THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. PATRICK
BAPTISM GUIDELINES

For children and infants age six and under, baptisms at the Cathedral take place after parents have attended a Baptism preparation class. Children age seven and above need to prepare for full initiation into the church at the Easter Vigil and need to take part in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Children. Families of these children will be asked to participate in a program of preparation.

In order to have a child baptized at the Cathedral of Saint Patrick:

1. The parents of the child must be registered members of the Cathedral of Saint Patrick or registered members of a Catholic church with the written permission of the pastor of that church for the baptism to take place at the Cathedral. If the parents are not yet registered but wish to have their child baptized, the parents must meet with the Pastor prior to registering.

2. The parents of the child must attend a baptism preparation class. For parishioners of the Cathedral, the baptism preparation classes are held the third Sunday of every month at 1:30 pm. Attendance at the baptism preparation class is not required for Cathedral parishioners if the parents have attended a class within the past two years.

SCHEDULING A BAPTISM

Baptisms are celebrated on the first, second and fourth Sunday after the 12:30 PM Mass. Saturday baptisms are possible if there are no weddings. To schedule a baptism, call St. Patrick’s parish office at (704) 334-2283. When scheduling a baptism, the following information may be needed:

- A completed **Baptism Registration Form.** If the parents have attended the Cathedral’s baptism preparation class, they will complete the form at the class and the form will be handed into the parish office. If the parent wasn’t required to attend the baptism preparation class, they can download the Baptism Registration Form from the parish website (go to the Worship tab and click Baptism).
- If the parents are not registered members of the Cathedral, they will need a **letter of permission** from their pastor before scheduling a baptism date.
- It is customary to provide a momentary gift for the clergy member (priest or deacon) who performs the baptism. The donation can be given directly to the clergy member. The gift amount is up to the discretion of the family.

Baptism is the gate to the other sacraments. It ushers us into the divine life, cleanses us from sin, and initiates us as members of the Christian community. Baptism has six primary effects. In addition to the removal of guilt for both Original Sin and personal sin, Baptism also removes the remission of all punishment that we owe because of sin, both temporal (in this world and in Purgatory) and eternal (the punishment that we would suffer in hell). Baptism also provides an infusion of grace in the form of sanctifying grace (the life of God within us) and provides the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit and the three theological virtues. Additionally, Baptism allows us to become a part of the Church which is the Mystical Body of Christ on earth and enables participation in the sacraments, the priesthood of all believers, and the growth in grace. Baptism seals the Christian with an indelible spiritual mark (the "character of Baptism") which sin cannot erase.
FAMILY INFORMATION

NAME OF CHILD TO BE BAPTIZED: _____________________________________________________

Date of Birth: __________________________

Place of Birth: __________________________

Address: ____________________________________________________________________________

Home Telephone: _______________________ E-mail: _______________________________________

FATHER’S NAME: ______________________________________________________________________

(First)             (Middle)   (Last)

Religion of Father: _______________________________

MOTHER’S NAME: _____________________________________________________________________

(First)             (Middle)   (Last)    (Maiden)

Religion of Mother: _______________________________

PARENT’S WEDDING DATE: _______________________

CATHOLIC PARISH WHERE YOU ARE REGISTERED: _______________________________________

City: ___________________________ State:_______________

WAS YOUR CHILD BAPTIZED PRIVATELY? ________ WAS YOUR CHILD ADOPTED? ________

SPONSOR INFORMATION

GODPARENT: ________________________________________________________

(First)             (Middle)   (Last)

PARISH WHERE REGISTERED: _______________________________________

GODPARENT: ________________________________________________________

(First)             (Middle)   (Last)

PARISH WHERE REGISTERED: _______________________________________

CHRISTIAN WITNESS: _________________________________________________

(First)             (Middle)   (Last)

PARISH WHERE MEMBER: ____________________________________________

PROXY: ___________________________________________________________

(First)             (Middle)   (Last)

PARISH WHERE REGISTERED: _______________________________________

It is sufficient to have just one Catholic Godparent but there may be two, one male and one female. The Godparent must be a Catholic in good standing who has been confirmed & is 16 or older. A Catholic who is not in good standing cannot be a Godparent or a Christian Witness. The Catholic parish where the person is registered will need to provide a statement that the sponsor if eligible.

A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community can be a witness of the baptism but only together with a Catholic Godparent.

If the Catholic Godparent is unable to attend the Baptism, a Catholic proxy can stand in at the ceremony. The Catholic proxy must meet all the same requirements as the Catholic Godparent.

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARISH OFFICE

CLASS DATE: ___________________________ INSTRUCTOR: ______________________ BAPTISM DATE: ____________
THE ROLE OF THE GODPARENT

The principal responsibility of a godparent is to give witness to the Catholic faith by his/her words and actions. The role is, together with the parents, to present the child for baptism, and to help it to live a Christian life befitting the baptized and faithfully to fulfill the duties inherent in baptism. When called upon to profess the Catholic faith on behalf of the infant, the godparent must believe in what he/she is professing.

Is the godparent expected to be someone who attends church every Sunday? It makes sense if they do. After all, you are asking this person to assist you in bringing up your child in the Catholic faith. The church reasonably expects parents and godparents to help the child “lead a Christian life in harmony with baptism.” Baptism depends on the faith of the Church, expressed by parents and godparents. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that they live what they say they believe. After the baptism, the godparent's role really begins, and not just in the sense of sending presents at birthdays and Christmas! Ideally, a godparent will continue to pray for their godchild; keep in touch with them and their family; give a present or a card at the baptism anniversary and each sacramental milestone in the life of the godchild; lead the child by their example towards a Christian way of life; be supportive of the godchild’s parents in their role as Christian parents and primary educators of their child.

THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE GODPARENT

1. One Catholic godparent, male or female, is sufficient but there may be two, one of each gender. No one can have more than two godparents for one child, nor can anyone have two godparents of the same gender.

2. Godparents must be appointed by the parents of the child being Baptized and must be one who is willing to provide spiritual guidance to the child. They may not be the mother or father of the person to be baptized.

3. Godparents must be age 16 or older unless the parish priest considers that there is a just reason for an exception to be made.

4. Godparents must be fully initiated Catholics (one who has celebrated Baptism, Eucharistic, Confirmation and practices their faith) and not labored under a canonical penalty, whether imposed or declared. If the person you are considering as a Catholic sponsor/Godparent is not married according to the laws and practices of the Catholic Church, or is cohabitating [living together without marriage], you will need to consider someone else. Catholics who are divorced and remarried, and whose previous marriage has not been annulled by a Decree of Invalidity are considered members of the Church living in an irregular (or invalid) marriage and as such, are not eligible to be a Godparent.

5. Godparents who are not members of St. Patrick’s Cathedral must obtain a “sponsor certificate” from his/her parish indicating he/she is a Catholic in good standing. The certificate should be mailed to the Cathedral office two weeks prior to the Baptism.

6. While it is ideal that the parents select two Catholic Godparents, the Church only requires that there be one Godparent. A baptized non-Catholic may serve as a “witness” to the ceremony, as long as a Catholic Godparent is present. The non-Catholic should be an active and participating member of his/her Christian community. A non-baptized person (i.e. a Jewish or Muslim person), cannot serve as a witness because the duties of a godparent to assist the parents of the child in passing on the Christian faith.

7. In a situation where an appointed Catholic Godparent is unable to attend the Baptism ceremony, a Catholic proxy can be appointed to stand in at the ceremony. The Catholic proxy must meet all the same requirements as the Catholic Godparent.
Godparents are a tradition in the Sacrament of Baptism that goes back as far as the early days of the Catholic Church. In those days, conversions came in two ways. In the first instance, whole families were received into the Church through the Sacrament of Baptism after they had been instructed and prepared by a friend or someone appointed by the Church. In the second instance, individuals were instructed and prepared by a friend or someone appointed by the Church.

During those days, the first four centuries, the Catholic Church was under intense persecution by the Roman Empire. To avoid persecution and the infiltration of pagans into the Church, every person who was received into the Church was required to have a sponsor. This sponsor performed two roles. First of all, he protected the Church by authenticating the sincerity of the convert. Secondly, as a catechist, he supported the person as a candidate into the Church.

During the first centuries, the emphasis was placed on the baptism of adults. That all changed when the Council of Trent, (1545 - 1563) affirmed that Adam's disobedience not only transfused physical death to the individuals but also, that all were born afflicted with a sin that is the "death of the soul." "Because of this certainty of faith, the Church baptizes for the remission of sins even tiny infants who have not committed personal sin." (C.C.C. # 403; Council of Trent: DS 1514)

In harmony with this new Decree and in consideration of the inability of an infant to speak for himself or herself, more than ever, it became necessary to appoint a godparent who would make the Profession of Faith in the child's name. This same person would also be responsible for instructing the child in the faith as if adopted by the Christian parents to protect the faith of their child.
Godparent/Sponsor Affirmation of Faith and Morals

I. Some Basic Church Norms Concerning Godparents/Sponsors

It is the very ancient custom of the Church that at the celebration of the sacrament of Baptism or Confirmation, a godparent/sponsor is present. The function of the godparent/sponsor is: a) together with the celebrant who baptizes or confirms, to represent the Church in receiving the person into the communion of the Church; and b) to support the person in living the Catholic Christian life.

In accord with Canon 874 of the Code of Canon Law, the Church can admit a person to the role of godparent/sponsor if: a) he or she is more than sixteen years of age; b) is a baptized Catholic who has been Confirmed, has already received the Blessed Eucharist, and lives a life of faith which befits the role to be undertaken; and c) is neither the father or the mother of the person.

Given the functions and role a godparent/sponsor exercises, a non-Catholic Christian cannot be admitted as a godparent/sponsor; however, he or she can serve as a Christian witness at baptism, provided that there is a Catholic godparent (c. 874 2). A baptized Catholic who is sacramentally or canonically ineligible to serve as a godparent may not serve as a Christian witness. These include those who subsequently renounced the faith in favor of another church community or entity. Those unbaptized and those whose Baptism is not recognized by the Catholic Church may not serve in the role of Christian witness but are welcome to be present at the ceremony.

Note that the Catholic seeking to be admitted as a godparent/sponsor “lives a life of faith which befits the role to be undertaken.” This means that the candidate for godparent/sponsor: a) sincerely believes and strives to put into practice the Word of God as taught by the Catholic Church; b) prayerfully assists at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation; and c) if married, was married in accordance with the requirements of the Catholic Church. One godparent/sponsor is required. Two godparents/sponsors may be appointed provided one is male and the other female.

II. Individual Criteria for Admittance as a Godparent/Sponsor

A sponsor must be fully initiated into the Catholic faith. When and where did you receive the three Sacraments of Initiation? (Fill in below.) If unsure, a Certificate of Baptism can be requested from your church of baptism and will list the sacraments listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church of Baptism</th>
<th>City, State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of Baptism</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of First Communion</td>
<td>City, State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of First Communion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Confirmation</td>
<td>City, State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Confirmation</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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*Remember, a godparent/sponsor must be 16 or older — [ ] Check here if you are at least 16 years old.*
A sponsor must be canonically free to carry out this office of godparent/sponsor. This means that Catholics in an invalid marriage (not married according to the laws of the Church) and those cohabitating (living together without marriage) cannot serve as a godparent/sponsor. If you are married, please complete the following questions.

**Place of Marriage** (church/other): ________________________________

City, State: ________________________________ Date of Marriage: __________________

**Marriage performed by:**
- [ ] Priest
- [ ] Deacon
- [ ] Minister
- [ ] Judge
- [ ] Justice of the Peace
- [ ] Not married

A sponsor must know the fundamental truths of the Faith and be a practicing Catholic who attends Mass on Sundays and receives the sacraments of Holy Communion and Reconciliation regularly. Based on these guidelines, are you in good standing with the Catholic Church?  
- [ ] YES
- [ ] NO

**Sponsor’s Church Attendance:**

- [ ] Weekly
- [ ] Monthly
- [ ] Occasionally
- [ ] Seldom
- [ ] Never

**Religion:** ________________

If you do not attend Mass weekly, please attach a separate letter explaining the situation.

Name of church you presently attend: ________________________________

City, State: ________________________________ Pastor’s Name: __________________

A sponsor must NOT be the father, mother, step-parent, or custodial guardian of the one to be baptized/confirmed. What is your relationship to the candidate? ________________________________

**III. Affirmation of the Prospective Godparent/Sponsor**

If therefore, you seek to be admitted as a godparent/sponsor, and are convinced that you qualify in accordance with the conditions listed above, kindly make the following solemn affirmation before God:

I, (print) ________________________________, a practicing Catholic seeking to be admitted as a godparent/sponsor, solemnly affirm that I fulfill the requirements of the Catholic Church for this role as presented above. I intend, with the grace of God, to continue the practice of my Catholic faith, and I will, to the best of my ability, carry out the obligations of my role as godparent/sponsor.

Date of Ceremony ________________________________  Name of Baptism/Confirmation Candidate (circle one) ________________________________

Parish, City, and State ________________________________

Signature of Godparent/Sponsor ________________________________  Today’s Date ________________________________

Godparent/Sponsor’s email address ________________________________  Godparent/Sponsor’s phone number ________________________________

**This section is to be filled in by the godparent’s/sponsor’s parish church where they participate.**

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

- [ ] godparent for Baptism.
- [ ] sponsor for Confirmation.

Name of Parish: ________________________________  Pastor’s signature: ________________________________

Date: ________________________________  Church Seal ________________________________