

Baptism

The **Sacrament of Baptism** is the first sacrament that a person celebrates and the first of three sacraments referred to as “the sacraments of initiation”. Through baptism, a person begins a new life with Christ, becoming a child of God and a Christian. It is the first step in a life in which one strives to become more and more like Christ. Baptism symbolizes and brings about a union with Christ’s death and resurrection. Baptism also creates a bond of unity that links all those who have been baptized.

The ordinary minister of baptism is a priest or deacon. Baptism requires the pouring of water and the pronouncement of the words “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

Baptism for Infants and Children (younger than seven)

The Church baptizes young children based on the desire, in faith, of their parents or legal guardians. Because children younger than seven do not yet have the ability to understand the meaning of baptism, and its rights and responsibilities, their parents are responsible for

- *Desiring baptism*
- *Promising to teach them about God and raise them as active members of the Catholic Church*
- *Completing a specific preparation for baptism*

Baptismal preparation: Parents are the first and most important teachers of their children in the faith. Our responsibility as a parish community is to support your efforts with a preparation program that is meaningful and helpful to you. The steps are as follows:

- Call the parish office (607) 733-3484 to fill out Baptismal Information Sheet
- Attend a Baptismal Class. Class is required if not attended in the last five years.
- Baptism will be scheduled during Mass or privately after Mass at the parents’ choice, pending the availability of priest/deacon.

Baptismal Preparation Class dates are posted in the parish bulletin; usually once a month in the Faith Formation Building.

Godparent requirements:

A person may have two Godparents. At least one Godparent must meet the following requirements:

- At least 16 years old
- Fully-initiated Catholic (has celebrated Baptism, Confirmation and Communion)
- Practices their Catholic faith

A baptized non-Catholic Christian may serve as a Christian witness in place of one of the Godparents.

Baptism for Adults and Children (seven years and up)

Recognizing their right and ability to take an active role in considering and preparing for this life-changing step, the Church provides a special process called **The Rite of Christian initiation of Adults**

(RCIA) for anyone, seven years old or older, who wishes to be baptized Catholic. The RCIA is also for anyone who was baptized Catholic but not raised in the faith and did not celebrate the sacraments of Confirmation or Eucharist/Communion, or for a person who was raised in a different faith and is considering becoming a Catholic.

The RCIA consists of gatherings over a number of months that provide an education and immersion experience in the Catholic faith. There are separate groups for adults and children.

The RCIA is divided into four stages and the stages are marked by rituals of blessing and commitment. The stages are intended to overlap and be open-ended, based on the needs of the participant.

The Period of Inquiry (initial questions and reflection)

Rite of Welcome

The Period of the Catechumen (from a Greek word meaning “teaching”, a period of instruction)

Rite of Election

The Period of Enlightenment (a particularly reflective and spiritual time of preparation)

Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation (usually at the Easter Vigil)

The Period of Mystagogy (from a Greek word meaning “mystery”; more instruction and reflection about involvement in the community)

For more information, please call the parish office at (607) 733-3484. You will be connected to the correct staff person to answer your questions.

