

Guidelines ~ Sacrament of Baptism Saint Paul Church

Frequently Asked Questions

General Schedule Overview

- a. Baptisms are scheduled on the 3rd and 4th Sunday of the month (there are no Baptisms during Lent). Exceptions may apply depending on Holydays so please contact the Parish Center for specific dates.
- b. Group Baptisms are at 1:30PM on the 3rd Sunday for up to 8 families.
- c. Baptisms at Noon Mass are on the 4th Sunday for up to 2 families.
- d. Parental Preparation Sessions are at 1PM on the 2nd Sunday of the month in the Parish Center.
 - Session One is required for all parents who are baptizing their first child or who are baptizing a baby at Saint Paul Church for the first time. Session One provides insight to the Sacrament of Baptism and includes a discussion of your family's faith life and expectations for your child.
 - Session Two is held the month of your child's baptism. Session Two addresses the symbols of the Sacrament and the specific logistics of the Baptism ceremony.

1. When should parents contact the Parish Center to schedule Baptism for their child?
 - a. Parents should contact the Parish Center and submit the Registration Form at least three full months prior to the requested date of Baptism.
2. What are the requirements for Catholic godparents?
 - a. Though it is customary for children to have 2 godparents the child can be baptized with one godparent. If there are two godparents they cannot be of the same gender.
 - Godparents cannot be the child's parent and are required to be 16 years of age or older and practicing their faith. They must be a fully initiated Catholic (Baptized, received Communion & Confirmation) and live a virtuous life consistent with their own Baptismal vows.
3. Why are there requirements for godparents?
 - It is important to understand that Baptism is one of the Seven Sacraments and is not a *private act* but is an official, public liturgy of the Catholic Church.
 - A godparent is a role of service and example done in the name of the Church to support the parents in the development of the child's Christian life.
4. What is a *proxy* if a godparent cannot be present at the Baptism ceremony?
 - A *proxy* physically represents a godparent who cannot be present at the Baptism. The godparent's name will appear on the official Baptismal Certificate and in the Parish Records. The proxy's name is not recorded in any records.
5. Are non-Catholic Christians permitted to serve as godparents?
 - A non-Catholic Christian can serve as *witness*. They must be physically present at the ceremony and their name will be recorded in the Parish records and on the Baptismal Certificate as a 'witness'.
6. Can a person who is a baptized Christian member of a recognized Eastern Church be a godparent at a Catholic baptism?
 - A person who is fully initiated (Baptism/Communion/Confirmation) in a recognized Eastern Church can be a godparent in a Catholic baptism. A letter of certification from their parish is required in advance of the baptism. If you have questions concerning the eligibility of a member of an Eastern Church please contact the Pastoral Associate.

If you have additional questions please contact John Nunziata, Pastoral Associate at jjnunziata@verizon.net or 201-327-0976, Ext 313.