

BAPTISM OF INFANTS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How do I have my child baptized?

The Baptism Program has three elements, which are completed in the following order:

- Baptism Instruction: Class is usually held on the first Thursday of the month at 7 pm. This class is held in the North Room. Childcare is available at some classes, if requested.
- Presentation of the Child at Mass: Approximately a week before the baptism, there is a short rite at the beginning of a Mass. You as parents ask the church to baptize your child, and they are blessed and anointed with the Oil of Catechumens.
- Baptism: All baptisms at Mass are celebrated by Fr. Shaun Lowery. Baptisms held outside of Mass are generally celebrated by one of the deacons here at St. Mary Magdalen.

Please contact Erin Wolfe at baptisms@saintmarymagdalen.org to get the process started. You will receive a packet with all the necessary forms and information.

Click [here](#) to go to the 2019-2020 schedule.

Do I have to be a parishioner?

Since Baptism is the entering of a person into the community of faith, it is very important to be a part of that community! That is why you are required to be a member of a parish to have your child baptized. This parish can be St. Mary Magdalen or another parish.

How do I join the parish?

Joining the parish also has three elements:

- Fill out a Pre-Registration Form: These can be found at the Welcome Desk in the Gathering Area. You can also fill this out in the Church Office, or Erin Wolfe can fill it out for you.
- Meet with a Welcoming Team member: A member of the Welcoming Team will contact you to set up a short meeting. These are usually held at church. The WT member will gather some information from you and will give you a folder with lots of great information about the parish.
- Attend a New Parishioner Meeting: These are usually held on the first Sunday of the month at 10:10 am in the East Room. The whole family can attend, as donuts and crayons are provided! You will hear from some of the various groups in the parish and will be able to meet some of the other new folks in the parish. After attending the NPM, you are considered a parishioner.

You can do the baptismal preparation while you are joining the parish. You just need to attend the NPM by the time of the baptism.

Do I need to register for class?

You do not need to register for the class, but it would be great to know that you are attending. The room is set up for the number of folks attending. Even a quick email on the day of the class is enough notice. (But if all else fails, just show up!) Baptism Class lasts approximately an hour and a half.

The new babies are welcome (but not required) to be in the room with us. Quarterly, we offer free childcare for older siblings. However, you must request this childcare by the Monday before the meeting to make sure that the caregivers are available. Please see the schedule to know which meetings have the availability of childcare.

I went to the class with my first child. Do I have to go again?

If it has been more than two years since you have attended Baptism Class, please attend again. It will be a good refresher about the sacrament and about how the ceremony goes. (Feel free to attend even if it has been less than two years!)

Can I go to class before I have my baby?

Absolutely! You can schedule the dates of the Baptism and Presentation, too.

Who can be a Godparent?

Being a Godparent is truly a ministry in the church. In choosing Godparents, parents should consider how the chosen Godparents will represent Christ and his Church in their future relationship with the child being baptized. The task of choosing Godparents should involve careful thought and much prayer.

What are the requirements for serving as a Godparent?

- Only one Godparent is required.
- The Godparent must be a fully initiated Catholic. (They have received Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation.)
- The person should be at least 16 years old.
- The Godparent may not be the mother or father of the person being baptized.
- A baptized person of another faith may serve as a second Godparent (Christian Witness), if the first Godparent is a fully initiated Catholic.

How many Godparents do I need?

You are only required to have one Godparent, but that Godparent must be a fully initiated Catholic (Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation).

Do the Godparents have to attend the class or the Presentation?

The Godparents are not required to attend either of these. However, if you have Godparents who would like to attend, just let us know!

I have been asked to be a Godparent. What do I do now?

If the parish of the child to be baptized requires a letter certifying that you are a parishioner, please contact the Church Office or Erin Wolfe.

If the parish of the child to be baptized requires you to attend a class, you are welcome to attend the first part of our Baptism Class. (You can leave when we get to the description of how we do the baptisms here at St. MM.) You will be provided with a letter saying that you attended class.

I attend a different parish, but I would like my child to be baptized at St. Mary Magdalen. Can I do that?

Yes! You will need to do whatever baptismal preparation your home parish requires. Then you will get a Letter of Delegation sent from your parish to St. MM. This letter delegates to Fr. Shaun (or a deacon) the authority to baptize your child. It also says that you have completed the required preparation. You can ask your church office about getting this done.

I am a parishioner at St. Mary Magdalen but would like to have my child baptized at a different parish. Can I do that?

Yes! You will need to do the baptism preparation required here at St. MM. Then the Office will send a Letter of Delegation to the parish where you are having your child baptized. This delegates the authority to baptize from Fr. Shaun to the pastor at the other parish and lets them know that you have completed the baptismal preparation here.

My spouse is not Catholic (or is not baptized). Can I still have my baby baptized?

Absolutely! That is not a problem, as long as they agree with having the child baptized. It is especially important for them to attend class in order to understand what Catholics believe about Baptism.

What is the difference between In-Mass baptisms and Outside-Mass baptisms?

Baptisms held during Mass are celebrated by Fr. Shaun. These baptisms are celebrated with our parish family present at the Mass. They are slightly more formal. A DVD of the baptism is available for baptisms during Mass (\$5). There is a five baby limit for in-Mass baptisms.

Baptisms held outside of Mass are celebrated by one of the deacons. They are more intimate because they are attended by a much smaller group of people. They are a bit more relaxed than the in-Mass baptisms. No DVD is available. There is no limit to how many babies can be baptized at an outside-Mass baptism.

What is the difference between infusion and immersion?

Infusion is baptism by pouring water over the child's head three times. There is no need to undress them. Immersion is when a baby is partially dipped into the water three times. The naked baby is immersed from the legs and bottom to the back of the head. The face never goes into the water.

Infusion baptism is celebrated at both in-Mass and outside-Mass baptisms. Immersion baptism is only celebrated outside of Mass.

What if my child needs to be baptized immediately and there is no priest or deacon available?

In these days of uncertainty, there might be times when a baby needs to be baptized quickly. If that is the case, please call the Church Office for information. If the Office is closed, please call Erin Wolfe at 810-923-8494.

Why do the dates stop in June?

Our church calendar runs from July of one year through June of the next year. In early June, we set the schedule for the next year. The new schedule is posted very soon after that meeting.

What if an adult or a child over the age of seven would like to be baptized?

Adults and children over the age of seven are baptized at the Easter Vigil. There is a longer journey of preparation for this called the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA). Click [here](#) to learn more about the RCIA process. Please contact Erin Wolfe if you have questions about this.