

ST. JOSEPH-OLNEY HOLY CROSS CHURCH-WENDELIN ST. JOSEPH-STRINGTOWN

Baptizing Infants and Children

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 calls 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.

ST. JOSEPH-OLNEY, HOLY CROSS-WENDELIN AND ST. JOSEPH-STRINGTOWN CHURCHES welcome the opportunity to celebrate the baptism of infants and young children.

We believe that the baptism of infants and young children assumes the full and active participation of both the parents and the parish community in the faith formation of children. The nature of this shared responsibility is outlined in the *Baptism Covenant* which we ask parents to sign at the time of baptizing an infant or young child.

Guidelines for Baptizing Infants and Children Baptism

Celebrations

St. Joseph-Olney, Holy Cross-Wendelin and St. Joseph-Stringtown Churches celebrate the sacrament of Baptism throughout the year, except during Lent and on weekends when other special events are scheduled.

Like all sacraments, Baptism is a celebration of the whole faith community and should take place in the presence of the parish community. For this reason, it is strongly baptisms are celebrated during a regularly scheduled Saturday evening or Sunday morning Mass. *To make arrangements for Baptism, contact the parish office .*

Expectations of Parents

At least one parent must be a baptized Catholic who is registered in the parish. Parents who attend or live in the boundaries of another parish must receive the permission of their pastor before a baptism can occur at St. Joseph-Olney, Holy Cross-Wendelin or St. Joseph-Stringtown.

- *Please complete the permission form, obtain the signature of your Pastor and sealed, returning it to the parish office before arrangements of the date and time are made.*

Catholic parents should attend Mass regularly and participate as fully as possible in the spiritual and sacramental life of the church. The parents' personal and social life should exhibit an understanding of the Catholic faith and a commitment to Catholic moral and social values.

Parents should be aware of and willing to assume the responsibilities for their child's religious formation which are outlined in the *Baptism Covenant*. They should be prepared to provide a nurturing family life in which children will see and experience Catholic faith and values in practice.

Catholic parents who are not active in the church might use the occasion of their child's baptism to reexamine their relationship to the church and to consider the possibility of resuming active participation in the spiritual and sacramental life of the Catholic community.

- *The parish priest would welcome the opportunity to discuss resuming active participation with a parent who feels unwelcome, alienated or angry.*

The Catholic Church hopes that non-Catholic parents will understand and respect what the Church expects from Catholic parents, and will use the resources of their own faith tradition to assist in the faith formation of their children.

- *Parents who have concerns or questions about how to raise their child in a home where parents have different faith traditions should visit with their pastor or the coordinator of religion education.*

Preparation

Parents are required to view the Preparing for your child's baptism DVD prior to baptizing an infant or child or attend another approved Baptismal Preparation Class

- *The DVD can be obtained from the parish office.*

Parent Formation and Education

St. Joseph-Olney, Holy Cross-Wendelin and St. Joseph-Stringtown Parish provides continuing formation opportunities for parents who are interested in the spiritual and moral formation of infants and young children. Participation in this continuing formation program is recommended for parents following the baptism of their child.

- *For information about continuing formation for parents, contact the pastor, coordinator of religious education or the parish office.*

Older Children

Children 7 years of age and above should be enrolled in a Catholic religious education program before baptism. Additional preparation classes will be provided as needed. Once the child reaches the age of 7 years, the Baptism will only occur at the Easter Vigil (unless there is a valid fear of death).

- *For information about preparation for older children, contact the pastor or the coordinator of religious education.*

Godparents

(Baptism Sponsors)

Godparents are technically called *Baptism Sponsors*. In the early church, sponsors served as witnesses who testified to the good intentions and worthiness of adults who were being baptized. Today, Baptism Sponsors of infants and young children serve as representatives of the wider faith community. They pledge to assist the parents in *showing* and *teaching* the young child about God's love, their faith as Catholic Christians, and their eternal destiny as children of God.

The Sponsor's presence at the Baptism ceremony symbolizes an important spiritual and personal relationship between the Godparent, the child, the parents, and the broader church community. This is a relationship and a responsibility which lasts a lifetime.

The Church requirements for Roman Catholic godparents are:

- A child must have one practicing Roman Catholic godparent in good standing with the Church. This Catholic godparent must be at least 16 years old and be mature enough to understand, accept and carry out the duties of a godparent.
- A godparent must have received the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation. A godparent must be living an exemplary life consistent with faith and morals as taught by the Roman Catholic Church.
- A godparent must be actively practicing the faith.
- A non-Catholic, baptized Christian may be chosen as a Christian Witness, as long as one godparent is Catholic.
- If two godparents are chosen, they may not be of the same gender.
- There may be no more than two godparents.
- If both are Catholic, both must meet all the criteria above.

Godparent Certificates

All godparents other than those from St. Joseph-Olney, Holy Cross-Wendelin and St. Joseph-Stringtown and Christian Witnesses must obtain a certificate/letter from their own parish/church stating that they are members in good standing and are eligible to act as a godparent/Christian Witness for Baptism. These certificates should be submitted to the Parish Office as soon as possible after the initial baptism registration. Without these certificates there may be a postponement of your child's Baptism.

Here are some questions parents might ask themselves when choosing Baptism Sponsors for their child:

- Is this a person whose personal life shows the religious and moral values I want my child to learn and practice?
- Is this a person who will be able and willing to explain their faith experience, convictions and growth to my child?
- Is this a person who will be in frequent contact with my child, especially during the early years of personal and spiritual growth?
- Is this a person who will be comfortable, when necessary, challenging me or my child about our faith?

For more information about baptizing infants and children, contact the parish office.

Baptism Covenant

The baptism of infants and young children assumes the full and active participation of both the parents and the parish community in the faith formation of children. This Covenant expresses the mutual responsibilities and commitments which we acknowledge as parents and parish communities to the infants and children who are baptized at St. Joseph-Olney, Holy Cross-Wendelin or St. Joseph-Stringtown Catholic Church.

The parish community acknowledges our responsibility

- to provide an active and welcoming faith community, which supports and assists parents in their role as the first heralds of faith to their children.
- to provide meaningful and convenient opportunities for participation in the spiritual and sacramental life of the Church.
- to provide life-long faith formation and adult education opportunities which enable parents to deepen their own understanding and practice of the Catholic faith.
- to provide opportunities which enable parents to grow in the knowledge and skills they need to be more effective role models and first heralds of faith to their children.
- to assist parents in the preparation of their children for, and celebration of, the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation.
- to provide religious formation and education opportunities for children and young adults.

To be completed by the Pastor of the Parent's church parish & then returned to the parish office

I hereby certify that _____ is a registered member or lives within the boundaries of this parish; is a practicing Catholic in good standing; and their child is eligible to receive the Sacrament of **BAPTISM**:

Name of Parish: _____

Pastor's signature: _____

Date: _____ Church Seal

The parents acknowledge our responsibility

- to provide a supportive and nurturing family life, in which children experience firsthand the beliefs, values and traditions of the Catholic faith.
- to participate as fully as possible in the spiritual and sacramental life of the Church by attending Mass regularly and celebrating the Sacraments frequently.
- to guarantee my child's regular and active participation in the spiritual and sacramental life of the Church.
- to assist in my child's preparation for, and celebration of, the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation.
- to enroll my child in formal religious education programs, and to be actively involved in the religious education of my child.
- to support the parish by my stewardship of time, talent and financial resources.

We enter into this sacred covenant in a spirit of cooperation and support, as an expression of our commitment to the continuing religious formation and education of our children.

SIGNATURE OF PARENTS _____

ST. JOSEPH-OLNEY
HOLY CROSS-WENDELIN
ST. JOSEPH-STRINGTOWN
Godparent Registration Form

Dear Godparent,

When a parent chooses you as a godparent that means you are thought of as a very special Catholic. Being called to be a godparent is not merely a choice because of family ties or friendship rewards. The call to be a godparent bears the responsibility of giving a spiritual witness to your godchild of how to live out the Catholic faith in every day of life. As a confirmed, adult Catholic, you are a guide and model of how a mature Catholic ought to live. By being faithful to God's law, being active in the life of your parish, participating in Mass weekly, and living the Gospel values, you offer tremendous personal support to parents who commit themselves, in Baptism to faithfully passing on the Catholic faith to their child.

Therefore, it is important that you prayerfully consider the serious responsibility, which you take on as a godparent. If you are unable to live up to Catholic ideals, you may wish to decline this responsibility.

REQUIREMENTS:

The Catholic Church's Code of Canon Law lists these requirements for a person to be a valid and lawful godparent in Baptism:

- Canon 872 - The godparent's role with the parents is to present the infant for the sacrament of Baptism and help the child live a life befitting a baptized Catholic Christian.
- Canon 873 – There may be only one male godparent or one female godparent or one of each.
- Canon 874

§1 To be permitted to take on the function of godparent a person must:

1. Be designated by the parent and must be mature enough to undertake this responsibility;
2. Be at least 16 years of age;
3. Have received the three sacraments of initiation namely Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation and live a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on;
4. Not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared by the Church;
5. Must not be the father or mother of the one to be baptized;

§2 A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic Christian community may not be admitted as a godparent but as a witness to the Baptism together with a Catholic godparent.

THE ROLE OF GODPARENTS

To be chosen as a godparent is a special honor. You have been entrusted with the responsibility to participate in this child's Catholic life and education. This privilege offers you the opportunity to develop a mutually enriching spiritual relationship – one that will last throughout this life and beyond. There are many ways you can nurture this spiritual relationship and become a special friend to our godchild. Among them are:

- Celebrate the anniversary of this holy day of Baptism each year with a visit, a call or a card.
- As your godchild grows, listen to and share in the struggles and triumphs of living a Christian life, and keep your self-informed on the Christian doctrine and values, to be able to answer questions as they arise.

- Encourage a consistent life of faith through special cards, letters, or gifts, which celebrate holy events...Christmas, Easter...and personal growth events...graduation, first job, engagement. (Gift suggestions: a bible, spiritual book, rosary, religious jewelry, gift certificate for religious goods/books, retreat opportunity.)
- Participate in, or send assurance of prayer, as your godchild receives the other sacraments, particularly First Communion and Confirmation, which complete initiation into the Church community.
- Be supportive of your godchild's parents in their role as the primary religious educators of their child.
- And most importantly, become a model of Catholic living for your godchild, through daily prayer, virtue and active participation in parish life and liturgy.

By living a Christian life in partnership with your godchild, both of you will experience the great joy of sharing a life of faith.

To be completed by the Pastor of the Sponsor's church parish & then returned to Fr. Mark Stec 5782 Ingraham Ln., Newton, IL 62448

I hereby certify that _____ is a registered member or lives within the boundaries of this parish; is a practicing Catholic in good standing; and is eligible to serve as a Sponsor for the Sacrament of **BAPTISM** for

Name of Parish: _____

Pastor's signature: _____

Date: _____

Church Seal