

Questions About Baptism

1. Who may be a godparent to our child?

A child should have two active, baptized, Catholic godparents—a man and a woman, who are the godfather and the godmother. Absent a Catholic godfather or godmother, an active, baptized Christian may be identified as a “witness” to the baptism. The active, baptized Catholic, however, would be the official godparent.

2. How soon should I have my child baptized?

Since Baptism is so important the Church encourages you to baptize your child as soon as possible. The timing will depend on how soon you can be properly prepared. You will need to participate in the parish baptism preparation program, arrange for the godparents, and set a date with the pastor when family and friends can be present.

3. Why does the Church recommend the Baptism of infants?

Since an infant cannot decide about celebrating baptism, the parents (because of their faith) take advantage of God's generous invitation and love for this child. They want their child to grow up knowing God's love and life by being a member of God's family. At some point, hopefully, the child will make his/her own personal decision to respond to God's love. Our Church believes that Baptism is one of the most important experiences of life. Caring parents would not want to deprive their children the grace of the sacraments.

4. My parents tell me I should pick a saint's name for my child. Is this the practice?

It was the custom in the early history of the church to change one's name at Baptism to reflect the important change taking place in one's life. Later, parents were encouraged to give their children a saint's name and even to refrain from non-Christian names. Today it is not necessary to name a child after a saint. However, it would be desirable to select a name that could have special meaning or significance for the child. In this way, the child's name could motivate him/her to be a follower of Christ.

5. If a baby is baptized at birth (emergency), may she/he be re-baptized in church?

In baptism we become a Christian and a member of God's family. We cannot repeat something that has already happened. The church has a ritual for this circumstance of bringing to the church a baptized child. Also at this time godparents could be present.

6. When can I have my child baptized?

In our faith community, Baptisms are celebrated during any regularly scheduled weekend Mass except during Lent.

7. My seven year old child has not been baptized. What should I do?

Every child who is seven years old (the age of reason) or older would be prepared for baptism through the "Order of Christian Initiation of Adults". After notifying the parish of your desire to baptize your child, you will be given the information about that preparation program. The baptism of older children takes place at the Easter Vigil service on Holy Saturday each year.

8. I recently witnessed an infant baptism and the baby was totally immersed in the water. Is this an ordinary way of baptizing?

There are two ways a child can be baptized: by pouring the water on the head, and by immersing the child into the water. The immersion of the child in the water of baptism more clearly symbolizes that this child is dying to the effects of sin and rising to the New Life of Christ. During your preparation you will decide which ritual you would like for your child.

9. I am a member of Sacred Heart Church, but would like to have my child baptized in the parish where I grew up. Is this possible?

It is preferred that you arrange the baptism of your child in the parish that you attend. You are now developing your relationship in this faith community. Baptism is the initiation of your child into this community. If you still desire to schedule the Baptism in another parish, you will need a letter from our pastor stating that this is all right and that you have been prepared for the Baptism of your child. Having completed the baptismal preparation program and been an active parishioner and regular worshiper at Sacred Heart will expedite a letter from the pastor.

10. My child died and was not baptized. What will happen to him/her?

Because of God's endless love for everyone, as clearly demonstrated through Jesus' saving act of redemption, we all share God's life in His Kingdom, especially a child not baptized. We recognize that God's unlimited love welcomes your child into the Kingdom.

11. What is the fee for Baptism?

There is no fee for a Baptism or any other service in the Church. Sometimes families give a gift of appreciation to the priest or deacon who presides at the baptism but this is not required.