Sacrament of Baptism - Children

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. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit (vitae spiritualis ianua), and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: "Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word." (Catechism of the Catholic Church # 1213)

Parents are obliged to have their infant children baptized in the first few weeks or as soon as possible after the birth. They and the Godparents are to be prepared properly for the Sacrament of Baptism, as they are speaking on behalf of the child and promise to raise the child in the Catholic faith. Parents are the first teachers of the faith to their children; they are encouraged to bring them to Sunday Mass on a regular basis, ensure that they receive the remaining Sacraments of Initiation (Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation), and continue to teach them the traditions of the Catholic faith.

Being a Godparent is an honor, a blessing, and a lifelong commitment. Godparents are a symbol of the Church, a witness to the faith, and a key partner in passing on values and virtues to the next generation. The Catholic Church has five (5) minimum requirements for Godparents (Canon 874):

- Are invited by the parent/guardian of the child to be a godparent
- At a minimum of sixteen years old
- A Catholic who has received the sacraments of initiation; Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation. Who is actively practicing the Catholic faith and leads a life that will be a good example for the child (attends Sunday Mass regularly, active prayer life, participates in parish ministries, participates in faith formation programs)
- Has not received and/or is not in the process of receiving a Church penalty such as excommunication
- Is not the child’s parent

Godparents are requested to provide verification that they are actively practicing their faith. This can be in the form of a letter/form from their home parish stating that they have satisfied the requirements of serving as a Godparent, or a letter written to the priest/deacon administering the Sacrament describing how they are actively practicing their faith. Questions/concerns should be directed to the priest/deacon.
**Baptism Registration**
A Baptism registration form needs to be completed for each child prior to the Baptism. Parent, child, and Godparent information is required for the form as well as a requested date for the Baptism.

**Baptism Preparation Class**
Baptism preparation classes at St. Paul parish utilize the Augustinian based “Reborn” education materials. Reborn explores the deeply personal power of Baptism, bringing to light the spiritual reality for parents and godparents and, most importantly, the child being baptized. Rendered with a cinematic beauty that’s become the hallmark of the Augustine Institute’s film productions, Reborn presents the foundation of the Church’s teaching on Baptism, with a step-by-step explanation of the rite itself, including its profound place in Scripture and Tradition.

Classes are offered on the second (2nd) Wednesday of every other month (September, November, January, March, May, July) from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm in the Center for New Evangelization. Registration is required for the class through the parish office. Lite refreshments are provided during the class.

Parents may attend prior to or after the child’s birth. Godparents are encouraged to attend with the parents. Children are welcomed to attend with their parents. Parents who have taken the class within the past three (3) years are not required to take the class again.

Prior to attending the class parents and Godparents are required to view the video; *A New Creation* (a hyperlink to the video will be provided after registration in the class is received in the parish office). A discussion of the video will take place during the class.

**Administering the Sacrament of Baptism**
Community is an important aspect of the Catholic Church, together we form the Body of Christ. As such the Sacrament of Baptism is to be administered in a community setting notwithstanding a few special circumstances. St. Paul parish offers two (2) options for children to receive the Sacrament of Baptism.

- **Community Baptisms** are scheduled for the first (1st) and third (3rd) Sundays of the month at 1:15 pm (with the exception of Lent and Advent). To ensure that the Baptisms are personalized, a limit of four children per ceremony has been established. If requests for more than four (4) children are received for a particular date and another date will not work for the family, a second ceremony will be scheduled for 2:15 pm for that given day.
- **Another option offered** is to have a child Baptized during a regular Sunday Mass. Permission from the pastor is required for a Sunday Mass Baptism to ensure that there are no other conflicting celebrations or activities scheduled for that particular Mass.