

CATHEDRAL OF THE ASSUMPTION

North River Road, Kingstown
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Guidelines for Baptism at the Cathedral of the Assumption

As you are seeking the baptism of your child in the Roman Catholic Church, the following guidelines are presented to help you embark upon this journey of faith with Christ and his Church.

A. The Sanctifying Role of the Church (Code of Canon Law, c. 842, 849; Catechism of the Catholic Church 1213, 1263, 1265, 1267-1270)

It is through Baptism we are enabled to participate in the Life of Jesus and become children of God. In baptism, we receive the Holy Spirit and become members of the Body of Christ, the Church. Baptism commits us to grow into a new life and to always strive to grow spiritually. By baptism, God purifies us from original sin.

The source of baptism as a sacrament of faith is the Risen Christ himself, who offers salvation to all people. Baptism, as one of the sacraments of initiation, is intimately linked to Confirmation and to Eucharist. The child is baptized in the faith of their parents, godparents and of the Church.

B. Basic Guidelines and Information for Infant (to include young children) Baptism (Code of Canon Law, cc. 867-868; Catechism of the Catholic Church 1251)

Parents are responsible for bringing their child to the Sacrament of Baptism as soon after birth as possible. Except in case of necessity, the church is the usual place of baptism.

In order that a child be baptized, it is necessary that the parents consent, or at least one of them, or the child's legal guardian. There must be reasonable hope that the child will be brought up in the Catholic Faith.

GODPARENTS: A person may only have one or two godparents; if two are chosen, they must be male and female.

In order for someone to be eligible as a godparent they must be chosen by the parents or guardian, have the ability and the intention to fulfil the role of godparent, be at least 16 years of age, and be a confirmed Roman Catholic, who has already received the Most Holy Eucharist, is leading a life in harmony with

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the Catholic Faith and will be a good role model for the child being baptized. They must not be either the father or the mother of the child.

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 fulfils the above criteria. A non-baptized person cannot be a witness or a godparent (Code of Canon Law, cc. 872-874; Catechism of the Catholic Church 1255).

C. Baptismal Preparation in the Cathedral Parish (Code of Canon Law, c. 851; Catechism of the Catholic Church 843)

In order to respect your request for the baptism of your child, you are invited to follow closely the stages of preparation offered below:

- Contact the Cathedral Parish Office and express your desire to have your child baptized.
- Introduce yourself to the priests and deacons if you do not already know them personally.
- Open yourself to the invitation to actively join the faith community of the Cathedral parish. If you are not registered parishioners, please consider becoming involved in the prayer and celebration of the Sunday Eucharistic community.

You will be invited to participate in some manner of faith formation prior to the baptism of your child. This will take the form of a set of baptismal preparation sessions with the Catechists responsible for infant baptism preparations. It is extremely important to take your faith-life seriously because, before God, you have taken on an awesome responsibility for the salvation of another—your own child! Your commitment and openness to baptismal preparation will help develop the faith-life of your child as he/she matures. It is important that the godparents of the child attend these sessions also.

D. Other Information (Catechism of the Catholic Church 857)

Are you living in a parish other than the Cathedral Parish?

You are required to take your Baptismal Preparation in the parish in which you reside (if they have a program) and then receive a testimonial letter from your Parish Priest to have your child baptized in the Cathedral Parish. This requirement respects the reality that pastors normally have sacramental jurisdiction only over their own parishioners. Therefore, when you seek a

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sacrament outside of your parish, your proper pastor's permission is necessary. Furthermore, the invitation to connect with one's own proper parish first is founded on the hope that the faith-life of the family and of the child to be baptized will be lived in community and not in isolation.

Can your child be denied baptism?

Baptism is not denied if the parents are unmarried or not married in the Roman Catholic Church. However, there may be reason to postpone Baptism if parents are not practicing the Faith or have no intention of living a Catholic life in harmony with the Gospel, or if the parents/guardians do not attend Sunday Eucharistic Celebrations.

Baptism of Children over 7 years

All of the above information applies to Baptism of an infant or young child only. If you have a child to be baptized who has reached catechetical age/the age of reason (Grade 2 or 7 years), you and they will receive different preparation. Having sufficient understanding, the preparation will now be for the full complement of the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

Those children already baptized in other Christian communities, where the Roman Catholic Church recognises their baptism as valid, will be prepared to make a profession of faith into the Catholic Church and will receive the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation in the rite of Reception into Full Communion with the Catholic Church.

Private Baptisms and Ministers of baptism

Private baptisms are not encouraged, as the hope is for the child to be welcomed and grow up within the Christian Community or family. Baptisms outside of the church will be accommodated ONLY where the child is in imminent danger of death.

The ordinary minister of baptism is a bishop, priest, or deacon (canon 861 §1), and in normal circumstances, only the parish priest of the person to be baptized, or someone authorized by the parish priest may do so lawfully (canon 530). Baptisms can be within the celebration of mass or outside of mass. Due to COVID 19, most baptisms will be done outside of the regular Sunday mass and individually.