

# Requirements for Baptism

## Parent Requirements

*By choosing to have your child baptized, you are making a serious commitment before God to raise your child in the Church and teach him or her about the Catholic faith. To ensure that you are prepared for and committed to this task, the Church asks that you meet the following requirements.*

- At least 1 parent of the child must be a Catholic member of St. Joseph Parish. Membership is determined by:
  - Being registered with the parish for at least 3 months before the date of the baptism
  - Faithful Mass attendance on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, and confessing sins at least once a year
  - Use of the envelope system in support of the parish
- The Catholic parent must be practicing the faith, and, if married, be married in the Catholic Church
  - If the Catholic parent is not married in the Church, please call the parish and ask to meet with the pastor about getting your marital situation regularized
- The parents must have the firm intention to raise the child in the Catholic Church, taking him/her to Mass and educating him/her in the faith
- If this is the first child baptized, the Catholic parent must attend the Baptism Seminar (generally offered on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of **every other** month)

## Godparent Requirements

*The role of the godparent(s) is to assist the parents in raising the child in the Catholic faith. You should look for someone who can provide encouragement to you and your child and will serve as a role model as he or she grows and learns about the Church.*

- Only one godparent is required, though there may be two
- There can be no more than one male and one female godparent
- At least one of the godparents must be a practicing Catholic
- The Catholic godparent must:
  - Be at least 16 years old
  - Have received the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Catholic Church
  - Be living a life in harmony with the faith by attending Mass and receiving the sacraments faithfully
  - If married, he/she must be married according to the laws of the Church
- A parent may not serve as a godparent, but a grandparent may

- Each godparent must obtain a letter or certificate of eligibility from his/her church stating that they are a practicing member in good standing with their church
- One of the godparents may be a non-Catholic Christian. This person is called a Christian Witness. He/She must obtain a letter of good standing from his/her church as mentioned above
- It is not necessary that the Catholic godparent be the same gender as the child
- If a godparent is not able to attend the ceremony, a proxy (stand-in) may be selected, and the chosen godparent will still be listed on the certificate as the official godparent
- Godparents do not need to attend the baptism seminar, but they are welcomed to do so

## The Baptism Ceremony

*The ceremony will not be a Mass, but will include scripture readings, a brief homily, anointing with the Sacred Chrism oil, baptism with water, and lighting of the baptismal candle.*

- Baptisms are not usually celebrated during Advent and Lent, as they are penitential seasons
- Baptisms are generally scheduled for Saturday afternoons
- Please arrive 15 minutes before your scheduled ceremony time
- Traditionally the child dresses in white, but it is not strictly necessary. A white baptismal stole and candle are provided by the parish for the ceremony.
- It is helpful for the priest if you include a little pink or blue ribbon on your child's clothes so the priest will know the gender of the child
- Photographs are permitted during the ceremony
- It is a pious custom to offer a free-will stipend to the priest or deacon who celebrates the baptism, **but it is certainly not required**, nor should you feel embarrassed if you are unable. Should you choose to offer a stipend, it can be in any amount, either in check or cash. You can place the check in an envelope and hand it to the priest or deacon immediately following the ceremony.
- You should choose a patron saint for your child, and respond with this name during the ceremony when asked "What name have you given your child?"
  - Choose a saint canonized by the Catholic Church
  - The saint could have the same first or middle name as your child, but it can be different
  - You might choose based on the feast day on which your child was born, the same name as another family member, by occupation, country of origin, etc
  - Try searching at [catholicsaints.info](http://catholicsaints.info) or [franciscanmedia.org/saints](http://franciscanmedia.org/saints) for ideas

## **Baptisms During Covid-19**

- Baptisms will be scheduled so that only one family will be celebrating a baptism at a time
- In between baptisms on the same day, the pews will be wiped down and the water in the font will be changed
- There is no limit to the amount of guests you can bring
- It is strongly recommended that all who are able wear a mask
- You will have an opportunity to take photos without masks after the ceremony if you choose

## **Baptism Checklist**

1. Contact the Coordinator of Rites of Initiation for available baptism and baptism seminar dates at [emily@stjosephcolumbia.org](mailto:emily@stjosephcolumbia.org)
2. Select godparent(s)
3. Select a baptism date (allow yourself time to complete the rest of the steps!)
4. Complete registration for baptism (the Coordinator will give you this)
5. Attend a Baptism Seminar if this is your first child baptized
6. Have godparents obtain a letter of eligibility from their church and send to the Coordinator of Rites at St. Joseph

**All paperwork is due to the Coordinator of Rites of Initiation 2 weeks before the scheduled baptism date. Letters of Good Standing can be sent to:**

St. Joseph Catholic Church  
Attn: Emily MacLennan  
3512 Devine Street  
Columbia, SC 29205