

# BAPTISMS



## St. Jude Catholic Church

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[www.stjudeboca.org](http://www.stjudeboca.org)

# A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

*A practical and useful guide  
to assist you in planning and preparing for the  
Sacrament of Baptism,  
welcoming your child into the Church as a child of God*



## Table of Contents

Infant Baptism Policy.....	2
Preparation for Infant Baptism.....	3
Requirements for Parents.....	3
Baptism Preparation Class.....	4
Requirements for Godparents.....	4
Frequently Asked Questions.....	6
Checklist for Baptisms.....	8
Schedule for Baptism Classes.....	8
Schedule for Baptisms.....	8
Baptismal Registration Form.....	9

# Infant Baptism Policy

The Sacrament of Baptism, the first of the three sacraments of initiation, is also the first of the seven sacraments in the Roman Catholic Church. It removes the guilt and effects of Original Sin and incorporates the baptized into the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ on earth.



## REQUIREMENTS FOR BAPTISM

1. To register for baptism, please call the parish office to set up a meeting with one of the parish priests. Bring with you the child's birth certificate and the baptism registration form which can be obtained online at [www.stjudeboca.org](http://www.stjudeboca.org) or at the church office. The parish phone number is 561-392-8172.

2. Parents must attend a baptism preparation class. The purpose of these classes is to convey an understanding of baptism in the Church today, to help parents recognize their responsibility and role in the development of their child's faith, and to welcome young families into our parish family. Baptism classes are normally held the first Tuesday of the month in English and the second Tuesday of each month in Spanish.

3. If you are not registered in the parish and do not live in Boca Raton, a Letter of Permission from your home parish is required. There is a \$50 fee for those who are not registered in the parish and/or not attending Mass for at least six months.

4. At least one of the Godparents has to be a practicing catholic and confirmed. They must obtain a Sponsor Certificate from their parish.

# Preparation for Infant Baptism

Baptism is the first of the seven sacraments. Adults and children old enough to understand baptism are given extensive formation and instruction prior to their reception of this first sacrament of initiation. In the case of infants, it has been understood throughout the centuries that an infant is baptized into the faith of his or her immediate faith community (e.g., parents, extended family, parish), the faith in which he or she will mature and come to a profound understanding of the significance of the Christian faith. Baptizing an infant is next to meaningless if the infant cannot rely upon this ongoing community support. Therefore, the minister of baptism needs to have a well-founded hope that a child to be baptized will actually enjoy the living example and support of the Catholic parent(s) and will grow up in a state of easy familiarity with religious practice.

## Requirements for Parents

### 1. At least one parent must be a “practicing” Catholic.

What does it mean to be a “practicing” Catholic? In terms of the sacraments, a practicing Catholic has a very active sacramental life. He or she goes to Mass a minimum of once a week and lives a life in union with the church and her teachings. A practicing Catholic is also a person of prayer. Each day, a Catholic responds to God’s call to personal communion through quiet time and reflection.

### 2. Mass Attendance

Catholic Christians recognize the celebration of the Lord's Supper (Mass, the Eucharist) as the indispensable source of ongoing spiritual nourishment. As a community, we are fed from the tables of the Word of God and Jesus' Eucharistic sacrifice. Catholics should not habitually stay away from, or in any instance excuse themselves lightly from, the Sunday celebration of Mass.

For the purpose of removing as many hindrances as possible to attending Mass, St. Jude Church has expanded its Mass schedule to appeal to a variety of styles and languages. We not only have a Saturday evening Mass at 5:00pm, but we offer early Masses (7:30am, 9:00am, and 10:30am), a noon Mass, a 5:00pm contemporary Mass, and a 1:30pm Spanish Mass. Surely, out of these seven Masses, you can find one that is convenient for you. A Catholic simply must not stay away from Sunday Mass. This celebration is at the core of who we are.

Participation in the Eucharist, and participation in a life of prayer in general, allows us truly to be "practicing" - to be open to the grace God gives us to live courageously and lovingly. Any other laws we are to follow, any other challenges we are given, are made easier because we allow ourselves to be fed.

If you have not been attending Mass regularly, we want to invite you to begin attending Mass for the sake of your child. During the baptism ceremony you will testify that it is your intention to bring the child up in the Catholic Church. We ask that you start living out this promise by beginning to attend Mass. You will see St. Jude parish has a lot to offer your children as they grow up. And, your attendance at Mass will teach your child the importance of practicing their faith. There is no better gift you can give your child than the gift of faith that is lived out by going to Mass each Sunday.

### **3. Parish Affiliation**

Catholic Christians must have a parish affiliation. If you are not a registered parishioner of St. Jude and live outside the parish boundaries, the pastor needs the permission of the pastor where you live in order to baptize your child.

St. Jude, like other Catholic churches, uses the envelope system to determine Mass attendance. If you don't use envelopes and the priest does not recognize you, there is no way to confirm that you attend Mass. So, be sure to use your envelopes every Sunday. While we encourage parishioners to be good stewards, we do not dictate how much each family should give.

### **4. Attend Baptismal Preparation Class**

These classes are offered regularly at St. Jude Church, usually on the first Tuesday of each month in English and on the second Tuesday of each month in Spanish. They are also offered at other local churches throughout the month. If the parents take the class at any church other than St. Jude, they must provide proof of attendance either in a certificate of attendance or a letter from that church's pastor. If the parents have taken Baptismal Preparation Classes within the past two years, this requirement is waived. **Please note:** If you choose to attend a class at St. Jude, you **must** register for the desired class.

## **Requirements for Godparents**

There are to be no more than two godparents and they are to be a male and a female.

### **1. Must be at least 16 years of age.**

### **2. At least one godparent must be a practicing Catholic, registered in a parish.**

The law requires that the godparents themselves have received the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation, the three "sacraments of initiation," and be members in good standing at their respective parishes. If they are not registered at St. Jude, they must have their own pastors send a letter stating that they are in good standing at their parish.

According to Catholic law, as long as one of the godparents is a practicing Catholic, the other godparent may be a baptized practicing non-Catholic Christian who is designated as a "Christian witness" to the baptism. (In this case a letter from the witness's pastor is necessary, stating that the godparent is in good standing in his or her church.) A Witness is not required to take the Baptismal Preparation Class, although it might be very beneficial if they did. A non-baptized person (i.e. Jewish, Muslim, etc.) may serve as a "witness" to the fact of the baptism.

### **3. Must be someone other than the parents of the child to be baptized**

### **4. Must be leading a life in harmony with the Catholic faith and the role they are about to assume**

## Baptismal Certificate

A Baptismal certificate is routinely issued after the baptism. (Please keep this certificate in a safe place for future use.) The names of the child, parents and godparents are taken directly from the Baptismal Registration Form you fill out, so be careful that the names are spelled accurately when completing the form. The names and birth date information on the Baptism Registration Form has to be the same as the information on the child's birth certificate.



The child's name is entered into the parish baptismal register, which is the *primary document of baptism*. It is in this parish register (known as the "baptizing parish" record) that notations will be made of events in the future which change the child's status in the Church (confirmation, marriage, religious profession, ordination, declaration of nullity of marriage, release from religious vows or responsibilities of an ordained person).

## Congratulations!

The entire membership rejoices with you as your child becomes a member of the household of faith at St. Jude Church. We trust, that as your child grows, you will continue to encourage his or her participation at Mass and in other parish activities as you yourself continue on your own faith journey which began with your own baptism. May Our Living, Loving God continue to bless you and your family in all that you are and in all that you do in His Most Precious Name. Amen.



# Frequently Asked Questions

## **1. When should my child be baptized?**

Any child at any age is always welcomed for baptism, given a commitment to raising the child according to the Catholic faith. Children who are old enough to personally profess their faith may be asked to receive specialized instruction specifically focused on Baptism. However, the actual date of baptism depends directly on when you fulfill all of the requirements and get all of the documents to us.

## **2. Can we have our child baptized if we are not married, were married outside the Church, or if I am a single-parent?**

Your child is always welcome to Baptism, given a commitment to raising him/her according to the Catholic faith, and we welcome your entire family to our parish community. While the Church does not promote having children out of wedlock or having Catholics marry outside the Church in a civil ceremony or another denomination (without permission), this does not prevent children from being baptized, provided there is a reasonable assurance of being raised Roman Catholic.

The Church recognizes that, for whatever reasons, people will make choices in life that lead them in many different directions. The fact you are here, reading this material, demonstrates that God is at work in your life. We would be delighted to assist you in facilitating your child's baptism and welcome any opportunity to discuss with you possible ways in which we may help bring God's love to you and your child.

## **3. Must I be a member of St. Jude Parish in order to have my child baptized here?**

No. Membership in the parish at which a child will be baptized is not required. We are frequently honored to baptize children of people who were once members of the parish, still have family in this area, or simply desire to return here so that a specific priest/deacon may perform the baptism. In this case, we will need to have a letter from the pastor of the church where the parents are registered.

Ordinarily, though, if you are a resident of the Boca Raton area, we require you to formally register as parishioners of St. Jude. Celebration of the Eucharist, as well as involvement in the spiritual, educational, and social activities of our parish community are designed to help each of us in our journey of faith through life, and we would welcome your presence here with us.

## **4. Whom should I choose to be godparents for my child?**

Whether you select very close friends or family members as godparents for your child is a very personal decision and not one of concern to the Church. The Church does, however, expect that a person chosen to be a godparent will support you spiritually (by prayer) and morally (by their example of word and deed) in your duty as Christian mothers and fathers as you raise your child in the Catholic Church. Please see the section "Requirements for Godparents" for eligibility requirements on persons desiring to be godparents.

Remember, the godparents you choose for your child will be his or her godparents for life. Once the ceremony is over they cannot ever be changed. So, pick godparents that you feel confident will be a part of your child's life forever. Select godparents who you believe will be good Catholic role models for your child.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **5. How many godparents may I have or must I have?**

Strictly speaking, you are required to have only one, who must be Catholic. As is the current custom, most people have two, who must be of different sexes (i.e. one godfather and one godmother). The Church offers no provision for more than two.

## **6. Does that mean that I can't have a non-Catholic serve as a godparent?**

Technically, a non-Catholic may not serve as "godparent." However, a baptized non-Catholic Christian may serve as a "Christian Witness" to the baptism as long as the other godparent is Catholic. A non-baptized person may serve as a "witness."

## **7. Must I attend a Baptism Preparation Program?**

Yes (unless you have attended one within the past two years). We, as Church, believe it is our duty to offer you, as parents, the opportunity to fully understand the commitment you are undertaking for your child and yourselves through the Sacrament of Baptism.

## **8. When should I attend the Baptism Preparation Class?**

For practical reasons, we encourage you to attend a baptism preparation session before your baby is born. Once your baby is home, we assume you will probably have a lot on your mind and be pretty busy caring for the newborn child. Should you decide that it is better to wait until after the baby is born, or if you are parents of an older child, you may, of course, attend any session at your convenience.

## **9. Is there anything I need to bring for the Baptism?**

Other than the child who will be baptized, no. St. Jude Parish will provide the "white garment" and the "baptismal candle" for the ceremony. However, parents usually choose a white garment of their choice for the child to wear at the baptism. In this case, please be sure that the garment is loose at the neck so the priest can anoint the baby's chest.

There is no charge for the use of the church, or for the priest's services, if you are registered members of the parish. If you are not registered, we ask for a \$50 fee.

Often the parents or grandparents wish to make a voluntary contribution to the well-being of the church in honor of their child/grandchild's baptism. If you plan to do this, please use the envelopes that are provided to you when you register for the baptism. One is for the Church and one is for the priest or deacon who does the baptism. Please give the envelopes to the baptismal assistant before the ceremony or the priest after the ceremony.

## Checklist for Baptisms

† Complete the Baptismal Registration Form **legibly, carefully and accurately**. This information will be used directly on the Baptism Certificate. Also register for the Baptismal Preparation Class on this form. Remember that both parents must sign this form.

† Decide whom you will ask to be the godparents. If the godparents are not members of St. Jude, ask them to arrange for the necessary letters of good standing to be sent from their parish as soon as possible.

† Return these forms to the parish as soon as possible.

† A few days later, a member of the parish staff will call you to discuss the baptism date for your child.

## Schedule for Baptism Classes

### English

First Tuesday of each month  
6:30pm to 8:30pm

### Spanish

Second Tuesday of each month  
6:30pm to 8:30pm

**Please note:** You **must** pre-register for desired class.

## Schedule for Baptisms

### English

Second and Fourth Saturday  
of each month  
11:00am

### Spanish

Third Sunday  
of each month  
3:00pm