



St. Peter's Catholic Church

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Dear friends in Christ,

Congratulations on the birth of your child! We are encouraged that you are now seeking baptism for your child and we, your parish community, wish to share in the joy of this celebration with you.

The baptism of your child is a very important opportunity for you, the parents, to reaffirm your Catholic faith. By asking for baptism, you are stating and affirming that you will actively participate in the spiritual life and Catholic faith development of your child.

To help you to be more fully aware of the great significance and importance of this joyful sacrament, the pastoral team here at Saint Peter's parish is more than happy to help you and your child in his/her initiation into this Catholic community and the Catholic Church as a whole.

Please read the following material since it contains vital information to help you prepare as best as possible to celebrate the baptism of your child.

We pray for God's richest and choicest blessings for you and your family.

Peace and joy,

Rev. Michael Corcione, ofm
Pastor

FOR THE PARENTS:

As you prepare for the sacrament of baptism for your child, you are presented with a unique opportunity to reaffirm your own Christian faith. On the strength of your own faith, you are asking the rest of the Church to welcome your child as a new member of this faith community. In doing so, you are making a promise to God, the Catholic Church and your child that you will do your very best to help develop the spiritual potential of your child and guide him/her to grow in the knowledge and love of Jesus and His Church.

Sometimes, Catholic parents, who do not participate in the regular liturgical life of the Church, insist the sacraments are their “right”. This may be true. But as with all things, with those “rights” come certain duties and responsibilities. Infant baptism is a “privilege” for Catholic parents who not only love Jesus above all things but are also committed to living out that faith through, with and in the Church at large.

Baptism is the door and the key to the rest of the sacraments. As such, baptism is also rite of initiation into our faith community and the beginning of a life-long commitment - - not just a one day celebration. In the long run, it is the parents’ sole responsibility to ensure that their child is given every opportunity to become a faithful follower of Jesus within their faith community. In short, if the strength and presence of God’s love is not nourished in the home, by the parents AND within the Church community, the significance of baptism is lost and the sacrament becomes just another “social event” with no real meaning.

Therefore, before we proceed with baptism, the Catholic community of St. Peter’s Parish requires some indication that you will take seriously the responsibilities found in infant baptism. We need assurance that the spiritual life that God gives to your child at baptism will be fully nourished and cared for, by you and this faith community of St. Peter’s Parish.

The final sheet of this baptism packet should be completed in full and returned to the priest at the time of your individual baptismal appointment before a date is given for the baptism ceremony.

PRACTICAL PREPERATION STEPS FOR THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Step one - Assessment and Initial contact

The first step in preparing for your child's baptism is to fill out the attached form of this baptismal package and then schedule an appointment with our parish office. Please consider carefully the answers you give. As it is the duty of BOTH parents to help raise your child in the Christian faith, both parents should participate in filling out the form before the appointment.

Step two - Choosing the Godparents

The selection of godparents is a critical choice in the baptism of your child. The role of the godparents is to help the parents raise their child in the Catholic faith. The godparents help the child live out their faith, giving good example by what they say and do.

As you begin to prepare for your child's baptism, you are invited to reflect on the role and the selection of the godparents. Prior to inviting a relative or friend to assume the role of the godparents for your child, it is important that you understand our church teaches with regards to the godparents.

- Godparents are to be over the age of 16 at the time of the baptism and should have received all three sacraments of initiation (baptism, confirmation and communion).
- Godparents must be Catholics in good standing, enthusiastically living their faith and active participants in the life of the church.
- Godparents represent the Church (not family) as they promise, on the behalf of the Church at large, to help the parents in raising the child in our Catholic faith.
- You must have at least one godparent. If you chose to have two godparents, they MUST be one male and one female (you cannot have TWO godfathers or TWO godmothers).
- Non- Catholic Christians (i.e. Anglicans, Baptists, etc.) may NOT be godparents. They may be "Christian witnesses" but they may not be the official "godparent". Non-Christians are not suitable to be either godparents or Christian witnesses.
- Once the godparents have been chosen, we kindly ask you to obtain from them an **updated** Baptismal certificate (which can be requested from the parish where they were baptized). **Please ensure to bring these Baptismal certicates with you to your scheduled appointment.**

If you have any questions or doubts about selecting the godparents, please do not hesitate to ask the priests/office BEFORE you ask the godparents. This may save you some trouble and help to avoid a possibly "embarrassing" situation.

Step three – Individual appointment with one of the parish priests

After you have read this package, completed the attached form and obtained the godparents' Baptismal certificates, please call our parish office to schedule an appointment.

Please bring the attached questionnaire to your scheduled appointment.

At this meeting, you may choose the baptism date and choose a date to attend one of our baptism instruction classes.

Step four – Attend the baptism instruction class

Baptism instruction class is MANDATORY for both parents and godparents. They are held monthly in our parish hall and usually last about an hour. You need to attend only one class BEFORE your child's scheduled baptism date. Meetings are usually on Mondays at 7 pm on a monthly basis.

Step five – Attend the Baptism ceremony

Baptisms here at Saint Peter's parish take place twice a month on Sundays at 1:30pm sharp. Everyone is welcome to attend the baptism ceremony as it is a joyful occasion for the whole Church.

The ceremony itself is NOT a Mass. It usually lasts about an hour from start to finish. There is a limit of ten (10) children per baptism so the ceremony does not drag on too long. We ask that you inform family members and friends to be prompt and respectful at all times when in Church.

Since photography can be distracting during the ceremony, we ask that picture taking and videos be done ONLY during the actual baptism itself around the baptismal font. At this time, all family and friends are invited to stand around the font and watch your child be baptized. This is when they may take pictures.

An offering envelope will be distributed to you at the baptism instruction class. Each envelope will have your family name on it so any donation you make may be recorded for your tax purposes at the end of the year. It is ONLY a donation and you may place it on the altar when you receive your child's baptism certificate at the end of the ceremony.

After the ceremony, you may remain in the church to take as many pictures as you like. The priests will also be available to take pictures with you, if you desire. If you have any questions or problems concerning your child's baptism or anything contained in this package, please do not hesitate to contact us at the parish office.

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONNAIRE:

Parents, in order to help you to make the right decisions about your child's Baptism,

- a) Please reflect together on the following statements indicating your preferred answer(s) with your initial, adding your comments or questions.

A reminder to please bring questionnaire to your scheduled appointment, with one of the priest.

1. I am Catholic because:

- _____ I was baptized a Catholic as an infant
_____ I chose to be a member of the Church as an adult
_____ I have chosen to live out my Baptismal commitment in this community

Please comment: _____

2. Faith is:

- _____ living according to a set of predetermined rules
_____ a personal relationship with God
_____ belief in an all-knowing and powerful creator

Please comment: _____

3. The Church is:

- _____ the building where Mass is held
_____ the people of God
_____ the faith community that I belong to

Please comment: _____

4. Baptism is important because:

- _____ it is the welcoming of my Child in to the Christian community
_____ it washes away the stain of original sin
_____ it allows my child to go to heaven

Please comment: _____

5. Participating in Sunday Mass each week is required of all Catholics. It is also important:

- _____ it enables me to hear the teaching of Jesus being proclaimed
_____ it enables me to worship God with my Catholic Christian community
_____ it is the great source of spiritual nourishment and essential for growth in faith
_____ God needs me to be at Church every week

