a large parish but we work hard to feel like a small parish. Community is very important to us, and that is precisely the reason we use the baptism preparation program that we do. Its emphasis on community and shared faith journeys helps bring families together. For this reason, we require that parents and godparents take the baptism preparation program every time they have a child to be baptized. If we are not growing in faith and sharing our journeys with one another, we are not being who Christ called us to be or created us to be.

While the pastor does not have the right to refuse baptism for any child, he does have the right to postpone baptism until he is reasonably sure that the child will be raised in a Catholic Christian environment. As mentioned above, parents in certain circumstances will be encouraged to attend adult faith formation classes.

About the Godparents

Children to be baptized need a sponsor or godparent. Canon law and the Catechism of the Catholic Church very clearly outline who is eligible to serve as a godparent.

- Godparents must be fully initiated Catholics (baptized, have received First Holy Communion, and are confirmed) and at least 16 years of age. They should be attending mass regularly and receiving God's grace through participation in the sacrament of reconciliation.
- Catholics married outside the Church, or Catholics who choose to cohabit outside of the Sacrament of Marriage, are not permitted to be godparents.
- Any Catholic, who has abandoned the faith, even if they now are active members in another Christian Church or community, may **not** serve as a godparent or as a Christian Witness. They have separated themselves from the Church and cannot serve even as a witness. Baptized Catholics, whether practicing or not, are not permitted to serve as Christian Witnesses.
- Catholics who are not fully initiated—that is, Catholics who have not received First Communion or Confirmation—may not serve as godparents or Christian witnesses.
- This person cannot be the parent of the child being baptized. If there are two sponsors, one must be a man and one must be a woman.

May God's blessing be upon you and all your family. We are so happy to welcome your child into the Church.



Godfather's Baptismal Covenant

St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church

A child's godparents are the first helper's for parents when it comes to raising a child who is grounded and strong in their Catholic faith. It is an important responsibility. Godparents lead by their strong, moral example, support the child's faith development, and assist the parents in their role as the primary educators of the faith. Canon law and the Catechism of the Catholic Church very clearly outline who is eligible to serve as a godparent.

- Godparents must be fully initiated Catholics (baptized, have received First Holy Communion and are confirmed) and at least 16 years of age. They should be attending mass regularly and receiving God's grace through participation in the sacrament of reconciliation.
- Catholics married outside the Church, or Catholics who choose to cohabitate outside of the Sacrament of Marriage, are not permitted to be godparents.
- Any Catholic, who has abandoned the faith, even if they now are active members in another Christian Church or community, may **not** serve as a godparent or as a Christian Witness. Baptized Catholics, whether practicing or not, are not permitted to serve as Christian Witnesses.

Godchild's Name: _____

Godfather's Name: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Parish where you are registered: _____

Church Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Sacramental History of the Godfather

Baptized at: _____

City/State: _____ Date: _____

Confirmed at: _____

City/State: _____ Date: _____

Married at: _____

City/State: _____ Date: _____

I understand the requirements for being a godfather, and by my signature below state that I meet these requirements and pledge to fulfill my duty to the best of my ability.

Signature: _____ Date: _____



Godmother's Baptismal Covenant St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church

A child's godparents are the first helper's for parents when it comes to raising a child who is grounded and strong in their Catholic faith. It is an important responsibility. Godparents lead by their strong, moral example, support the child's faith development, and assist the parents in their role as the primary educators of the faith. Canon law and the Catechism of the Catholic Church very clearly outline who is eligible to serve as a godparent.

- Godparents must be fully initiated Catholics (baptized, have received First Holy Communion and are confirmed) and at least 16 years of age. They should be attending mass regularly and receiving God's grace through participation in the sacrament of reconciliation.
- Catholics married outside the Church, or Catholics who choose to cohabitate outside of the Sacrament of Marriage, are not permitted to be godparents.
- Any Catholic, who has abandoned the faith, even if they now are active members in another Christian Church or community, may **not** serve as a godparent or as a Christian Witness. Baptized Catholics, whether practicing or not, are not permitted to serve as Christian Witnesses.

Godchild's Name: _____

Godmother's Name: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Parish where you are registered: _____

Church Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Sacramental History of the Godmother

Baptized at: _____

City/State: _____ Date: _____

Confirmed at: _____

City/State: _____ Date: _____

Married at: _____

City/State: _____ Date: _____

I understand the requirements for being a godmother, and by my signature below state that I meet these requirements and pledge to fulfill my duty to the best of my ability.

Signature: _____ Date: _____