

CHURCH OF THE VISITACION POLICY FOR BAPTISMS

The sacrament of Baptism initiates a person into the Catholic Church.

Who may be Baptized at Church of the Visitacion?

- Catholics living within the Church of the Visitacion boundaries, registered or not
- Catholics living outside the parish boundaries with some connection to the Church of the Visitacion AND must obtain written permission from their parish of residence, as a matter of courtesy among parishes.

Registration for a baptism must be done in person by a parent of the child. We do not accept applications over the phone. Registration must be done at least one month in advance. Baptisms are typically scheduled at 11:00am on the Second or Fourth Saturday of the month (English). Dates may be flexible depending on church availability. Baptism in Spanish is available upon advance request.

Parents or Guardians:

At least one of the child's parents must be a baptized and practicing Catholic. Parents (or guardians) take on the responsibility for raising the child Catholic when they ask for baptism. They are the ones responding to the baptismal promises on behalf of the child. When asking for a Catholic baptism, the parents or guardians must be able to say with confidence that the child will be brought up within the Faith. This includes taking the child to Mass, teaching them the Faith, praying with and for them, and making sure they receive the sacraments including Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation. The role of the parents is a crucial aspect of any infant baptism, and must not be taken lightly.

It is not required that the parents be married in the Church, although a future Church marriage is suggested to give a good example of true Christian life to the child.

Godparents:

The role of the chosen godparents is twofold. First and foremost, they are to act as a source of prayer and example for the child being baptized. Secondly, they are expected to assist in the formation of the child's faith throughout their life, and, if needed, are available to raise the child in the Faith if the parents cannot. This being said, the faith of the godparents is an extremely important factor in fulfilling the baptismal promise of being raised in the Catholic Faith.

The primary Godparents (one male and/or one female) must be practicing Catholics over the age of 16 who have received the Sacraments of Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation (must provide proof). If married, it must be in a Catholic Church (not just civil ceremony). The two godparents do not have to be married to one another.

A baptized person who belongs to another Christian community may be admitted only as a "Christian witness" (not a godparent) provided that there is at least one Roman Catholic godparent who fulfills the above criteria. A non-baptized person cannot be a witness.

A Godparent Affidavit must be completed and signed by both the prospective godparent and the pastor of their home parish (for Catholic party only).

Registration/Preparation:

For infants and children up to 6 years of age:

- Complete the Application Packet and return it to the Parish Office for review.
- A copy of the child's birth certificate is required because the Baptismal Certificate constitutes a legal document.
- Although there is no charge for the Sacrament of Baptism, we do request a minimum donation of \$100.00 to cover the preparation class and to support the ministries of the church. This donation is made when application is turned in. (Payment Method - Cash or Check only)
- Both parents and primary godparents are obliged to participate in a Baptismal Preparation Class at least one week before the baptism is to take place. This is to ensure that those involved know something of the meaning of the Sacrament of Baptism.
- The Baptismal Preparation Class consists in a discussion regarding faith in the Catholic Church, the Creed, the Sacraments, and the symbols that are used during the Rite of Baptism, such as the holy oils of anointing, water, candle, etc.
- The parents or godparents may attend a Baptismal Preparation Class at a parish other than Church of the Visitation. In this event, a letter or other document from that parish stating that the parents or godparents have attended their Baptismal Preparation Class must be provided to Church of the Visitation. *

For School-Age Children 7 years to 17 years of age:

- Must enroll into the Parish Religious Education Program (CCD) before September of each year or must be enrolled at Our Lady of Visitation School.
- Instruction will be given to the child while attending Religious Education Classes.
- When the child is ready, parents will be referred to the Parish Office to complete the above preparation.

For Adults 18 years of age and up:

- Contact the Parish Office at (415) 494-5517 x3 regarding OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults), which runs from September thru May
- Sacraments are typically administered at the Easter Vigil

All administration is managed through the Parish Office, AFTER Parents and Godparents have submitted the paperwork to the parish office.

* For those who wish to attend the Baptismal Preparation Class at Church of the Visitation in order to baptize their child or be a godparent at another parish, we request a donation of \$25 per person. Register in person at the parish office first and pay the donation in order to attend the class. Church of the Visitation will provide a letter certifying your attendance in the Baptismal Preparation Class.