

Our Lady of Loreto Baptism Guidelines and Policies

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that baptism is a Sacrament of faith. “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned” (Mk. 16:16). But faith needs the community of believers. Only within the faith of the Church can the faithful believe. The faith required for baptism is not a perfect and mature faith; it is a beginning faith, a faith “as a mustard seed” that develops.

Baptism is the first sacrament of the Church and the first sacrament of Initiation. Parents are the primary teachers of their children, and by example of their love, faith, and values, children, too, grow in faith and grow in the virtues. Our Lady of Loreto has a baptism preparation class to help parents understand their roles in the development of the faith of their children. If you are seeking baptism for your newborn infant or a child, we are happy to provide you with this packet of information to help you understand the sacrament. We welcome all new members to the Church and our own parish community, including the littlest ones.

What are the requirements for baptism?

For a child to be baptized in the Catholic Church, there must be a “founded hope” that the child will be raised in the Catholic faith. At least one parent must be Catholic, and there must be at least one godparent, who is Catholic. Parents are also required to participate in a one-hour baptism preparation class. You must allow at least two weeks preparation time for scheduling the baptism of your child.

Required Paperwork

Because Baptismal Certificates are viewed as legal documents, we require certain records to ensure the proper registration of the sacrament of baptism. Please return the following paperwork to our Baptism Coordinator, Pat Kehl, at the Baptism Prep Class, or to the office no later than *two weeks prior* to the baptism of your child.

- Completion of the form “Information for Baptismal Register.”
 - *If information you have stated on this sheet changes prior to the baptism of your child, please notify Pat Kehl of these changes as soon as possible.*
- Signed Sponsor Certificate by the parish representative from the home parish of each of the designated godparents.
- A copy of your child’s birth certificate issued by the state in which he or she was born.
 - *If your child is adopted, we will require documentation from the courts.*

What about single parents or parents who weren't married in the church?

We welcome all parents who are seeking baptism for their children. If you have concerns about your marital status or having your child baptized, we will be happy to have you speak with one of our priests to clarify any questions you may have.

Can we have the baptism celebrated in another church but do the preparation here?

Yes, however this may involve a little paperwork from both parish offices. Here at Our Lady of Loreto, we will need to know what is required from the other parish. Please contact the parish where the baptism is to take place and inquire about their preparation process. Please send any requests for information or documentation from that parish, via email, to Msgr. Edward Buelt at: Pastor@OurLadyofLoreto.org. Be sure to include the name of the parish, the parish point of contact, the parish mailing address, and phone and fax numbers. We will also need to know the baby's given name, gender, date of birth, and the date the baptism is scheduled.

At what age are children usually baptized?

The Church instructs parents to see to it that their children are baptized “within the first weeks after birth” (canon 867). If you have a child nine years of age or older who is not baptized and whom you are seeking to have baptized, you will need to contact our Children’s Minister, Joan Deeb, at 303.414.2274 or JDeeb@OurLadyOfLoreto.org. Joan will answer any questions you may have and explain the process of having your child or teen initiated into the Church, a process we call the Rite of Initiation for Children or Teens (RCIC or RCIT).

What are the requirements for godparents?

Before all others, parents are bound to form their children, by word and example, in faith and in Christian living. The same obligation binds godparents and those who take the place of parents (canon 774). It is very important and we trust that you will choose godparents who will take an active role in the faith formation of your child.

- The church requires at least one godparent who is a practicing, confirmed Catholic, and age 16 or older. That godparent's name is entered into the parish record book as the "official" godparent for baptism.
- **Only two** godparents may be chosen. God parents are spiritual parents. Therefore it is required that one be male and one female. Two godparents of the same gender are not permissible.
- Non-baptized or baptized persons of another Christian faith may not be godparents.

What happens during the preparation sessions?

The session is designed to help you reflect spiritually on being new parents and how this great change will affect your own relationship with God. We also reflect together on the faith you desire for your child. The theology of the sacrament of baptism will be discussed, as well as practical aspects of the ceremony itself. It also is a great way to meet other parents in the parish and to answer any questions you may have.

Why doesn't Our Lady of Loreto baptize babies during Lent?

Lent is a special time of repentance and conversion. It is a special time, too, for children, teens and adults who have previously entered into preparation for baptism into the Catholic Church through the Rites of Christian Initiation. Lent is called the Period of Purification and Enlightenment. By not celebrating any other Sacraments of Initiation during Lent, we wait in eager anticipation with them for the new life of the baptismal waters. We generally baptize infants on the Octave of Easter, that is, the Sunday after Easter Sunday itself.

Is there a fee?

As an expression of their “thankfulness,” many parents will give a donation at the time of their child’s baptism. We suggest \$25. Your contribution helps to fund the baptism preparation program, the paper work, and the supplies required for the baptism of your child. You may make this contribution at the baptism preparation class or at the baptism.

Required information on the baptism certificate.

We do our best to have an accurate Baptism Certificate available at the time of baptism. However, when we do not receive the required documents as requested or changes are made prior to the baptism without prior notification, we cannot guarantee a baptismal certificate will be available. We are required by Canon Law to include the parent’s names as recorded on the birth certificate. Please note that you will see the mother’s maiden name on the baptismal certificate rather than her married name. As this is a legal record, if your child is adopted we must have adoption paperwork made available to us to ensure that we are documenting this sacrament properly. The adoptive parents names will be recorded on the certificate, biological information will be included in the church sacramental records. Only the two designated godparents shall be recorded in the Church Sacramental Register. If your child is being baptized at Our Lady of Loreto, we will be considered the Church of Record Keeping; therefore, notification of the sacraments of confirmation, marriage and holy orders, celebrated at other parishes, should be sent to Our Lady of Loreto.

Enclosed in this packet of information is the following:

- Information Form for Baptismal Register.
- Two Sponsor Certificates, one for each person you have asked to be a Godparent to your child. These forms must have a signature of a clergy member or designated staff member of the parish they currently attend.

*****These forms are to be completed and returned to the Baptism Coordinator with other requested paper work no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled baptism.***

What do I do Now?

Please contact Pat Kehl at 303.690.5159 or email lpkehl@earthlink.net to register for a baptism prep class and to schedule a date for the baptism of your child.

If you have a high risk pregnancy or are anticipating the need of a high risk delivery, please contact the office at 303.766.3800 in order that we may notify our clergy.

If you experience a miscarriage at anytime during your pregnancy and would like to have spiritual counseling with a member of our clergy, please contact the office at 303.766.3800.