



Ottawa, Illinois Catholic Parishes

Guidelines for Baptism of Infants and Children Under the Age of 7

Parents

1. Parents must be registered, practicing members of one of the Ottawa Catholic Parishes.
2. Parents must complete the enclosed Baptism Information Form. This form is used to identify the child to be baptized, prepare the baptism certificate, and record the baptism in our Sacramental Record Book.
3. Parents registered in another Catholic Parish who wish to have their child baptized at one of the Ottawa Catholic Parishes must first obtain a letter of permission from the pastor of the church parish in which they are registered.
4. Parents are required to attend a Baptism Class and meet with one of the priests. If a class was attended within a 3 year period, this requirement is waived.
5. A Baptism date cannot be scheduled until a baptism seminar has been attended and all of the enclosed paperwork is returned to the parish office.

Godparents

1. Godparents must be practicing Catholics who are at least 16 years of age and have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation. If married, the godparent must be married in the Catholic Church or had their marriage blessed by the Catholic Church.
2. Godparents must have a Godparent Eligibility Form signed by the pastor of their parish indicating that they are registered parishioners, practicing Catholics, and are qualified to serve as a godparent.
3. Godparents are not required to attend a Baptism Class, but are encouraged to do so.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How many godparents should there be? The Catholic Church requires you to have one practicing Catholic as godparent; however, it has been tradition to have two.
2. Can the same godparents have responsibility for more than one child in the same family? Yes, as long as they take seriously their responsibility and intention to help the children grow in faith.
3. Does the gender of the Godparent matter? If you choose only one godparent, you are free to choose a male or a female. However, if you wish to have two godparents, there must be one male and one female.
4. Can a non-Catholic serve as a godparent? A baptized, non-Catholic may serve as a witness to the baptism, only if there is proper Catholic sponsor who fully meets all requirements of a godparent. The non-Catholic who is selected as a witness should be an active/participating member of his/her church community. Their name will be entered into the Sacrament Record Book as a Witness, with the name of the Catholic godparent.
5. What is the difference between a godparent and a witness? Witness is the term that is only mentioned in the Code of Canon Law. Canon Law describes a witness as a baptized person who belongs to a non-catholic ecclesial community. A godparent is a Confirmed, practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church.
6. Can a person serve as godparent by proxy (stand-in) if the godparent is unable to be at the baptism? If a godparent cannot attend the baptism ceremony, a proxy can stand in the place of the missing godparent, as long as they fulfill the same requirements. The name of that person will be entered as a proxy in the Sacramental Record Book, along with the name of the missing godparent.