
“The term children or infants refers to those who have not yet reached the age of discernment and therefore cannot profess personal faith.” *(Rite of Baptism, no.1)*

“Parents of an infant (or young child) to be baptized and those who are to undertake the function of sponsor are to be instructed properly on the meaning of this sacrament and the obligations attached to it.”
(Code of Canon Law, c. 851.2)

“To fulfill the true meaning of the Sacrament, children must later be formed in the faith in which they have been baptized.”
(Rite of Baptism, no. 3)

Preparation for Baptism can help parents more fully embrace their role as primary teacher of the faith, and to raise their child to live as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Being a disciple of Christ involves every part of our being – our head (intellect), our heart (love), and our hands (service).

Discipleship Includes:

- Growing in knowledge and understanding of the Gospel message through systematic catechesis. (Head)
- Having a passionate, heartfelt relationship with Jesus Christ sparked through reading Bible stories, daily prayer, and fully participating in Mass. (Heart)
- Outwardly expressing faith through concrete actions in service to the community. (Hands)

A Guide for Parents of Infants and Young Children



Baptismal Preparation in
the Roman Catholic
Diocese of
Rochester, New York

Preparation for the Sacrament

Parents and godparents should be prepared in such a way that the celebration of the Sacrament is a joyful event understood by all!

Prior to the day of Baptism, ***parents*** should be made aware of:

- the theology, rights and responsibilities associated with Baptism, particularly the sacred promises they will make during the Rite of Baptism.
- the impact and significance of this event on the faith-life of the entire family.
- their role in bringing up the child in the Catholic faith, especially weekly participation in the worship of the Church at Sunday Mass, daily prayer, and reading the Bible.

Godparents should also be made aware:

- of the meaning of this Sacrament and the obligations attached to it
- of their role as a lifelong example and mentor in the faith.



Pre-requisites for Godparents

- Must be at least 16 years old.
- Must be a fully initiated Catholic: having received Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.
- Must lead an active life of faith that is in accord with their commitment as a sponsor.
- Is not the father or mother of the one to be Baptized, since they already have their responsibilities to the child.



“Parents are obliged to take care that infants are baptized in the first few weeks.”

(Code of Canon Law, 867§1)

The Role of the Parish

Research shows that you (parents) are the number one influence on your child’s faith formation and in practicing the faith as they grow to adulthood. Your parish priest and others at the parish are both obligated and pleased to help you in this endeavor!

When you meet at the parish, you should be provided with resources and materials to help you teach your baptized child about God, whose adopted son or daughter he or she is, and about how to live as a follower of Jesus Christ. Children are eager to learn, and there are many resources available for your use.

Talk to your priest and parish staff about:

- adult faith formation opportunities.
- bible study.
- children’s bibles, prayer books and other resources.
- parent groups.
- opportunities for service in the community.

Bringing up your child in the Catholic faith is an exciting journey and the Church is eager to assist you!