



2017

Infant Baptism Policy



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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 of you" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Baptism is the first sacrament celebrated in the process of becoming a full member of the Church community. It is the first of the three Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

Baptism is, like all the sacraments, a gift from God. Water is the universal symbol. Water is absolutely essential for all life. Water cleanses and restores. It is the waters of Baptism which give us new life. In accordance, through Baptism we die to ourselves in order to be restored and resurrected in the new life of Christ.

"The fruit of Baptism, or baptismal grace, is a rich reality that includes forgiveness of original sin and all personal sins, birth into the new life by which man becomes an adoptive son of the Father, a member of Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit. By this very fact the person baptized is incorporated into the Church, the Body of Christ, and made a sharer in the priesthood of Christ" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1279*).

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To assist parents in understanding what is required for the reception of the Sacrament of Baptism at Christ the King Parish, the following guidelines are provided:

Parents seeking Baptism for their child must be registered members of Christ the King Parish. Parish registration forms are available at <http://ctkhaddonfield.org/parish-registration>

Registered parishioners must also submit a Baptism Registration Form prior to setting a date. This form may be found at <http://ctkhaddonfield.org/sacraments/baptism>

The Sacrament of Baptism is celebrated most Sundays at 12:15 pm and 1:15 pm. Summer schedule baptisms are celebrated at 11:15 am and 12:15 pm. Summer schedule 2016 begins July 1 and ends September 11.

Baptismal Preparation for first-time Parents

First time parents must also attend two formation experiences (track 1 & 2) in preparation for the anticipated birth of their first child. All *first-time parent(s)* preparing to welcome a newborn and seeking Baptism will attend **two** formation experiences in preparation for the anticipated birth of their first child. Tracks are designed specifically for those entering parenthood for the first time and created **by** parents **for** parents. All tracks (1 & 2) will be held on Sundays in Morgan Hall following the 11am Mass. The outline of this new configuration follows. We hope it will assist you in planning your baby's baptism with prayerful thought and consideration prior to this wonderful event in your new family. Available dates for **Track 1 and Track 2** may be found on the Baptism Registration Form.

Track 1 - Mission Possible - The Call to Baptism

Who Attends? All First Time Parents - Pregnant parents(s) choose this Track 1 and may attend between the 4th and 8th month of pregnancy. Adoptive parents may attend any time during the adoptive process or before their child arrives. New parishioners who have already had their first and seek Baptism for that child will also attend this session. In all scenarios, this track must be completed **PRIOR** to choosing godparents and attending Track 2.

Track 2 - Living the Mission

Who Attends? Parents - New baby/child most welcome! Godparents are strongly encouraged to attend. This track takes place following the birth of your child and at least one month prior to their scheduled baptism and includes a review of the Baptismal ritual itself.

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Choosing Godparents

Infant Baptism celebrates the responsibility of the Christian community, along with the parents and godparents, to nurture and sustain the faith life of the child. It affirms the experience of God's love offered freely to all people without constraint.

The Church continues to understand that the bond between the godparent and the family is very close and asks that the godparent not only be ready to help the parents in the Christian formation of their child, when appropriate, but that the godparent also be a source of guidance, support, and inspiration to the child on his or her journey with God. Godparents represent the Church as the Body of Christ.

Prior to choosing godparents, parents are reminded of the following:

- ✓ There may be only *one* male godparent or *one* female godparent. If you choose two godparents, then one must be male and the other female.
- ✓ Godparent(s) must be at least sixteen (16) years of age.
- ✓ The Church requires that at least one godparent be a practicing Catholic who has been fully initiated (i.e. celebrated the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation, and if married be in a valid marriage in the Catholic Church). Most parents opt to choose two people.
- ✓ It is permitted to have one godparent who is a non-Catholic baptized Christian to act as *witness* to the baptism. The other godparent must be a practicing Catholic as noted above.

Catholic parents are requested to provide a "Sponsor Eligibility Form" prior to the baptism for the Catholic godparent. This form may be obtained from the parish where the godparent is registered. The eligibility form should be submitted to Christ the King Parish at least two weeks in advance of the Baptism. Eligibility forms are not needed for non-Catholic witnesses.

On occasion and in certain circumstances, a godparent may not be able to attend the Baptism ceremony. Anyone may stand in as proxy for the godparent. However, it is important to contact Carol Pisani, Pastoral Associate, if there is to be a proxy at the ceremony.

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Baptism Checklist

Prior to setting a date for a child's baptism, parents are asked to:

- ✓ Submit Parish Registration Form if you are not registered at Christ the King.
- ✓ Submit Baptism Registration form to Christ the King. Should your child be not yet born, fill in the available information that exists at the time.
- ✓ First time parents attend a two-part Baptismal Preparation Program. Registration may be found at <http://ctkhaddonfield.org/sacraments/baptism>. Questions? Please call Carol Pisani, Pastoral Associate, at (856) 429-1600 x119 or email pactk3@gmail.com
- ✓ Following receipt of your Baptism Registration form, you will be contacted by our Pastoral Associate for a brief conversation regarding details, baptism date finalization and to answer any questions you might have.

Finally, if you have a friend or family member who is a priest or deacon, they may be invited to celebrate the sacrament at one of the usual times. Please contact Carol Pisani to solidify details for a visiting priest or deacon. Parents are encouraged to make a donation to the Church on the occasion of a child's baptism.