

Baptism FAQ

What are the requirements for infant Baptism:

1. **Complete the Baptism Paperwork:** Registered parishioners can email the Baptism Coordinator to have the Baptism Information Form that the parents need to complete and the Sponsor form that your Godparents and their parish need to complete.
2. **Attend a Pre-Baptism Class:** Parents must attend the Baptism class. Email the Baptism Coordinator to let them know which Baptism Class you would like to attend! Classes are offered monthly at St. Peter Chanel. Classes may be taken at another parish, but a certificate of completion is necessary for paperwork.
3. **Reserve a Date for the Baptism:** As soon as you have completed a Baptism Class and returned the paperwork, you can then schedule a Baptism.

Why do the parents have to attend a preparation class and Faith Formation?

Before the celebration of baptism, the Church expects parents and sponsors to be formed in the meaning of the Sacrament as well as its responsibilities. St. Peter Chanel offers classes one Sunday of each month. Classes begin at 10:45a and run until Noon.

Who should I contact?

Families desiring to have a child baptized at St. Peter Chanel Catholic Church may contact the Baptism Coordinator, Cindy Czajkoski at cczajkoski@stpeterchanel.org

Why does the Church baptize infants?

It has always been the practice of the Church to baptize infants. From the earliest days, when an adult was baptized so was everyone else in that person's household. Along with the growth of Catholicism in the Fourth and Fifth centuries came a decrease in the number of adult baptisms and infancy became the primary time for baptism. After the Second Vatican Council the adult Catechumenate (or RCIA) was restored, but in keeping with the long-standing tradition of the Church, infant baptism is still normative.

But infants cannot make an act of faith in God or Jesus Christ, can they?

That is true, and the Church recognizes that, so infants are baptized on the faith of the parents. This means there must "be a founded hope that the infant will be brought up in the Catholic religion; if such a hope is altogether lacking, the baptism is to be put off" . In other words, if there is little or no faith on the part of the parents, little or no faith will be passed on to the child. In putting off the baptism, the Church is not refusing to baptize the infant; rather, the Church is ensuring that this child will be raised in the practice of the faith into which he or she has been baptized. Yes, postponing baptism may cause some anxiety or tension in the extended family, but it is also a time of reflection for the parents of the child on their own relationship with God, Jesus, and the Church. The Church earnestly desires all who are baptized to participate in the weekly liturgical and

pastoral life of the community. This postponement should be viewed as a challenge to live out the baptism the parents themselves received earlier in life.

Who is considered for infant baptism?

The Church considers anyone who has not yet completed their seventh year to be an infant. Therefore, the parents of children under the age of seven may request baptism and attend the parish's infant baptism preparation session. For those children who are over seven years of age the Church requires that they make a profession of faith. Therefore it is necessary that they themselves be prepared for the Sacraments of Initiation. Please contact Ms. Cindy Czajkoski at cczajkoski@stpeterchanel.org for children age 7 and over.

What is the role of the Sponsors/Godparents?

The role of the sponsor or Godparent is, "together with the parents, to present an infant at baptism, and help the baptized to lead a Christian life in harmony with baptism, and to fulfill faithfully the obligations connected with it." In the beginning of the Rite of Baptism of Children, the Godparents are asked if they are willing to help the parents of the one baptized in their duties as Christian parents. Thus, the function of the Godparents is not merely ceremonial or social but to assist the parents in raising their child in the practice of the faith.

What does it mean to lead a "life in harmony with the faith and role to be undertaken?"

In addition to being a fully initiated Catholic (i.e., having received the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) the sponsor must also be person of faith--one who regularly attends Sunday Mass, has been married according to the norms of the Catholic Church (if married), and strives to deepen his or her relationship with God through Jesus. A good question to ask is: "Does this person take care of their own faith... if not is he/she likely to help take care of my child's?"

May a non-Catholic be a Sponsor/Godparent?

Because the child is being baptized into the Roman Catholic Church, "a baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community may not be admitted except as a witness to baptism and together with a Catholic sponsor." In other words, as long as there is one Catholic Godparent who meets all the requirements of the Church listed above, another baptized person, Catholic or non-Catholic, may be a witness to the baptism.

How many Sponsors/Godparents can a child have?

Only one Godfather and/or one Godmother can be baptismal sponsors but additional Catholic persons may act as witnesses at the baptism.

Does the child have to have a saint's name?

As a minimum, the Church requires that no name "foreign to a Christian mentality" be given to the child (Canon 855). Consider, however, choosing a name for the child from the rich tradition of models of the Christian life. In some cultures, the one is named after the saint whose feast day the child is born on or around. Then, as the child grows up, encourage him or her to learn about the patron, perhaps promoting a devotion to the child's namesake.

Is there a charge for the baptism?

The Church never charges for the celebration of a Sacrament. Rather, Christians give out of gratitude for what they have received from God. A donation to the celebrant (priest or deacon) is up the family.