

Parish of St. Mary, Franklin



INFANT & CHILD BAPTISM An Important Decision



Congratulations on the birth or reception of your child into your family. At Baptism, with the support of godparents, your child will enter the Catholic community of faith at St. Mary here in Franklin. We are a parish dedicated to living according to the message of Jesus as found in the scriptures. At the celebration of Baptism, you promise to raise your child in the Catholic faith, leading by example, living in the presence of God, and showing your child how to love and forgive others, as Christ has taught us.

The decision to have your child baptized must come after serious reflection. Why? Because Baptism does not end once the ceremony is over. Nor is Baptism something which pertains to the child alone. You have a pivotal role.

Parents who ask for their child to be baptized into Christ have the most significant part to play in on the Christian life to their children. It is through them that the child will come to know the love of God. Your faith also needs to be strengthened and further developed as your child

matures. To present your child for the Sacrament of Baptism is to accept responsibility for the growth of faith in your child, along with your own.

Christian parents do not force their faith upon a child, but teach by example. Parents should baptize their child not because it is the custom, but because they desire the Christian life for their child. Parents who value their own faith will want to share the life of Christ they have inherited. Later, the child's faith will be based on what he/she has learned and experienced in the home and community from the very first days of life in the family.

Because the responsibility of Christian parents is such a serious one, and often difficult, it is very understandable that they should need family and friends to assist in the responsibility of raising a child in the Christian life. The godparents most explicitly assume the responsibility with the parents and will be ready to help the parents raise their child in the knowledge of the Lord.

Baptism Scheduling and Preparation:

If you have not already done so, the Baptism needs to be scheduled through the secretary of the Parish, who will need certain information about your child, yourselves, and the godparents. Her email is: secretary@stmarysfranklin.org

BAPTISM Class When the Baptism is the First for Parents. If this is your first child to be baptized as Catholic, you will need to attend a short Baptism class which will be offered remotely through a ZOOM link. The date and time can be arranged by the secretary at the time of scheduling the Baptism. At the class, which will be no more than an hour, we also will show a video for discussion. You will be contacted via email by the leader of the class with the ZOOM link information after the scheduling process is completed.

VIDEO for Parents Who Have Already Had Other Children Baptized. If this is not your first child, and you have already had your other child or children baptized in the Catholic Church, there is no class requirement; but please watch this short 15-minute video that can be found on the St. Mary website at the following link, before going to the Baptism: <https://www.stmarysfranklin.org/infant-baptism>

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can be a Godparent?

- ❖ A child should have at least one Roman Catholic godparent.
- ❖ Catholic godparents must be at least 16 years old.
- ❖ A non-Catholic, baptized Christian may participate as well. In such case, he/she would also witness the baptism, serving as a godparent during the ceremony.

What does the godparent do at the baptismal ceremony?

The godparents will stand with the parents and publicly acknowledge their commitment to support the child's parents in raising him/her in the Catholic faith. With the parents, they will trace the sign of the cross on the child's forehead and be a part of the ceremony.

What if a godparent can't be present at the baptismal ceremony?

A family member or friend can stand in at the ceremony as a proxy for the absent godparent, but the godparent's name will appear on the baptismal certificate.

What commitment are parents making in bringing their child to be baptized?

It means that you want your child to be raised in the Catholic faith, embrace its core Christian beliefs as reflected in the *Apostles Creed*, and strive to live a Christian life that maintains faith in God.

What is the Apostles Creed?

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

In some families, the grandparents want their grandchild to be baptized, but the parents don't attend mass regularly and aren't even sure what they believe anymore. Is it still okay for the parents to go through with the baptism?

Yes. But, as the parents, this is solely your decision.

Sometimes, the birth of a child can be a moment in life when parents return to the faith in which they were baptized. This can be the result of the natural tug toward God which was embedded within us when we were baptized, but has been dormant for a long time. Then the Holy Spirit touches our lives with the miracle of life, as we contemplate the enormous responsibility of it all.

Baptizing a child initiates him/her into the Christian community, as well as publicly stating that you want your child to share in the life and beliefs of the Catholic community. It may not mean that you agree with everything in the Catholic Church, but it does mean that he/she will be raised as Catholic.

When do Baptisms take place at St. Mary Parish in Franklin?

Baptisms at St. Mary in Franklin take place on Sunday afternoons, as scheduled with the secretary of the parish. They typically are scheduled consecutively at 1:30, 2:15, and 3:00 pm. When the COVID pandemic occurred, we started doing individual family baptisms instead of baptizing children as a group at the same time. We have decided to continue the practice, even as the pandemic has subsided. Each family will be scheduled for their own individual Baptism, to which family and friends may be invited. If there is a sibling, cousin, or the child of a close friend who you wish to have baptized at the same ceremony, we can schedule the baptisms together at one ceremony, at your request. In such case, the parents of the other child also must contact the secretary of the Parish to confirm the arrangements.

Is photography allowed during the ceremony?

Yes. Photographs and video are excellent means of sharing the memory of this joyous and special day with your child as he/she grows in age and faith. Your photographers and videographers are welcome if they respect the sacred nature of the ceremony, as long as it is not flash photography, which would be a distraction.

Is there a fee for a Baptism?

There is no fee. However, many families wish to offer a donation on the occasion of their child's Baptism. This may be placed in an envelope and given to the presiding clergy at the baptism (Priest or Deacon).

What time should you arrive at the Church for the Baptism?

Please plan on arriving at the Church at least fifteen minutes prior to your scheduled time. On days when we have several separate baptisms scheduled that afternoon, we may need to begin the baptism ceremony promptly, so please also let your friends and family know this as well.