

ST. ANDREW THE APOSTLE CHURCH

Infant Baptism...

*Serving God's People as
Christian Stewards*



St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church

Preparation for Infant Baptism
encourages parents to re-examine the mean-
ing which faith has in their lives...

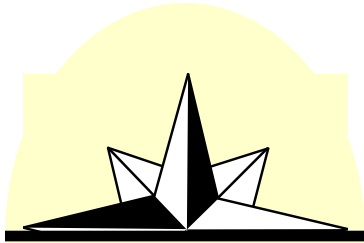
856-784-3878 Parish Office

856-783-0550 Lifelong Faith Formation Office

ST. ANDREW THE
APOSTLE CHURCH

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Catechesis for Baptism is directed primarily to adults - adult candidates for Baptism and parents and godparents of infants who are to be baptized. Preparation for the Baptism of infants...encourages parents to re-examine the meaning which faith has in their lives.

National Catechetical Directory

The purpose of this booklet is to provide parents with the necessary information and guidelines for Infant Baptism and the Baptism preparation process. Our hope is that this program will make the celebration of your child's Baptism a more meaningful experience.

In asking to have your child baptized you are accepting the responsibility of training him/her in the practice of faith. It will be your duty to bring him/her up to keep God's Commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbors. The Baptism Preparation Program offers an excellent opportunity for you, the parents, to renew and/or deepen your faith, strengthen your commitment to the Church, seriously reflect on the responsibilities of Christian parenting, and come to a better understanding of the Sacrament of Baptism.

It is with great joy that our Catholic Community of St. Andrew the Apostle and the Baptism Team welcomes you to this program and we look forward to welcoming your new child into the family of God through the faith-filled celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism.

St. Andrew the Apostle Parish Guidelines and Policies

The following guidelines and policies are given in the light of the Church's mission and ministry to give living witness to the faith that it professes. These policies were developed in relation to the Code of Canon Law (CCL), Rite of Baptism with Children (RBC), the Rite of Christian Initiation (RCIA), the General Directory for Catechesis (GDC), and the Camden Diocesan guidelines. They are implemented under the direction of the pastor and his delegates to prepare and empower parents bringing children for baptism to assume their role and responsibility in the sacramental life of the Church.

Parish Guidelines & Policies

1. BEGINNING:

The first step in the process toward Baptism is to complete the initial paperwork in the main office. Office hours are Monday 10:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., Tuesday through Friday 8:30 AM. to 4:30 PM. A copy of your child's birth certificate and Godparents eligibility forms are required to complete the registration. The parents and Baptismal Team need ample time to prepare for the Baptismal celebration. Therefore, parents seeking Baptism for their child are invited to contact the parish office during the 4th or 5th month of pregnancy or as soon thereafter as possible to make arrangements for the preparation classes and the baptismal date.

2. WELCOMING:

St. Andrew the Apostle Parish requires two formational sessions for parents to complete, prior to the celebration of the Sacrament. Both parents are strongly encouraged to attend. Because of the role of Godparents in the witnessing of a committed life of faith, they too are encouraged to attend.

3. ASSESSMENT OF READINESS:

“For an infant to be Baptized:

- (1) the parents, or at least one of them, or the person who lawfully takes their place, must consent;
- (2) there must be a founded hope that the infant will be brought up in the Catholic religion...
- (3) One parent must be Catholic and active in the practice of their faith. The parents are instructed as to the nature of the sacrament of Baptism, and understand their responsibility to raise their child in the faith. Therefore, attendance by both parents is required, regardless if the spouse is Catholic, unless pastoral considerations have been made.

Couples who are in an irregular marriage (not witnessed by a Catholic priest or deacon) or have other impediments that prohibit them from full communion in the Church are encouraged to speak with the Pastor to explore the possibility to restore them to full communion and membership in the Catholic Church. Our Pastor, Msgr. Marucci, is most happy to meet with you. Please schedule an appointment with Joe Bigos, our Administrative Assistant, at 856-784-3878 to arrange an appointment with the Pastor.

Guidelines & Policies...

4. GODPARENT/SPONSOR:

A suitable sponsor (commonly referred to as godparent) is to be chosen following the norms of the Code of Canon Law. To be admitted to the role of sponsor, a person must:

- be designated by the parents or the one who takes their place
- have completed the sixteenth year of age
- be fully initiated (already received the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) and actively practicing the Catholic faith
- not be bound by any canonical penalty (e.g. one who is in an invalid marriage cannot be a sponsor)
- not be the father or mother of the one to be Baptized
- there can be only one male sponsor and/or one female sponsor
- a non-Catholic, baptized person may participate *only* in the role as a witness of the baptism.

5. CATECHESIS:

Parent/godparent preparations are held in **two sessions**. The first date and time is flexible. You will come together with other parents and godparents to explore the theology of the sacrament, and its meaning in your life, and the life of your child. Also discussed will be the role of the godparent. **To set up a time convenient for you, please call Jim Hemschoot, the Pastoral Associate for Lifelong Faith Formation, at (856)783-0550.**

Session two will be held on the second and last Monday of the month and presented by the Baptismal Preparation Team. This session is held in the Church at 7:00 PM, in order to rehearse the Baptismal ritual. To reserve a place in this session, **please call Kathy Fowler, in the main office at (856)784-3878, at least two weeks in advance.** This formation session will be conducted by Michelina O'Neil and members of the Baptismal Preparation Team.

*Go and Baptize all people, in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.!*

Guidelines & Policies...

6. CELEBRATION:

Although Baptism can be celebrated on any day, it is nevertheless recommended that it be celebrated ordinarily on Sunday, or if possible, at the Easter Vigil.” (CCL, #856) If parents choose to baptize at another Catholic church, please be assured that all necessary paperwork will be provided upon completion of the Baptism preparation program.

The Sacrament of Baptism is celebrated at 11:30 a.m. **Mass** on the first Sunday of the month, or at 1:00 p.m. on the third Sunday of the month, except during Advent and Lent, when we observe the solemnity of these seasons in anticipation of Christmas and Easter. **After your preparation sessions are completed and your paper work (Birth Certificate and Godparent eligibility forms are received), please call Juliette at the main office to schedule a date for your child.**

7. SUMMARY: *Policies of St. Andrew the Apostle Parish*

1. Completion of the Registration and Baptismal Preparation Sessions for all parents presenting infants for Baptism.
2. At least one parent must be a practicing Catholic and a member of St. Andrew the Apostle Parish, or a child of an active registered parishioner.
3. Attendance at all sessions by parents is required, whether or not the spouse is Catholic. Godparents are encouraged to attend both sessions so they may feel comfortable with their role.
4. A Godparent Letter of Eligibility needs to be signed and returned no later than the 1st session. See “Choosing a Godparent” section, for more details.
5. Couples who are in an irregular marriage (not witnessed by a Catholic priest or deacon) or circumstances are encouraged to seek whatever avenues necessary to restore them to full communion and membership in the Catholic church by contacting a priest, deacon, or advocate provided by the parish.
6. Baptisms are celebrated the first Sunday of the month during the 11:30am mass and the third Sunday of the Month at 1:00pm, after 11:30am mass. Children of parishioners that regularly attend Mass on Sundays and Holydays of obligation have the privilege to celebrate the Baptism at the 11:30am mass on the first Sunday of the month.
7. Before a Baptismal Certificate can be issued, a copy of the child's state birth certificate must be turned in to the Parish Office.

GODPARENTS

The Godparents, together with the parents are present to profess the church's faith, in which the child is being Baptized. Therefore, in order to be appointed sponsor, the person must be suitable for this role and have the intention of fulfilling it.

1. Only one godparent is required, but two may be permitted. If two are chosen, one must be male and the other female. (Canon 872-873)
2. The Godparent(s) must have received the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.
3. The Godparent(s) must not be bound by any canonical penalty.
4. The Godparent(s) may not be the father or the mother of the child to be Baptized.
5. When the Godparent(s) are represented by proxies, the latter should be Catholic, and the godparent must give explicit indication of their desire to assume the role and responsibility of godparent.
6. The Godparent(s) must be mature enough to undertake this responsibility, having completed the 16th year. (Canon 847.2)
7. If only one Godparent is chosen, a second person, called a Christian Witness may also be asked. The Christian Witness is a Baptized Christian of another faith (not Catholic, nor a Catholic who has left the faith).
8. An unbaptized person cannot act as a Godparent or Christian Witness.
9. If Godparent(s) are from out of state, you must choose a parish member to be a "stand in" to help on a daily basis.

The Godparent needs to contact their Church where they are a registered parishioner to obtain a Sponsor Eligibility form, then return that form to St. Andrew the Apostle Church Office 2 weeks prior to the scheduled Baptism.

Making your choice

In deciding on a godparent or godparents, then, you have some important decisions to consider. There is everything to suggest that it is a serious responsibility to choose well; it is a decision worth much thought, prayer and discussion. When the choice has been made, it is appropriate that you tell the godparent-to-be what led you to your decision. There is a great honor involved, but also a great responsibility.

You are looking, certainly, for a mature member of the Catholic church, one who has received the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist). You are looking for someone who can share with you the task of handing on a faith and whose life shows that faith in great and small ways of everyday living. You are looking for someone you can call on for help. You are looking for someone who knows that being a Catholic has to do with prayer, with justice towards the poor, with kindness for friends and strangers alike, with many things that are not so popular or common in our own society.

So enjoy this time to consider the possibilities. Talk it over with each other. Consider what will happen if you end up living far away from the godparent. Would this person continue to take an interest in your child and to be a presence in the child's life? When you have made your choice and your godparents-to-be are determined by parish personnel as having met requirements, and they have accepted, you may wish to ask them to be more a part of the Baptism by making the baptismal garment, or by making or buying a beautiful Baptismal candle. It may become your custom over the next years to invite them to your home on the anniversary of the child's baptism for a special celebration of a most important event, or specifically involve them in additional ways in your child's life.

Godparent Statement Letter

You will be required to have your Godparent(s) obtain a Baptismal Sponsor Eligibility Form. This letter is obtained from their proper Pastor. The godparent is required to contact his/her Pastor, where they are properly registered, and to obtain this document. Once received, we ask that this letter be delivered to St. Andrew the Apostle Parish immediately. The signed certificate is required on or before the first session.

Final Preparations

Baptismal Candle

One of the most important symbols of Baptism representing the light of Christ, is the baptismal candle. The presider, or his delegate, will light this baptism candle from the Easter candle during the ceremony. Each family must provide a white candle for each child being Baptized. We recommend using a large, free standing, pillar type candle so that it can be used again for other sacramental celebrations for that child.

This type of candle and candle holder can be purchased at any candle shop and most drug and grocery stores. If you wish, decorations can be added to the candle to personalize it. Here are some suggestions:

- Ribbons or bows can be pinned into the candle
- Child's Name and Date of Baptism
- Silk or dried flowers can be attached at the base
- Beads, sequins, etc. can be pinned into the candle
- Silk flower candle rings can be purchased for a nice effect
- Words and dates can be painted on the candle

White Garment

As a symbol of your child's "putting on the new life of Christ", you are asked to bring your child dressed in a white garment. This may be a gown that has been in your family for generations, or it might be something newly purchased just for this occasion. "See in this white garment the outward sign of your Christian dignity."

Siblings

The Baptism of a younger brother or sister is a special time for a child. It is important that you take time to explain this event to your older children and provide opportunities for them to be involved in the preparations. This might include helping you decorate the candle or plan a celebration to follow the Baptism. Older children can help dress the baby, and stand with the parents and Godparents at the time of the anointing rite.



Final Preparations Cont'd...

Photography

The Rite of Baptism is a sacred event, one in which we celebrate with much joy. We encourage families to record this special event, either with photographs or videotape, to share with your child as he or she grows. However, we do ask that you be considerate of the other families present. Please arrange for a friend or family member to handle the camera, as the parents and godparents will be occupied with the ceremony. We ask the person recording this event to adhere to the following guidelines.

At Baptisms during liturgies, photos and videos may ONLY be taken of the actual Baptism and may not be taken of the Mass itself.

Videotape or photograph ONLY from the assigned pew of the Baptism family. Sit next to the godparents for the best positioning of the camera.

PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE THE PEW DURING FILMING.

The celebrant will be happy to pose for additional photographs after the ceremony. Just ask!!

Thank you for making this a beautiful celebration for your family and all the other families and guests in attendance.

Fees:

There is no fee for the celebration of Baptism. However, parents are asked to make an offering to the parish to support the ministries of St. Andrew the Apostle Parish. St. Andrew the Apostle Parishioners host approximately 90 ministries and provide compassionate outreach to the poor and oppressed. Your support is appreciated.

NOTES: Questions to Ask:



Church of St. Andrew the Apostle

BAPTISMAL CHECK LIST:

COPY OF THE CHILD'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE

GODPARENT'S ELIGIBILITY FORMS

BAPTISMAL PREPARATION SESSION I
Scheduled with Jim Hemschoot

BAPTISMAL PREPARATION SESSION II
on the second and fourth Monday evening at 7:00pm.
Please contact Kathy Fowler in the Parish Office to
schedule this class.

After the above requirements have meant, please call the Parish Office to schedule your date of Baptism.

Thank you!

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