

Preparing for Your Child's



Sacrament of Baptism



**CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST
515 Cathedral Street - Lafayette, LA 70501**

A Message from your Pastor:

“The Christian community welcomes you with great joy!”

In the Rite of Baptism, these very words are proclaimed! And it is with *GREAT JOY* that the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist walks along side of you as preparations begin for the Baptism of your child.



It is surely a sacred and bold move you make by bringing your child forward to the Sacrament of Baptism! Your choice declares that you are seeking to make a permanent connection between your child and Jesus Christ within the Christian community. What a consolation to know that no matter how close or distant your own personal relationship is with God, the new life of your child has stirred a desire in you to seek Baptism for him or her. As, your pastor, I am filled with JOY BEYOND WORDS for the gift you are giving your child.

Please know that, in the Sacrament of Baptism, the Catholic community promises to walk beside you in nurturing the faith of your child. So, let us begin the process now. Carefully read all of the information provided. You will discover another message from me in the section on Selecting Godparents/Sponsors – such an important part of your child’s Baptism.

Know that I am praying for you and yours daily.

Rev. Chester C. Arceneaux, Pastor



BAPTISM – Parent Policy Acceptance Form

(Original: Office - Copy: Parent)

Name of Child _____ Parents _____

Possible Dates: _____ Celebrant: _____



1) Select and prepare your Godparents:

Go to our website: www.saintjohncathedral.org and click on

- 0) SACRAMENTS, then
- 1) BAPTISM. In the information, you will be directed to:
- 2) HOW TO SCHEDULE A BAPTISM, click on that.
- 3) As you read, you will be directed to click on and download the **GODPARENT CERTIFICATION FORM**.
- 4) The **GODPARENT CERTIFICATION FORM** *must be turned in 2 weeks before the scheduled Baptism. It is your responsibility to inform the godparents of this! This form can be FAXED to: 337-232-1379.*

2) Schedule Baptism Classes for:

- 0) Parents
- 1) Godparents

*If you or your godparents cannot attend a class here at the Cathedral, it is your responsibility to find and attend another Roman Catholic Baptism Class at another church parish. You must provide official and signed verification that the classes were attended.

- ## 3) BAPTISM FORM - You will be emailed a BAPTISM FORM. Review the form carefully. Respond per email to confirm that the Baptism Form information is correct OR note anything that needs to be changed. This is the information that will be included on your child's Baptismal Certificate so we want names to be spelled correctly for our archives.

Before the Baptism can be scheduled, the following forms, those applicable to your case, must be turned in to the Cathedral of St. John Office of Evangelization:

- 1) If not registered at Cathedral Parish, Letter of Permission from your Parish Pastor.
- 2) "Letter of Suitability" – Required if a priest or deacon, who is not from the Diocese of Lafayette, is the celebrant.

2 Weeks Before the Baptism

- 3) "Godparent Certification Form" for each Godparent/Sponsor
- 4) "Christian Witness Covenant and Proof of Trinitarian Baptism" Form
- 5) Baptism Class Attendance Form
 - a. Parents
 - b. Godparents
- 6) Reply by Email your final approval of Baptism Form (this will be emailed to you for final review)

PARENT STATEMENT OF POLICY ACCEPTANCE

I have read and reviewed both the above information and the Baptism Preparation Information provided me by the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist. I am aware that unless all of the above requirements are met or if new policies are instituted by the local ordinary, my child's Baptism may be delayed or denied. I am aware that until I receive a formal statement of confirmation (by email), I am to remain open for possible changes that could affect the date/time and those participating in the Baptism of my child. I further realize that if the celebrant has any reason to suspect that my child's Baptism should not take place, cancelling the Baptism can take place at any given moment.

Parent/Legal Guardian Date

Witness Date

BAPTISMS at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist Information and Frequently Asked Questions



1) Who do I call to begin the process?

Call the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist (337-232-1322) and ask for Ms. Laura LaHaye, Coordinator of Evangelization and Outreach. You will be expected to make an appointment to discuss the Baptism Policies if: a) You have not had a child baptized here since 2010 or b) If this is the first time you have a child baptized here at the Cathedral.

2) What if I am not a registered parishioner of St. John Cathedral Parish, can I still have my child baptized here?

- Canonical policy states that sacraments are to be administered in one's home church parish of registration. Therefore, if you are not **officially registered** as a parishioner of St. John Cathedral, you must provide a written **Letter of Permission**, from your Pastor of the Church parish where you are registered, stating the following:
 - **Declaring that you are an active, registered parishioner with your parish church.**
 - **That you are in good standing with the Catholic Church.**
 - **That the Pastor gives permission for your child to receive the sacrament of Baptism here at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist.**
 - **This must be provided BEFORE a Baptism can be scheduled.**

3) How do I know what Catholic Church parish I belong to?

- Your physical home address constitutes the church parish you should register with. However, you can choose to register with "a Catholic Church parish" outside of your geographical area. In order to be considered a Catholic in good standing, you must be committed to a Catholic Church parish so as to ensure that you and your family members are both sharing and benefiting from reception of the Sacraments and overall life of the Church community.
- If you are new to Lafayette and would like to find out which Catholic Church is located in your geographical boundaries you can call any local Catholic Church or go to:
www.diolaf.org
Click on "PARISHES" and then on "PARISH FINDER"

4) When and where do Baptisms take place?

- When: Baptisms are normally held on the First & Third Saturdays (following the 4:00PM Mass) and Sundays (following the 11AM Mass).
- Where: In the Cathedral. Because of space constraints, only two (2) babies can be baptized at one time.

5) Who celebrates the Baptism?

- A Cathedral parish priest or deacon celebrates the Baptism.
- If you request a priest or deacon whose assignment is not in the Diocese of Lafayette, a “Letter of Suitability” for the priest or deacon is required from the Bishop of that celebrant’s Diocese, stating that the celebrant is in good standing. ***It is the responsibility of parents to obtain and present this “Letter of Suitability” to St. John Cathedral 2 weeks before the Baptism.***



6) Who is required to take the Sacrament of Baptism Preparation Class?

- Both parents and both Godparents are required to attend.
- Baptism instructions are required for *first-time parents and Godparents*.
- Classes are once a month in the Cathedral Center.

Pre-register for these classes by calling the Evangelization Office at 337-232-1322.

- If you are unable to attend the class here at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, it is the responsibility of the parent/godparent to arrange to attend a class at another Catholic Church parish. A signed official certificate of attendance - from the parish where the class was taken - must be turned in two weeks prior to the scheduled Baptism.

7) What if one parent is not a Catholic?

In the event of a mixed religion marriage, the Catholic party must remember his/her commitment made to the Church at their wedding ceremony in promising to raise the children as Catholics. One parent must be a baptized Catholic.

8) What if the parents are not legally married?

- If the parents are unmarried, we will not be able to list the name of the father of the baby unless we receive *either*:
 - i. A copy of the State Certificate of Live Birth listing the father’s name or;
 - ii. A legal copy defined by Canon law 877, which reads ***‘the name of the father is to be entered if his paternity is established either by some public document or by his own declaration in the presence of the parish priest and two witnesses.’ This sworn statement must be notarized.***
- Either one of the public documents must be provided at least two (2) weeks prior to the baptism taking place.

CHOOSING A GODPARENT/SPONSOR

More from your Pastor about Baptism

Dear Parents,

At this time, I also want to impress upon you the seriousness of selecting Godparents/Sponsors who are rooted in their Catholic faith. Please think long and hard about who will be the Godparents for your child and then **PRAY** for God's validation of your choice. You see, the Godparent/s will remain an important figure throughout your child's life. They can never be replaced because their commitment is sealed in the Sacrament of Baptism.

These are the adults who your child can turn to for extra support when life experiences demand that virtuous decisions be made. These are the adults who should be there to celebrate successes and give support when your child is faced with struggles. These are the adults whose way of life will speak volumes to your child. They are the ones who walk by your side as you try to lead your child toward heaven.

The information provided below should set you on the path to the right choice! So, please read carefully and call if you have questions.

As your pastor, I join with you in prayer as you discern who will be the Godparents for your child.

Rev. Chester C. Arceneaux, Pastor



Godparents/Sponsors:

Information & Frequently Asked Questions

1) How many godparents can I have or do I need?

- According to Canon Law, you are required to have at least one active, confirmed Roman Catholic Godparent who is in good standing with the Church.

2) What are the requirements for someone to be allowed to serve as a Godparent/Sponsor?

- Someone over 16 years of age who is in *good standing with the Church*. This means that they have received the sacraments of Baptism, Holy Communion and Confirmation. If they are married, they must have a marriage recognized by the Catholic Church.
- Their pastor signs the Godparent Certification Form validating that they are registered in a Catholic Church parish and actively participating in the Sacraments.
- ***The Godparent Certification Form must be completed and turned in two weeks before the Baptism.***
- Must have attended a Baptism preparation program.
- If there are two Godparents, they must be of the opposite sex.
- ***If someone was ever baptized as a Catholic and currently claims to "...have left the Catholic Church," then he/she cannot be a Godparent or a Christian Witness.***

3) What if the Godparents cannot be present for the Rite of Baptism?

- If the Godparents cannot be present at the Baptism, proxies can be designated to answer the parts of the Godparents during the ceremony itself. They should meet the same qualifications as Godparents (refer to Question #2) but do not have to take classes. They will be listed in the baptismal record as "proxies".



4) What is a Christian Witness?

- If there is only one Godparent, another person may be able to serve as a “Christian Witness.” A Christian Witness is someone who “witnesses” the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism. The Christian Witness is an individual – at least age 16 years – who has been baptized into a Christian community with the Trinitarian Baptism formula. His/her Baptism must be recognized and approved by the Catholic Church. The Christian Witness is not a Godparent and must pledge to support the parents and/or Godparents with the child’s spiritual growth according to the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church. ***If someone was ever baptized as a Catholic and currently claims to “...have left the Catholic Church,” then he/she cannot be a Godparent nor a Christian Witness.***



5) Who can / cannot serve as a Christian Witness for the sacrament of Baptism?

- Only someone who is a:
 - Baptized non-Catholic may be a Christian Witness for the baptism. A copy or legally sworn and notarized statement validating the Christian Baptism of a potential Christian Witness must be provided two weeks before the scheduled Baptism.
 - **A Christian Witness cannot** be listed as a Godparent because their life does not witness to the practice or support of the Roman Catholic faith to which you, as parents, are professing to your child.
 - **A Christian Witness must provide the “Christian Witness Covenant and Validation of Trinitarian Baptism Form” to the Cathedral of St. John Office of Evangelization 2 weeks before the scheduled Baptism.**
- ***Please note AGAIN, that If someone was ever baptized as a Catholic and currently claims to “...have left the Catholic Church,” then he/she cannot be a Godparent or a Christian Witness.***

Important Deadlines To Remember

Before the Baptism can be scheduled, the following forms, as applicable to your case, must be turned in to the Cathedral of St. John Office of Evangelization:

- If not registered at Cathedral Parish, Letter of Permission from your Parish Pastor.
- “Letter of Suitability” – Required if a priest or deacon, who is not from the Diocese of Lafayette, is the celebrant.

The following is due 2 Weeks Before the Baptism:

- “Godparent Certification Form” for each Godparent/Sponsor.
This form must be signed by their PASTOR.
NOTE: If a Godparent is a registered parishioner of the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, they DO NOT need to get the Pastor’s signature. Just turn in the form and the Baptism Coordinator will complete the remaining process.
- “Christian Witness Covenant and Proof of Trinitarian Baptism” Form
- Baptism Class Attendance Form
 - a. Parents
 - b. Godparents

IMPORTANT POLICY TO REMEMBER:

It is very important to remember that unless all of the above requirements are met or if new policies are instituted by the local ordinary, your child’s Baptism may be delayed or denied. Until a parent receives a *formal statement of confirmation (by email)*, you need to remain open for possible changes that could affect the date/time and those participating in the Baptism of your child.

IMPORTANT DATES & TIMES

A. Baptism Date Requested _____

Time _____

Celebrant:

1. To be assigned

2. Other: _____

B. Baptism Class Date _____

Class Time - 6PM to 7:30PM

Location:

**St. John the Evangelist - Cathedral Center.
515 Cathedral Street – Lafayette, LA**

***Enter through rear entrance.**

NOTES:

**While this information provides much, there is so much more to learn
about this beautiful sacrament.**

**If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to
contact our office.**



**CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST
515 Cathedral Street - Lafayette, LA 70501
Phone: 337-232-1322 FAX: 337-232-1379**

We are praying for you!