

# Celebrating Baptism



*Baptism, the first of the initiation sacraments, is truly a celebration of God's love and welcomes us into the extended family of the Church. Baptism brings with it great joy, and also responsibilities. Most of us were baptized as infants, and our parents chose to accept those responsibilities and to nurture us in a life of faith and love. Parents today continue to make the choice to baptize their children, accepting those same responsibilities.*

## How do we celebrate Baptism at St. Raphael's?

*There are several steps in our Baptism preparation program:*

- a Welcoming meeting with a parishioner who serves in the Baptism ministry;*
- a Welcoming blessing with our parish at a Sunday Mass;*
- a group gathering with members of our Baptism team  
and with other families preparing for Baptism;*
- the celebration of the sacrament of Baptism with family and the parish.*

**This process takes time, so parents are asked to contact the rectory to begin the process at least three months prior to the hoped for date of Baptism.**

**The process may begin before the baby is born.**

## **REQUESTING BAPTISM**

By requesting to have a son or daughter baptized, parents are acknowledging their role of being the primary religious educators of their child. The most important preparation for this responsibility is to consider one's own faith. Children will learn so much from parents in many different areas. Being in touch with the meaning of faith in one's own life will help parents to share that faith with their child.

**At the Baptism of their child, parents will be asked what they are seeking for their child. The answer is *faith* or *Baptism*. But the underlying question to be considered is *why*?**

***Why are you choosing to ask to have your child baptized?***

***What aspects of your faith are most important for you to share with your child?***

## **BLESSINGS OF BAPTISM**

Blessed are the children, baptized today,  
bringing hope and promise, love and laughter.  
Thank you, God.

Blessed are the moms and dads, lovers of their children,  
gazing with wonder and awe at amazing new life.  
Thank you, God.

Blessed are the godparents, supportive and joyful,  
beaming with pride at the trust placed in them.  
Thank you, God.

Blessed are the grandparents, excited and wise,  
sharing stories and dreams and hearts full of love.  
Thank you, God.

Blessed are sisters and brothers, little and big,  
welcoming with curiosity a new person into their lives.  
Thank you, God.

Blessed are family and friends, and the whole church community,  
celebrating, remembering, helping, hoping, loving.  
Thank you, God.

God, continue the blessings of this day.  
Send love and warmth, wisdom and patience,  
hope and dreams, gratitude and sleep.

We ask this through Jesus, our brother and friend,  
who loves us all so well. Amen.



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## What about Godparents?

During the Baptism ceremony, godparents are asked to commit to helping the parents live out their faith responsibilities to their children. Godparents, then, are very special in the life of their godchild. They are people whom you choose with great care, for they will be examples and role models for years to come. To help parents make wise choices for the privilege of being godparents, the Catholic Church has specific requirements.

- **Godparents must be fully initiated Catholics (having received Baptism, Confirmation, and Communion), sixteen years of age or older and who are actively living their Catholic faith.**
- **If there are to be two godparents (only one is required), one must be male and one female.**
- **A baptized non-Catholic Christian may act as a sponsor along with one Catholic godparent. This person is called a “Christian witness”, not a godparent.**
- **A non-baptized person may not be a godparent or a Christian witness. (This is not a judgment on personal integrity or goodness. During the Baptism, godparents and Christian witnesses commit to believing in and living out the Christian faith. A non-baptized person cannot commit to this.)**

Once the Baptism has occurred, the choice of godparents cannot be changed.

It is important to take time to reflect carefully on your choices.

It is not just an honor, but also a key responsibility.

**So, parents are invited to reflect on:**

*Have you considered whom you might ask to be godparents for your child?*

*Do you trust that they will help your child grow in faith through their love and witness?*

### The Day of Baptism

Baptism is a sacred celebration for each family and for our parish family. Our Catholic faith teaches us that we are baptized into Jesus Christ, - into his death and his resurrection. The symbols used throughout the ritual — the holy water, the sacred chrism, the white garment, the Baptismal candle — speak to all of this amazing gift of God and the joy and the responsibilities of being a disciple of Jesus.

This celebration is a joyful time of prayer. In order to maintain a prayerful and reverent atmosphere, we do not allow pictures or videos to be taken during the ceremony itself. Pictures are encouraged before and after (just not during) the ceremony, for Baptism is a special time to remember.



*We stand with you,  
we pray for you,  
O Holy Child of God!*