

**Q. Are there any age requirements to have my child baptized?**

A. Parents may schedule children ages 7 and under for the Sacrament of Baptism through the Pastoral Center Office by following the procedures outlined in this booklet. Children ages 8 and up must receive religious education before being baptized. Information on Baptism for children 8 and older is available through our religious education office at (504) 341-8477.

**Q. What if my spouse is not Catholic?**

A. Since parents promise to teach their child the Catholic faith at his/her baptism, at least one parent **SHOULD** be a practicing Catholic. Non-Catholic parents who wish to learn more about the Catholic faith are encouraged to attend RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) which begins in August of each year. Contact the Pastoral Center Office at 347-2203 for more information.

**Q. What forms must parents complete?**

A. All parents are required to complete a blue Baptismal Information Form and a white Parental Testimonial form. Godparent testimonial forms must be signed by each godparent. **Only fully completed forms can be processed.** If parents reside in Visitation of Our Lady Parish but are not registered, they are asked to complete a Parishioner Data Form (located on our church website) and register with the parish.

Also, if the parents are not married to each other, you must bring in the **ORIGINAL** birth certificate of the child to the Pastoral Center for a staff member to see. Copies of the certificate are not acceptable.

**Q. What is the deadline for turning in required paperwork?**

A. All baptismal forms **MUST** be turned in one (1) week prior to the Baptismal Seminar you are scheduled to attend. If the forms are not turned into the Pastoral Center on time, you **will not** be able to attend the Baptismal Seminar.

**Q. What if I am not married?**

A. If the child's parents are not married, birth certificates **are** acceptable as proof of paternity. If birth certificates are not available, you are required to submit a **notarized** "Acknowledgement of Paternity Affidavit" form if the birth father's name will appear on the baptismal certificate. If this form is not provided to the Pastoral Center by the time of Baptism, the father's name will be indicated as "Not declared."

**Q. What if my family does not live in Visitation Parish?**

A. Non-parishioners are welcome to have their children baptized at VOL. Parents who **do not** live in VOL's church parish must obtain permission from the church parish in which they reside. Parents should contact the church office in their home parish and ask that a Letter of Permission be sent to Visitation. Letters of Permission may be mailed or faxed to the Pastoral Center at (504) 347-2223. If you are uncertain if you reside in VOL's church parish, please call the Pastoral Center Office at 347-2203.

**Q. My family lives in Visitation Parish, but we are not sure if we are registered. How can we find out?**

A. Parents who reside in VOL's parish are asked to register with VOL by completing a parishioner data form located on our church website. Families who are unsure if they are registered may call the Pastoral Center to verify their registration.

**Q. What are the requirements for the Godparents?**

A. **Both** Godparents **MUST** be at least 16 years of age; one male and one female. **At least one** Godparent **MUST** be a **Confirmed Practicing Catholic**. Non-Catholic Godparents are identified as Christian Witnesses on church records. Catholics who are not yet confirmed cannot serve as either a Godparent or as a Christian Witness. Catholics who are not practicing their faith in any manner or who are not in "good standing" cannot serve as Godparents or as Christian Witnesses.

**Q. Do we have to attend any special meetings?**

A. Parents and Godparents are required to attend a Baptismal Seminar before their child is baptized. Baptismal Seminars are held the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Church Meeting Room. There is no fee for the seminar; however, registration is required. Contact the Pastoral Center to register.

**Q. When are baptisms held?**

A. Baptisms are held every Sunday (except holidays) after the 12:00 noon Mass. No more than three (3) children may be scheduled per Sunday. After completing and returning the appropriate forms **and** attending a Baptismal Seminar, parents may then call the Pastoral Center to schedule the Baptism. **Please note: BAPTISMS ARE NOT SCHEDULED UNTIL ALL FORMS ARE TURNED IN!**

**Q. Do we have to know any special prayers?**

A. Parents and Godparents will be given a special "Rite of Baptism" booklet on the day of the baptism with all prayers and responses.

**Q. Is photography and videography allowed?**

A. Yes! However, we ask that you be mindful to not block the paths of the priest, deacon, and other parents and Godparents.

**Q. Are there any fees?**

A. There are no fees required to have your child baptized, but many parents choose to give an offering to the church to help defray costs.

**Q. When will I receive my child's baptismal certificate?**

A. Baptismal certificates are usually mailed within 2-3 weeks. Parents wishing to pick up their child's baptismal certificate may call the Pastoral Center at 347-2203.