

St. Peter the Apostle
Catholic Church

Baptism Ministry



*Celebrating the
Sacrament of Baptism*

Baptism: A gracious gift of God

The birth and baptism of your child is a grace-filled time in your life. In your child you can see the mystery of God's loving and challenging presence. Your baby is a promise of new life and a gift for the future, both for the child's parents and family, as well as for the parish community of St. Peter the Apostle. When an infant is baptized, we see God's love and salvation given freely and lavishly.

This is why the baptism of an infant is such a wonderful experience for all. When we see your new baby and share in the joy of your family, we can see, feel and know the love of an all-gracious God. The mystery of how our God is with us and the promise of God's abiding love is opened to us as we witness and participate in the Rite of Baptism.

Baptism is the gift of new life in the Risen Christ given through the Church that you as parents are privileged to offer your child. Gratitude, joy and a promise to love and guide your child throughout his or her journey of faith is your response to God's love.

St. Peter the Apostle Parish celebrates Baptism as a process that begins with your decision to bring your child to the Sacrament. In order that you may fully participate in the celebration of the Sacrament, you will be involved in each step of this process.

Beginning the Process

Most likely, you have already contacted the Parish Center to begin the joyous process of new life for your child. The parish secretary asked you for some general information and then sent you a packet of information in addition to this brochure. Please carefully review all of the paperwork. Some of the documents are for child's godparents, ***so please be sure to share the respective paperwork with them in a timely fashion.***

The Church strongly encourages you start this process during your pregnancy to allow you flexibility and time to properly prepare for this great day. Please do not wait until the month you want your child Baptized to start this process! This is a process of preparation for both the parents and the godparents.

Baptism preparation meetings take place in the Parish Center at 7:00 pm on the first Thursday of every month. This ministry is intended as an inviting and welcoming forum to prepare you for the Baptism of your child and to assist with any questions you may have. The topics discussed at this evening of reflection are "Belonging to the Church" and "Theology of Baptism/Original Sin." You are welcome to attend this session before your child is born. Although it is not mandatory, we strongly encourage godparents to attend this meeting also.

The sacrament of Baptism is celebrated on the third Sunday of the month at 12:15 pm (immediately following 11:30 am Mass). Please call Parish Center at 630-773-1272 (ext. 200) to schedule a date.

Please reflect upon the following thoughts as you prepare to begin this process for yourself, the godparents and your child:

Baptism is the beginning of a journey to the truth that our Father is loving, merciful and compassionate. Just like St. Augustine said, “Our hearts will not rest until we rest in the Lord.”

As a child, we do not make any decisions about coming before the Church for Baptism; our parents and community do. It is up to the child as he/she matures to make their life history a journey with and to God. As you create your history in time and space from the time your child is born, Baptism is the beginning of your spiritual history as you continue to grow and mature. Your spiritual history is your journey to eternity.

The Church is the tangible presence of God through which the Holy Spirit is received and we now share in Christ’s passion. Being baptized doesn’t mean that we will always believe, but our membership card will never be revoked. Once you are baptized, you are bound to the Church and Christ. This permanent seal is with us forever and has entitled us to share in the Holy Spirit and God’s grace.

Baptism is the first sign of God’s forgiveness of original sin. Through this grace, God claims us for Himself and gives us the strength to avoid sin in our life.

Baptism is not only for the child who is being accepted into the Church, but to be celebrated by all of the people attending this celebration. By our presence, we are thankful for this child and also accept responsibility for this child’s spiritual history. We become closer to this child through our witness in this faith community. God wants us to love everyone for whom they are, and our presence is an affirmation that we accept this child for who they are. This responsibility moves us to assist this child in becoming all that they are; a child of God and our brother or sister in Christ.

This is a renewal of our own Baptism. Just as God is claiming this child in Baptism, God is continuing to claim us as adults through this Baptism by giving us the strength and courage to teach this child how to live a Christian life.

Baptism is not something that we receive and forget, but Baptism remains with us forever. Baptism is not something that is of the past, but in the here and now. Baptism should bring us back to questions not only our history, but our spiritual history as well. How have we lived? How do we live? How will we live?



This Baptism process is modeled after the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) adult learning.

MARRIAGE	RCIA	INFANT BAPTISM
Intro and Friendship	Evangelization and Preparing for Baptism	Welcoming, Overview, Forms
Companionship & Engagement	Instruction of the Un-Baptized	Instruction for Rite of Baptism
Rite of Marriage	Rite of Initiation	Rite of Baptism
Settling-In	Mystagogy	Post-Baptismal Ministry

Choosing Godparents

When choosing godparents, it behooves parents to be quite selective. The purpose of the godparent is to guide the child in the ways of the faith so that they might reach heaven. The Code of Canon Law explains that the godparent is one who “will help the baptized to lead a Christian life in harmony with baptism, and to fulfill faithfully the obligations connected with it.”

The godparent must:

- ◆ Have completed the sixteenth year.
- ◆ Be a Catholic who has received their first communion and the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- ◆ Lead a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken.
- ◆ Not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared.
- ◆ Not be the father or the mother.

A life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken means someone who is practicing their faith weekly, believes what the Church believes, is validly married in the Church or living a chaste single life and has no other obstacles to being a good Catholic example of Christian life.

A person of another Christian denomination or other religion cannot be a godparent; however, a Christian person of another Christian denomination may serve as a Christian witness which is not a godparent and whose name does not appear on the baptismal certificate.

A Catholic cannot be a Christian witness. Any Catholic party is bound by the laws which govern godparents, as previously stated. An individual who has left the Catholic faith cannot be a Christian witness because they have freely chosen no longer to live the Catholic faith.

Parents may choose to have only one godparent. If the parents choose to have two godparents, one must be male and one female. The relationship of two godparents emulates spiritually the parenthood of the biological parents. Just as it is impossible to have two biological parents who are of the same sex so is it impossible to have two godparents of the same sex.

In order to avoid any embarrassment on your part, it is suggested that you contact the parish center prior to choosing your godparents. Your godparents will be asked to have their parish priest fill out a godparents form testifying that they fulfill the canonical requirements.

Checklist

Before the Baptism of your child, please review all of the following guidelines to make sure you are meeting the necessary criteria:

- Parents need to be registered and active parishioners (please contact the Parish Center if you need to register).
- One or both parents need to attend the Baptism preparation meeting before your child can be baptized.
- As Godparents act as sponsor to the one being baptized, Catholic Church Law mandates that at least one Godparent is a **practicing Catholic—confirmed and in good standing in the Catholic Church**. (See letters to be signed and returned in the Baptism packet).
- One Godparent may be non-Catholic but is documented as a witness and must be of Christian denomination.

Please complete and return the following items to the Parish Center:

- Parent questionnaire
- Baptism registration form
- Letter confirming godparents' good standing and active participation at their parish (form to be used is provided in packet)
- Parishioner registration (if not already registered)

Required paperwork **MUST** be returned to the parish center **no later than ten (10) business days prior to the baptismal date or your date will be rescheduled**. This includes all necessary information regarding family records and godparents.

Please read the baptism planning information provided before selecting a godparent. A sponsor certificate must be provided **by each godparent**. The proper **sponsor certificate** for St. Peter the Apostle is included with the baptism packet provided. Christian witnesses are most welcome to celebrate with the family and community, but please note they are not recorded as sponsors on the Baptismal Certificate or in the Baptismal Register.

Dates to Remember!

Baptism Preparation Meeting

Rite of Baptism



As your child grows in Faith...

- ◆ Pray with your child
- ◆ Take your child to Sunday Mass
- ◆ Encourage your child to know God in the ups, as well as the downs of life.
- ◆ Encourage your school-aged child to participate in activities offered at the parish.
- ◆ Help your child know self-worth, self-esteem and most of all love.
- ◆ Encourage your child to live the life God created them to fulfill, not what society dictates.

St. Peter the Apostle Catholic Church

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