

## **Guidelines for Celebrating Baptism at St. Joseph Catholic Church**

**1. Register in the Parish:** Parents of the child to be baptized must be registered members of Saint Joseph's. If you are not already registered you may do so by contacting Marian Hall, Parish Secretary at the church office, 620-241-0821 or at [mhall@stjosephmcperson.com](mailto:mhall@stjosephmcperson.com). Parish registration forms are also available online at the parish website.

**2. Contact the Pastor** at the parish office to schedule a baptismal preparation meeting.

**3. Selecting Godparents:** Godparents play a very important role in your child's spiritual life. They should serve as role models of the faith. The child should be able to look to their godparent as an example of how the church teaches us to live our Catholic faith. They should support not only the child but you, the parents as well. Additionally, in their role as godparent, they represent the larger Church community. Therefore, being a godparent is not only an honor, it is a tremendous responsibility. Therefore, the godparents should be carefully chosen. In recognizing the importance of the godparent and their duties, the Church has provided guidelines to help parents choose the best possible godparents for their children. St. Joseph's strictly adheres to Canon Law in all aspects of Baptism. If potential godparents are not practicing members of the church or have converted from the Catholic faith to any other faith, they should not be considered and will not be accepted.

The Church requirements for Roman Catholic godparents are:

- A child must have one practicing Roman Catholic godparent in good standing with the Church.
- A godparent must have received the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation.
- A godparent must be living an exemplary life consistent with faith and morals as taught by the Roman Catholic Church.
- A godparent must be actively practicing the faith.
- A nonCatholic, baptized Christian may be chosen as a Christian Witness, as long as one godparent is Catholic.
- If two godparents are chosen, they may not be of the same gender.
- There may be no more than two godparents.
- If both are Catholic, both must meet all the criteria above.

**4. Godparent Certificates:** All godparents including those from St. Joseph's and Christian Witnesses must obtain a certificate/letter from their own parish/church stating that they are members in good standing and are eligible to act as a godparent/Christian Witness for Baptism. These certificates should be submitted to the Pastor as soon as possible after the initial baptism registration. Without these certificates there may be a postponement of your child's Baptism.

**5. Baptism Preparation Class:** All first time parents are required to attend a Baptism Preparation Class. This 30 minute class is to be scheduled with the Pastor. Parents are encouraged to attend a class prior to the birth of their baby All godparents are welcome and encouraged to attend the class if they are in the local area.

**6. Scheduling the Baptism:** After meeting with the Pastor, parents may consult with him to set a date and time for the celebration of Baptism. At St. Joseph's, baptisms may be celebrated during or after the 5:30 p.m. or 9:00 a.m. Sunday Masses. Other dates or times may be taken under consideration according to the Pastor's discretion.

**7. Naming Your Child:** The name you select in addition to your family name will provide your child with a unique identity. The long standing tradition of the Church has been to give at least one name of a saint or person from our Biblical tradition. A Christian name will provide your child with a model for Christ-centered living.

<http://wordbytes.org/saints/names.htm> -- site for choosing names

**8. Pictures at the Baptism:** Photographs and video are encouraged at the baptism ceremony. These are excellent means of sharing the memory of this joyous and special day with your child as he/she grows in age and faith. They will also turn out to be a good teaching tool. Please be sure to follow the instructions of the celebrant to insure that you will be getting the best pictures and not interfering with the ceremony. Father is always happy to stay for pictures with your family after the baptism.

**9. Clothing and Candle:** A white Baptismal gown is customary but not required. Whatever clothing is worn should be loose enough at the neck to allow anointing of the child's breast. If a hat is worn, it should be removed for the baptism. The parish will provide a white Baptismal garment and a decorated candle. After the ceremony they will be yours to keep as a reminder of this joyous milestone. The candle can be burned on Baptismal anniversaries and when the child receives other sacraments in the future.

**10. Family Donation:** There is no fee, however many families wish to offer a stipend to the Pastor on the occasion of their child's Baptism.

**11. Baptismal Record and Certificate:** The baptism will be recorded in the permanent records of the parish from the information you provide. Therefore please be sure of the accuracy of information and the spelling of names. A baptism certificate will be mailed to you following the baptism. Later, whenever a certificate might be needed, it can be prepared from the parish record.

**12. Baptismal Water:** It is a nice idea to retain a small amount of the blessed Baptism water with which your child will be baptized. If you wish, you may bring a small leak proof container to fill with this water after the ceremony.