

Baptism Guide for Parents

Congratulations on your new addition and the upcoming Baptism! Enclosed are some guidelines to assist you in preparing for your Baptism Liturgy and for life after the Baptism. Baptism is only the beginning of your child's relationship with the Lord and your journey as Christian parents. We are here to walk with you every step of the way, provide you with resources, and to pray with and for you so that your marriage and family can thrive.

Scheduling a Baptism

Contact Betsy Shulkosky (bshulkosky@greatgrouping.org or 724-935-2104 x234) to schedule your child's Baptism. We schedule Baptisms:

- On Saturdays at 10:00 AM or later, either in the main church or in the Grotto Chapel.
- On Sundays at 12:30 PM or later in the main church.
- Other times appointment.

Once you have scheduled your baptism, we will send you a confirmation email indicating the necessary forms that are required.

Required Paperwork

Please submit the following items no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled Baptism. Each item is explained in further detail below.

- Copy of your child's birth certificate/verification of birth or adoption finalization paperwork.
- Submit a letter of permission from your pastor if you are not registered members of Saints John & Paul Parish.
- Attend a Baptism Prep Class if you have not been to one in the last four years. An on-line course is available.
- Sponsor Eligibility Form for Godparents and/or Proxy.

Baptismal Registry and Birth/Adoption Documents

After the Baptism, the sacrament will be recorded in the parish Baptism Register. Your child's permanent Sacramental Record will always be kept at Saints John & Paul Parish. Before your child's reception of other sacraments (First Reconciliation, First Communion, Confirmation, Marriage, and Holy Orders), entry to Catholic School, or Religious Profession, you will be asked for an updated copy of his or her Sacramental Records, which will always be issued from this parish. As your child receives additional sacraments, that will always be recorded here.

To create this permanent record of your child's sacramental life, we need the following information:

- Child's Full Legal Name
- Date of Birth
- City of Birth
- Father's Full Legal Name
- Father's Religion
- Mother's Name (including Maiden Name)
- Mother's Religion
- Godparents' Names

As supporting documentation for this information, please submit a copy of your child's birth certificate. If you do not have the birth certificate when you schedule the Baptism, please submit a copy of the Verification of Birth from the hospital or birth center until you receive a birth certificate.

Baptism and Adoption

When a child is in the process of being adopted, Pennsylvania State Law requires the natural parents to consent to the Baptism. Otherwise, the sacrament will be postponed until after the adoption has been finalized, unless the child is in danger of death. Foster parents do not have the authority to present a foster child for Baptism. If your child has been adopted, please submit a copy of the finalized adoption paperwork as supporting documentation.

Permission for Non-Parishioners

You do not have to be registered members of Saints & Paul Parish to have your child baptized here. Diocesan policy requires that you obtain written permission from your pastor for us to perform the Baptism in our church.

Baptism Preparation Classes

Baptism Prep Classes are designed for families who have never attended one before or who have not been to one in four years or longer. In these classes, we strive to help parents:

- Understand sacraments in general and baptism in particular.
- Understand how to live out the promises they make during the baptism ceremony.
- Recognize that this is about renewing their own relationship with the Lord and starting that relationship for their child.

To achieve these goals, we use the Christian tradition and sociological studies to suggest practical steps parents can take to be truly Christian parents. Because of this approach, both veteran parents and first-time parents have found our classes to be valuable.

Choosing Godparents

One of your most important tasks before the Baptism is to choose godparents for your child. You only need one, but if you choose two, Church Law requires one male and one female. Godparents will assist you in raising your child in the Catholic faith and therefore must meet certain qualifications as set forth by Church Law. According to Canon Law, a godparent must:

- Be designated by you and must have the intention of performing this role.
- Be at least 16 years of age, unless his/her pastor sees just cause for an exception.
- Be a Catholic who has been Confirmed and has already shared Holy Communion.
- Be a Catholic who leads life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken.
 - This means that if the person is married, it must be according the laws of the Church.
 - This also means that former Catholics and non-practicing Catholics cannot serve as a godparent.
- Not be bound by any legitimately imposed canonical penalty.

- Not be the father or mother of the child.

If you cannot find an eligible godparent, we would be happy to put you in contact with a parishioner who can serve in this role and pray for your child and your family.

Verifying Godparent's Eligibility

The proposed godparent's pastor must verify that s/he is eligible to serve in this role. If your godparents are from Saint John & Paul Parish, they should call the main office (724-935-2104) to attest to their eligibility. If they are from a different parish, the godparents will need to request a Sponsor Form from their home parish.

Christian Witness – A Non-Catholic Godparent

Because a godparent should be an asset to you in raising your child in the Catholic faith, it makes sense that you must have at least one Catholic godparent. A baptized Christian of a different denomination can serve as a Christian Witness as long as a Catholic godparent is also present. In these cases, there still needs to be one male and one female. Former Catholics and non-practicing Catholics cannot act as a Christian Witness. All Christian Witnesses will be asked for a letter of good standing from their current church.

Proxy Godparent

If a godparent cannot be present at the Baptism for a good reason but still would like to perform the life-long task of being a godparent, you can have a proxy present at the Baptism. The proxy must also be eligible to be a godparent according to the above requirements and must obtain a Sponsor Certificate as well. You will need to submit a Sponsor Certificate for both the godparent and the proxy.

What to Expect During the Baptism

The Rite of Baptism includes six main parts:

1. Rite of Receiving the Child

The celebrant will ask for your child's name and for you state your desire to have him/her baptized as well as your intention to be Christian parents:

Celebrant: What name have you given your child?

Parents: [Name]

Celebrant: What do you ask of God's Church for [Name]?

Parents: Baptism. (or Faith; New Life; etc.)

Celebrant: In asking for Baptism for your children, you are undertaking the responsibility of raising them in the faith, so that, keeping God's commandments, they may love the Lord and their neighbor as Christ has taught us. Do you understand this responsibility?

Parents: We do.

Celebrant: Are you ready to help the parents of these children in their duty?

Godparents: We are.

Celebrant: [Name], the Church of God receives you with great joy. In her name I sign you with the Sign of the Cross of Christ our Savior; then, after me, your parents (and godparents) will do the same.

2. Sacred Celebration of the Word of God

During the Sacred celebration of the Word of God, there will be one or more Scriptural readings. The celebrant will give a brief homily on Baptism and may explain some of the rest of the rite.

3. Prayer of Exorcism and Anointing Before Baptism

The Celebrant then prays over your child for the forgiveness of Original Sin and for the Holy Spirit to begin to dwell within him/her. He will then anoint your child with the Oil of the Catechumens on the breast.

4. Celebration of Baptism

The celebrant will then bless the water in the Baptismal Font, citing several instances from Salvation History of God's use of water to save his people. He will then lead parents and godparents through a renunciation of sin and profession of faith. This takes the form of six questions asking if you renounce Satan and if you believe in the tenants of the Creed. After each question, parents should respond, "I do."

Celebrant: Is it your will, therefore, that N. should receive Baptism in the faith of the Church, which we have all professed with you?

Parents and godparents: It is.

And immediately the celebrant baptizes the child, pouring water over the head three time and saying: "N., I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

5. Explanatory Rites

Immediately following the Baptism proper, the celebrant will anoint the child's head with Sacred Chrism, clothe him/her in a white garment, and ask a godparent to light the Baptismal Candle from the Easter Candle.

6. Concluding Rites

The ceremony concludes with the Lord's Prayer, a blessing, and a dismissal.

What to Expect After the Baptism

Baptism is a major event in your family's life, and it is the beginning of many more great things God has in store for your family. As your parish family, we want to celebrate with you and walk with you as you raise your child to be a disciple of Jesus.

Immediately after your scheduled Baptism, we will **email** you a congratulations note and invite you share a picture from the Baptism along with any reflections you may wish to share. To help you establish the habit celebrating your child's Baptism Anniversary, we will mail you a **postcard** eleven months after your Baptism reminding you of the date and providing simple suggestions to celebrate it.

We are a family-friendly parish, and we want to support you in your duty as Christian spouses and parents. We offer resources on healthy ways to thrive in the postpartum

period, postpone or achieve your next pregnancy, and even grapple with infertility and pregnancy loss. We offer many different activities for young families throughout the year to give you an easy way to meet other young families at our parish including:

- **Holy Half Hour** – introducing little ones and their parents to Eucharistic Adoration with prayers, songs, and stories to stir little hearts.
- **Seasonal Events for Young Families** – Summer Storytime, All Saints Day Dress Up Party, family movie nights, and more.
- **Making Music Praying Twice** – a music and movement class for newborns through age five with a parent that models prayerful and playful beginning music aptitude; registration opens on July 1 for sessions beginning in the fall.

We are here to help you strengthen your marriage, handle difficult parenting issues, and deepen your prayer life. We are honored to celebrate your child’s Baptism, and we look forward to growing with your family in the years to come.

Contact Information

Saints John & Paul Parish

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Scheduling Your Baptism

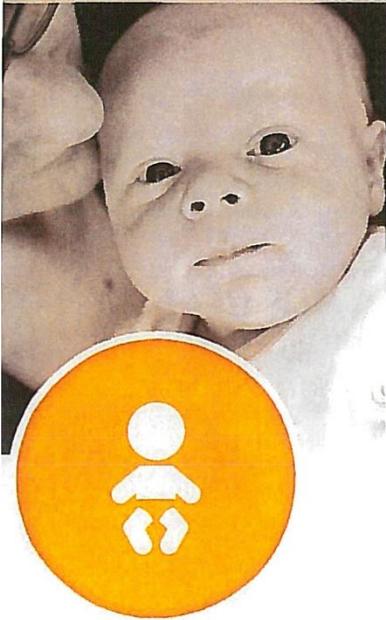
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FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Here's your developmentally appropriate guide-at-a-glance for effectively ministering to kids of all ages



BABIES

TYPICAL BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

- Young babies recognize human faces and prefer them to inanimate objects.
- A baby's brain is beginning very early adaptation to the language it hears in the home.
- Babies recognize familiar voices.
- A baby's healthy development is largely dependent upon how much the baby can consistently trust familiar adults to care for his or her needs.
- Music and rhythm help stimulate infant brain development.

TYPICAL PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Babies express curiosity and often bring things to their mouths as a way of exploration.
- Between the ages of 4 months and 7 months, babies begin learning to sit, roll, and eventually creep.
- At just a few months old, babies begin to recognize and even respond to people's emotions.
- They enjoy physical peekaboo-type play activities, especially with parents.
- Babies enjoy seeing their image in a mirror.
- At around 9 months, babies are able to express a wide range of emotions—and do so!

FAITH CONCEPTS

- Babies seek and value unconditional love. Consistently demonstrating it is important to help them understand a loving God.
- As you provide an environment where babies can develop a sense of trust in the adults around them, you lay groundwork for them to trust an unseen God.
- People in the church community help demonstrate love for one another.

QUESTIONS YOU CAN ANSWER

- Am I safe?
- Do I matter?
- Are my physical needs met?
- Can I trust people to care for me?
- Do people see me?
- Am I loved?

EFFECTIVE WAYS TO TEACH

- Babies need gentle, loving physical touch to feel love.
- They need eye contact and a person who will smile and interact with them.
- Babies react in utero to music rhythms before birth. Any use of rhythm and cadence boosts development and is instantly engaging.
- Read Scripture and Bible stories to babies. Even if they don't literally understand, they sense your tone and expressions of love for them.
- Babies thrive on routine. Add prayer time to your ritual.

THROUGH THE YEARS

Use this information as a reminder, primer, guide, or cheat sheet about what's happening with kids developmentally at each age—and how you can strengthen their foundation of faith.

BY SHEILA HALASZ

TODDLERS

TYPICAL BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

- A toddler's brain is developing social-emotional characteristics like making eye-contact, responding to his or her name, and gesturing.
- Inter- and intrapersonal intelligences are developing, which can lead to large emotions and power struggles with peers.
- Connections in the toddler's brain grow stronger through repetition, which is critical to learning.
- Brain development is happening at an explosive rate. Toddlers are experiencing a lot of change and may be easily overwhelmed.
- Toddlers may cling to caregivers and be fearful of strangers.
- Toddlers experience an egocentric existence, resulting in the 2-year-old's unmistakable anthem: "Mine!"

TYPICAL PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Toddlers can walk on their own and enjoy their beginning autonomy.
- They're beginning to notice physical cause-and-effect relationships.
- Toddlers begin pretend play and enjoy pulling and pushing toys.
- They're able to mimic others and follow two- and sometimes three-step directions.
- They are drawn to things that interest them and will quickly abandon items, only to reclaim them later.
- Toddlers love repetition, rhythm, and routine.
- They have a limited attention span and become restless within a few minutes.
- They'll play side by side with others but not cooperatively with others.

FAITH CONCEPTS

- Church is a special place.
- God and Jesus are important.
- God loves me.
- God made me, so I am special.
- I matter to God.
- I can show love.

QUESTIONS YOU CAN ANSWER

- Do the people I am with like me and look happy?
- What will happen when I push, touch, poke, or drop toys? What will happen when I do that to people?
- Am I safe, even when I'm angry or unhappy?
- How do I get what I want?
- How can I be independent while still feeling safe?
- Does God always love me?

EFFECTIVE WAYS TO TEACH

- Toddlers need to move their bodies. Let them move while you tell or read Bible stories.
- Encourage toddlers to experience joy in play.
- Let toddlers be loud as they praise.
- Toddlers won't share easily. Have duplicate items for toddlers to touch and manipulate so conflict stays to a minimum. Intentionally model concepts of sharing, cooperation, and getting along with God's people.
- Use music and rhyme with lots of repetition for Scripture and stories.
- Lead by example when developing character. Toddlers need to see what honesty, patience, self-control, repentance, and kindness look like before they can emulate positive character traits.
- Prayer rituals can include children offering prayer requests and starting their own simple dialogue with God.

