



Requirements for Infant Baptism

Children under the age of 7 years

With great joy and thanksgiving, Saint Junipero Serra Parish welcomes children into the Church through the Sacrament of Baptism! The goodness of your lives and your faith make possible this wonderful celebration of the eternal life bestowed by our gracious God. Children in need of Baptism who are 7 years of age and older, have a different process for Christian Initiation.

Our Roman Catholic Church's *General Instruction for Christian Initiation* teaches us that

“As far as possible, all recently born babies should be baptized at a common celebration on the same day. Except for a good reason, baptism should not be celebrated more than once on the same day in the same church.” (GICI, 27).

- Registered parishioners of Saint Junipero Serra Parish are welcome to present a child for Baptism in one of the two churches of the parish.
- Parents who are not registered parishioners, will need to speak with our pastor Fr. Michael G. Lorentsen, OFM Conv. before planning a baptism in this parish.
- We ask you to present a copy of the child's birth certificate so that the place and date of birth may be noted appropriately.
- We ask you to complete a baptismal information form in which you list the child's name, your own names as parents and the names of your chosen God-parents or sponsors. Because the listing of baptism is a legal document, we need to have the father's full name and the mother's name with the maiden name. The baptism certificate and record will follow this requirement.

Parents and God-parents/sponsors at infant baptism

The parents are the primary teachers when infants are baptized into the Church. Their own faith, their own growth in love and their own sense of values are what is most evident to their children as they grow. God-parents are usually taken from family and friends.

Godparents must be baptized and confirmed and practicing Catholics in good standing. Catholic Godparents from another parish must provide a written permission from the pastor of their respective parishes which certifies one's availability to serve as a sponsor for the Church. Both Catholic godparents must provide a respective sponsor certificate. At least one Godparent must be Catholic.

A Christian of another tradition may serve as a Christian Witness of the Baptism, but cannot serve as a sponsor. Non-baptized persons may stand in as support to the family, but do not serve as Godparents in the Rite of Baptism. During the Rite of Baptism, parents and Godparents profess their belief in Jesus Christ. Only disciples of Jesus Christ can exercise this role.

Schedule for infant baptisms

Baptisms are on Sundays at 1:00 PM in either church of the parish.

We do not celebrate Baptisms during the season of Lent (February 22, 2023—April 8, 2023).

A suggested offering To the extent that one can, an offering of \$100.00 is suggested for the baptism of a child. However, no child will be refused baptism for financial reasons.

Frequently Asked Questions about Infant Baptism at Saint Junipero Serra Parish

What is required of the parents who wish to have their child Baptized at St. Junipero Serra Parish?

To baptize in the Catholic church, at least one parent needs to be Catholic. Baptisms at Saint Junipero Serra are open to registered parishioners.

Parents and Godparents are required to attend a Baptism Preparation session through a virtual format such as Zoom through an appointment with the pastor. In this way, everyone can gain insight in what to expect on the day of your child's Baptism.

Parents are required to provide appropriate documentation for the child's Catholic godparent(s) before the baptism is scheduled. Information about the requirements for Godparents is available below and at the Baptism preparation session.

What is required of Catholic Godparents?

When you invite a person to serve as your child's godparent, you are asking this individual to make a lifelong commitment to your child. The day of your child's Baptism marks just the beginning of the godparent-godchild relationship. It is the hope of the church and the Catholic community that your child's godparents will be lifelong companions who will nurture your child's faith and help him or her become a true disciple of Christ. Only one Catholic godparent is required for a child to be baptized, but if two godparents are chosen one must be male and one must be female.

To serve as a Catholic godparent, an individual must be:

- A baptized Catholic who has received the Sacrament of Confirmation and regularly participates in the celebration of Sunday Eucharist. If married, the Catholic godparent must be married in the Catholic Church.
- Registered as an active member of a Catholic parish
- Sixteen years old or older

When you ask someone to act as a Catholic Baptismal Sponsor, please have them contact their current parish and request a Godparent form or letter of good standing. This helps affirm that the Godparent has their church's permission to do so, and meets the above guidelines for Catholic Godparents. This form or letter is required before a baptism will be scheduled. A physical copy of this form or letter should be mailed or dropped off to:

Saint Junipero Serra Parish
Attn: Baptism Preparation
50 E Street
Seaside Park, NJ 08752

Frequently Asked Questions about Infant Baptism

continued

Any person who was baptized in the Catholic church who wishes to serve as a godparent must meet the above requirements.

If a Godparent cannot be physically present for the Baptism, a proxy may stand in their place by the Baptismal font. The proxy is not required to provide documentation from their church, as they are giving assent on behalf of the recorded Godparent.

Can I have a Godparent who is not Catholic?

At least one Catholic godparent is required. A non-Catholic person who was baptized in another Christian tradition may be invited to serve as a “Christian Witness.” This person will participate in the celebration and will stand alongside the Catholic godparent during the baptismal ceremony. If one Catholic Godparent and one Christian witness are chosen, one will be male and one will be female, per the *Code of Canon Law* for the Catholic Church.

A person who was baptized in the Catholic church and has decided to leave the Catholic church of their own volition is not considered a Christian Witness. However, your invitation to them could be an opportunity to invite them back to participation in the Catholic church.

Do I have to be a registered member of the parish in order to have my child baptized?

You are required to be registered in a Catholic parish to baptize your child in the Catholic Church.

If you are registered at another parish and provide the written permission from your pastor to our Baptism office, you are permitted to baptize your child at one of our Communal Baptism Liturgies.