



Congratulations on the expectation or arrival of a new child from God! We are happy that you have decided to present her/him for the Sacrament of Baptism at St. Francis de Sales Parish.

This is a sacred time in the life of your family. We have created a baptism process to help you experience a sense of the holiness of this time in a special way and by doing so experience more deeply the presence of God within your family.

To be baptized literally means “to be immersed.” In this first of all the sacraments, those who are baptized are immersed-plunged into- the very life of God. Cleansing, refreshing water, which is necessary for life is used to symbolize God in whom we live and move and have our being. In Baptism, we receive Christian dignity-we are members of the Body of Christ, the Church.

That is why our Baptism Font is so prominent at St. Francis de Sales. It is at the church entrance so that all who enter are immediately reminded of their Baptism and from its waters we bless ourselves each time we enter the church.

Baptizing Babies

Since the days of the Apostles, the Catholic Church has baptized entire households and of course that meant even infants. Why deny these little ones the grace and dignity of being a Christian? Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me.” Babies can’t say “yes” to Baptism, but their parents can. When presenting their child for baptism, parents promise to “raise them in the practice of the faith.” Dad and Mom promise to share and foster within their children the most precious gift of faith. That faith will guide and inspire their child every single day of life-all the way to the Gate of Heaven.

Baptism Preparation

The St. Frances de Sales Family welcomes your child with great joy, and looks forward to celebrating the Sacrament of Baptism with each family. Since this is a most important milestone, parents are required to enter a three step preparation process.

1. Preparing for Baptism at Home: Following these pages of information, parents will find the reflection and discussion materials to use at home, prior to contacting the parish. Finding time to reflect and share as the materials encourage and direct is important to the process.
2. Meeting with Parish Representative: When parents have completed the reflection and discussion materials and have agreed to continue with the preparation process, they will contact the parish office and make an appointment to meet with the parish representative to share their insights, questions, etc. from their discussions of the *Preparing for Baptism at Home*.
3. Baptism Preparation Session: Parents and Godparents (when possible) attend and participate in a session given by the parish Baptism Preparation Team. If parents have attended a

preparation session within the previous two years, they are asked to participate in an abbreviated preparation session.

Selecting Godparents

The role of the Godparent is one of spiritual friend, of support, and care. Godparents represent the parish community in a special way. They also provide the one-on-one support the child needs as she/he becomes familiar with the Roman Catholic faith. The selection of Godparents is one of the most important decisions parents make.

At St. Francis de Sales, we see the role of Godparent to be both a privilege and a responsibility.

Ordinarily, there are two Godparents chosen, one of each gender; however, it occasionally happens that there is one Godparent chosen and he/she is typically of the same gender as the child to be baptized.

Since Godparents represent the Church, they should be carefully chosen. The Church requires that a Godparent be:

- At least sixteen years of age
- Be a Roman Catholic who has received the Sacrament of Confirmation and shares in the Sacramental life of the Church on a regular basis.
- Leads a life in harmony with Church teaching.

Options for Baptism

In Baptism one is welcomed into the Church family, so we celebrate baptisms during the Mass usually on the third weekend of each month (except during Advent and Lent). Exceptions to this are made as necessary. The parish recommends that the baptism take place during the Mass that the parents/family usually attends.

Baptizing an Older Child

If a child is seven years of age or older, the Church considers him/her as a candidate for the catechumenate process commonly referred to as the RCIA Program. Parents should contact the parish office to discuss this process with the pastoral associate.

Continuing Participation in a Life of Faith

Celebrating the Sacraments are very special events in our faith life. Most of our faith experiences are more ordinary and habitual such as weekly attendance at Sunday Mass, frequent reception of the sacraments of Holy Communion and Reconciliation, daily prayer as a family, participating in formation programs for children and adults, etc. These are the ways that faith is brought to life in the home. Committing to these practices of our faith will help families to grow stronger in their faith and are a crucial part of children's "catching" the faith that parents have chosen for them at baptism.

We are looking forward to welcoming new members to the Family of the Church. Please contact us when you are ready to begin the journey toward Baptism.