

Baptism FAQ's

1. Must the parents be married in the Catholic Church before their child can be baptized?

The policy states that the baptism is to be delayed if there is not "founded hope" that the child will be brought up in the Catholic religion. However, baptism is not to be delayed because the parents are not married in the Catholic Church. The ordained minister should not insist that the parents marry in the Church, but rather help them understand the value and importance of the sacrament of marriage, and later assist them in preparing for the sacrament when they have decided to marry.

2. Why does the parish insist that parents be registered in the parish and use envelopes for their Sunday contributions before their child can be baptized?

Church law requires that there be a "founded hope" that the child will be brought up in the Catholic faith. The child is more likely to be raised in the Catholic faith if the parents are practicing Catholics. Registration in the parish and use of contribution envelopes are one sign that the parents are practicing, although other factors are also taken into consideration.

3. Why must the child be given at least one saint's name at the baptism?

Saints are models for living the Christian life. As the child grows up he or she can learn about, imitate and pray to the patron saint for help and guidance.

4. May a grandparent or other relative present a child for baptism?

The proper persons to present a child for baptism are the parents or the person who lawfully takes their place. However, if the parents allow it and promise not to interfere with the person making the promise to raise the child in the Catholic faith, another person may be allowed to present the child for baptism.

5. May a child be baptized if only one parent requests it?

The consent of at least one of the parents, or the person who lawfully takes their place, is required for the baptism of a child.

6. Why must the parents and godparents (sponsors) attend instructions before baptizing the child?

Both the parents and godparents (sponsors) need to understand the meaning of the sacrament of Baptism and the obligations they undertake when they baptize a child. The instructions are intended to help the adults participate in the sacramental celebration and raise the child in the Catholic faith.

7. Where and when do the parents and godparents (sponsors) attend instructions for baptizing?

Parents and godparents (sponsors) can attend baptism instruction in any of the parishes in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. They must bring to their parish a copy of the certificate given at the baptism instruction. Normally, the certificate is good for two years.

8. I attended Catholic schools through college and am well informed of my Catholic faith. Why is it required that I attend classes before having my child baptized?

The pre-baptism classes for parents and godparents (sponsors) provide a deeper understanding of the sacrament of baptism and the role of the parents, godparents (sponsors), and parish community in the faith development of the child/family. Catholic schools and parish faith formation assist us in learning about, growing in and living our Catholic faith. The preparation for and deeper understanding of the sacrament of baptism is not the particular focus in Catholic schools and parish faith formation classes.

9. May we choose more than two godparents (sponsors) for our baby? May we use two godfathers in place of a godmother?

A maximum of two godparents (sponsors) is allowed for the sacrament of baptism. Only one godparent (sponsor) is required for baptism; however it is customary to have two godparents (sponsors). If two godparents (sponsors) are identified, one must be male and the other female.

10. What is required for a person to serve as a godparent (sponsor)?

The person serving as godparent (sponsor) must meet the following requirements:

- a. be appointed by the parents or the one serving in their place*
- b. be at least 16 years of age*
- c. be a Catholic who has been confirmed and received the Most Holy Eucharist and who leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role of godparent (sponsor)*
- d. not be the father or the mother of the one to be baptized.*

11. May a non-Catholic Christian serve as godparent (sponsor) at a Catholic baptism?

A non-Catholic Christian may only be a witness, together with a Catholic godparent (sponsor), in a Catholic baptism. Any questions concerning non-Catholic participation in baptism should be referred to the pastor.

12. May a Catholic serve as a godparent at a non-Catholic baptism?

A Catholic may act as witness at a non-Catholic baptism, but not as a sponsor. The only situation in which a Catholic may be a godparent (sponsor) in "another ecclesial Community" is in an Eastern Orthodox Church "if he/she is so invited" (Directory for the Application of the Principles and Norms of Ecumenism, 98, a, b).

13. May a priest or a deacon serve as a godparent and also preside at the baptism?

Clergy may serve as godparents (sponsors) but are asked not to be the minister of baptism if serving as a godparent (sponsor) so that the roles are not confused.