

# Baptism

The following information applies to children under the age of 8 who are to be baptized.

## When can a baptism be scheduled?

Baptisms at St. Joseph's on Capitol Hill are generally scheduled for Sunday, immediately following the 8:30 AM or Noon Mass. (If necessary, other times can be arranged in accordance with the availability of a priest or deacon.)

Parents and godparents must attend a Baptism Preparation class before the date of the Baptism. (This requirement can be waived for those who have taken a class within the past three years.) Classes are ordinarily held on a selected Sunday, immediately following the 8:30 AM Mass. Classes are held in the church or via Zoom and take about one hour. Babies are welcome, but not required to attend.

According to the rules of the Catholic Church, baptisms should generally be performed at the parish in which the family resides or is registered. If you neither reside within St Joseph's boundaries (NE: 1st St to 11th St, and G St to East Capitol) nor are formally registered here, you would need to register or seek an exception. Exceptions can be granted for good cause.

## Who can be godparent/sponsor?

These two terms are interchangeable; they refer to the role of the person not only in relation to the family, but also in relation to the Christian community. As the child's parent, you must designate one godparent who is Catholic, has been Confirmed, and is at least 16 years old. You may designate a second godparent. If you do, that person must be of the opposite sex of the first godparent.

The godparent joins in "sponsoring" the child as a new member of the Catholic community and therefore must be a member in good standing. Since only one godparent is actually required, we can sometimes accept a non-Catholic Christian as the second godparent. (On the baptismal record, that non-Catholic would be listed as a Christian "witness". Non-practicing Catholics cannot be listed as Christian witness.) Parents may not serve as sponsors for their own children.

Godparents must sign and submit an affidavit of good standing, **click the 2nd link on the page**. If the Godparent is not a member of St Joseph's, the affidavit must be signed and submitted by their pastor. Godparents may take their required preparation course at a parish other than St Joseph's, but must have that pastor send us a letter indicating that they have completed the class within the past three years.

### **Is a Baptismal gown required?**

Use of a gown is derived from the time when candidates were baptized by immersion and needed a piece of clothing as a cover. Over time it has taken on Christian symbolism. Since baptism by immersion is not often practiced, the need is less in modern times. The rite includes it as one of the special symbols of the sacrament, but it is not a firm requirement.

### **When will we receive a certificate?**

Parents will receive a certificate in the mail shortly after the baptism. If replacements are needed, please contact the rectory.

### **Is an offering required?**

A freewill donation to the church may be made at the time of baptism.

### **What is my first step?**

For scheduling, preparation, and other information, parents should contact: Deacon Gary Bockweg ([gary.bockweg@verizon.net](mailto:gary.bockweg@verizon.net))

Parents should not make any plans for their child's baptism before contacting Deacon Bockweg.