

**SACRED HEART PARISH
1077 TOWER ROAD
WINNETKA, IL 60093**

Guidelines for Baptisms at Sacred Heart

It has been the constant practice of the Roman Catholic Church from the earliest times to administer the sacrament of Baptism to infants. Parents very naturally want to pass along their own faith to their child and their values that flow from that faith. Baptism marks the beginning of this faith life.

Pope John Paul II called the family the Domestic Church, the Christian home where the child begins to experience life as part of a collection of families called the Church. At Baptism, the parents and sponsors along with the whole Christian community take upon themselves the responsibility to make the Church and the world a place that will offer the newly baptized the love and support needed to grow to full Christian adulthood.

We welcome you and your family to Sacred Heart Parish for the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism. Please carefully read our guidelines in order to facilitate your celebration.

When are Baptisms Celebrated?

Baptism is usually celebrated at Sacred Heart Parish on Sundays at 12 Noon. Baptisms may also be celebrated during 10:30 Mass on most Sundays. Baptisms are not normally celebrated during the Season of Lent (the six weeks prior to Easter), since Lent is the traditional time of preparation for adult Baptism, which occurs at the Easter Vigil service. Exceptions to usual time for Baptisms may occur during the Easter and Christmas seasons. Baptisms may also occur at other times and dates. Please contact the Baptism Coordinator for alternative dates and times. In case of emergency or illness, Baptisms can take place at any time.

At what age are children usually baptized?

At Sacred Heart, children are generally baptized when they are between two and six months old. We encourage parents to wait after the child's birth until they can experience the joy of this occasion without undue fatigue or stress. However, all children up to age of seven are welcome to Baptism. We also welcome children age seven or older to Baptism. We offer baptismal preparation designed to meet the needs of older children and their parents. We welcome adults interested in Baptism to join our RCIA program. Please contact our Baptism Coordinator for more details.

Can I have my child baptized if my spouse or the other parent is not Catholic?

Yes, only one parent needs to have received the Sacrament of Baptism. The other parent must agree to have the child baptized. Please note, however, that if one or both of the parents have expressed an intent to become Catholic, the child may be baptized. As long as there is an earnest desire for the child to be reared in the Catholic faith, the Church will work with the parents on baptizing the child and addressing any specific concerns.

Do I have to be married in the Church to have my child baptized?

No, however, we would invite those who have not received this sacrament to contact the Parish office for more information on how to celebrate this sacrament.

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Role of Godparents in Baptism

Along with parents, a godparent is to present the child at baptism, to assist the parents in raising the child in the Catholic faith and to serve as a role model. See Qualifications for Godparents below.

How do I arrange for my child to be baptized at Sacred Heart?

Please complete the Baptism Information Form and return it to the Parish Office by email (creid@shparish.com), fax (847-501-5311), or mail (1077 Tower Rd, Winnetka, IL 60093). Within 3 to 5 days, our Baptism Coordinator will contact you to confirm the information, answer any questions, provide additional information and confirm the date and time for your child's Baptism. The Baptism Information Form is available on our website or from the Parish Office.

A few weeks prior to the scheduled date, the Priest or Deacon who will preside at the Baptism will contact you to discuss the ceremony, provide the opportunity for you to choose readings, and otherwise personalize the ceremony for you and your family.

Qualifications for Godparents

There are five qualifications a godparent must meet:

- Be chosen by the parents or guardians of the child,
- Be at least 16 years old
- Have received the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist and be a Catholic of good standing, leading a life in harmony with the faith
- Be someone other than the child's parents
- Not be bound by any penalty imposed by the Church

A Godparent or Christian Witness (see below) who is unable to attend the baptism may have a representative (proxy) take his/her place.

How many godparents can a person have?

A person can have either one male or one female godparent, or one of each. Two godparents of the same sex or more than two godparents are not permitted. Additional sponsors are welcome, but are not officially considered godparents.

Can a Christian who is not a Catholic serve as a godparent?

A non-Catholic cannot serve as a godparent, but he or she can participate in the baptism as a Christian Witness. However, it remains the responsibility of the Catholic godparent to ensure a Christian upbringing for the child. Similarly, Catholics are permitted to serve as baptismal witnesses in other

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Christian communities. If a non-Catholic Christian Witness is chosen, the other godparent must be a practicing Catholic. Note that a non-baptized person may not serve as a Christian witness.

Preparing for Baptism

All new parents are asked to complete a Baptismal Preparation Class before their child is baptized. These are held on the fourth Sunday of each month at 9:15 AM in the Parish Offices' conference room.

If this is not your first child, we ask that you attend a class if it has been more than three years since you last attended. The preparation class is important for the information it provides regarding the ceremony and for a broader understanding of the significance of the Sacrament of Baptism.

What should the child wear for the baptism?

A white garment is an ancient sign of the newly baptized Christian's new life in Christ. Your child's baptismal garment need not be a traditional baptismal or christening gown; it can be any clothing that is mainly white. (Regular department stores such as Macy's and Kohl's sell traditional baptismal gowns.)

Family Donation

There is no fee for Baptisms at Sacred Heart. However many families wish to offer a donation to the Parish on the occasion of their child's Baptism. This may be placed in an envelope and given to the priest or deacon celebrating the Baptism or it may be mailed to the parish – Sacred Heart Parish, 1077 Tower Road, Winnetka, IL 60093.