



ST. BERNARD CATHOLIC CHURCH

GUIDELINES FOR THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” Matthew 28: 19-20

Congratulations on the birth of your child and your decision to have them receive the gift of our Catholic faith passed on from Jesus Christ through the Apostles. To fully realize the great beauty and importance of this sacrament, the Church provides the following laws and guidelines to assist you in preparing for the baptism of your child:

1. **Baptism Preparation Class:** This class is provided to help parents and godparents understand the commitments and responsibilities entrusted to them when they approach the Church for the baptism of their child. Both parents and both godparents are required to attend a class, information for the classes provided at St. Bernard is listed below.
2. Only the legal guardian may present a child for baptism. If the parents of the child are not married, a copy of the child’s birth certificate must be provided. If you would like to received information on the sacrament of marriage, please let us know.
3. **Sponsors:** A sponsor, or godparent, is a person chosen by the parents of the child to assist the baptized person in leading a Christian life in accord with what they are receiving in the sacrament of baptism. A sponsor is also charged with the responsibility of assisting and encouraging a baptized person, for the rest of their lives, to faithfully fulfill the obligations inherent to the dignity of baptism, e.g. education and formation in the Catholic faith, a committed sacramental life, a life of prayer and devotion, etc. Sponsors must provide an updated baptism certificate (showing all sacraments received) from their church of baptism.
4. **Sponsors:** Because the task of being a sponsor for the sacrament of baptism is so important and so challenging, the church wishes to ensure the one taking on this role has the means to accomplish it. Therefore, the following requirements for sponsors are outlined in canon law numbers 872-874:
 - There is to be only one male sponsor or one female sponsor or one of each.
 - They are ordinarily to be at least 16 years old.
 - The sponsor must be a baptized Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist and who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on.

- If married, has a marriage that is canonically valid and recognized as such by the Catholic Church.
 - The sponsor may not be the mother or father of the one being baptized.
5. If for some reason your chosen godparent(s) are not able to be present for the baptism, a proxy may be chosen to stand in for them.
 6. A baptized member of a non-Catholic community is not to participate as a sponsor except together with a Catholic sponsor and then only as a witness of the baptism.
 7. If you wish to have your child baptized in a church parish other than your territorial or registered parish, you must receive permission to baptize elsewhere from the pastor of that home parish.
NB: Any sacraments your child will receive throughout his/her lifetime will be recorded in the parish in which the baptism takes place.

BAPTISMAL PREPARATION CLASS INFORMATION

Classes are held in the **Church Office Conference Room** at 219 E. Bridge St. on the **2nd Sunday or 3rd Tuesday of the month**. New parents, along with the godparents, are required to attend the Baptism Preparation Class prior to the baptism of their first child. Please call the church office at 337-332-2159 to sign up for a class or for more information.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM INFORMATION

The Sacrament of Baptism is usually celebrated on the 2nd and 3rd Sunday of the month following the **11am mass**. Please call the church office to schedule the Baptism.