

Infant Baptism Policy for St. Mary's Visitation Parish



Baptism is the celebration of the love of God for each of us. It incorporates us into the mystery of the person of Jesus Christ. In baptism, the Holy Spirit dwells in us. Baptism is a celebration of the loving embrace of God. It is this sacrament, which opens Christian life to us, affirming us as sons and daughters of a loving God. Baptism is, as are all sacraments, an act of God and an action of the Christian community.

According to the Roman Ritual for the rite of Baptism, baptisms may be celebrated on Sunday with the Christian community during Mass, but this is not to be done too often. At St. Mary's Visitation Parish, baptisms are typically scheduled outside of Mass on the second and fourth Saturday of the month at 11:00am, but this can vary. (Please check our website for current dates).

The baptism of an infant presumes that the faith of the parents, the family, and the godparents together with the Christian community will nurture and form the child in experiences of faith.

Parents are the first and primary teachers of faith; they help form a 'domestic' church within their home. Just as raising a child is an enormous responsibility, so is raising a child in faith. In order to help parents with this responsibility from the start, the Church asks every parish to assist parents so that they might continue their own faith formation as they raise their child.

Parents are invited to affirm and strengthen their commitment to the Christian faith and the religious practices of the Church through a period of preparation, which emphasizes spiritual and moral formation as well as instruction in the Scriptures. This preparation period offers parents a wonderful opportunity to assess their own understanding of the faith and to renew their commitment to our Christian Catholic way of life.

Recognizing the need for such baptismal preparation and for a greater involvement of the entire community in the faith lives of the children of St. Mary's Visitation Parish, we establish the following policy for the baptism of children:

1. Prior to the celebration of baptism, parents are expected to participate in the parish's established baptism preparation program. Parents who have participated in a parish baptism preparation in the five years prior are invited, but are not required, to re-take the preparation class.
2. We recommend that parents participate in the preparation program prior to the birth of their child. Baptism preparation will consist of a one-session presentation, lasting about one hour. Registration is necessary. <http://www.stmaryeg.org/baptism.html> or [Liz Steybe 262.782.4575x129](mailto:Liz.Steybe@stmaryeg.org) or lsteybe@stmaryeg.org

3. Those seeking to have children baptized should be registered active members of St. Mary's Visitation Parish. Special arrangements for non-parishioners must be arranged through the Pastor of St. Mary's Visitation and a letter of permission from their parish priest is required.
4. Parents are encouraged to give careful attention to their choice of godparents. Although it is customary to have two godparents, only one is required. At least one of the godparents must be a confirmed, practicing Catholic. If there are two godparents, a second godparent can be Catholic or Non-Catholic, but must be a practicing Christian.
5. Priests or deacons who are related or friends of the family may preside at the Baptism with the Pastor's permission and a "Letter of Suitability" if they are from outside the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.
6. All registrations for the Sacrament of Baptism for infants/children up to age 7 must be made through Liz Steybe at 262.782.4575 x129 or lsteybe@stmaryeg.org.
7. Parish Baptism Dates can be found on our website <http://www.stmaryeg.org/baptism.html>.