

Preparing for Your Child's

Sacrament of Baptism



ST. JOAN *of* ARC
ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

3801 E. Greenway Rd. | Phoenix, AZ 85032
Phone (602) 867-9171 | Fax (602) 482-7930

A message from Fr. Dan Connealy:

Dear Parents,

“Your family has experienced great joy at the birth of your child, and the Church shares your happiness.” These are words taken from the order of baptism for children, which I also make my own. It is with great joy that I, and all of us here at St. Joan of Arc, accompany you as you embark on this important duty of having your child baptized into Christ, becoming a member of the Church.

Because the baptized belong no longer to themselves but to Jesus Christ who died and rose for us, your choice declares that you accept the responsibility of helping your child become his disciple. You are not alone; the community of St. Joan of Arc will walk beside you in this task of nurturing the faith of your child. We are in this together as the Body of Christ. It gives me joy to walk with you in this journey of faith.

Please take time to carefully read through this packet. There is a lot of information, and some required forms to fill out and turn in. A detailed check-list of these required forms, etc., is provided on page 15 in this packet.

Each family is unique, and we are here to walk with you in a process that is suitable for your needs. We invite all families to enter more fully into the life of the Church and the parish community throughout the process.

The Lord Jesus looks lovingly on your child and your family. My prayer for you is that you keep the flame of faith alive in your hearts and the hearts of your whole family. As you strive to be living examples of faith and discipleship to your children, know that you are in my prayers as well.

In Christ,

Fr. Dan Connealy
Pastor, St. Joan of Arc

Understanding Baptism

The Sacrament of Baptism is the initial sacrament of faith and through the waters of Baptism we enter a new kind of life. That life is a life in Jesus Christ, lived in the Church. “Having become a member of the Church, the baptized person belongs no longer to himself, but to him who died and rose for us” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC], n. 1266).

Infant baptism celebrates faith – the faith of the Church, of parents, godparents, and the entire community – a faith that transforms the lives of all involved; a faith that will be shared and lived by word and example as parents and godparents help children grow in their baptismal life. Parents and the local parish community must clearly understand the meaning of baptism and the responsibility entailed in living a Christian life. That responsibility includes sharing with their children the faith they received from God in the Church and participating in the Church’s missionary activity (cf. CCC, n. 1270). As the *Rite of Baptism for Children* puts it: “the faith in which the children are baptized is not the private possession of the individual family, but the common treasure of the whole Church of Christ” (*Introduction*, n. 4).

“Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, the person baptized is configured to Christ. Baptism seals the Christian with the indelible spiritual mark (character) of his belonging to Christ. No sin can erase this mark, even if sin prevents Baptism from bearing the fruits of salvation” (CCC, n. 1272). Baptism is the door to eternal life and the kingdom of God. But Baptism is without fruit if not lived out and the person does not develop into a mature disciple of Jesus Christ.

“The sacraments of Christian initiation – Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist – lay the *foundation* of every Christian life. ...The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life” (CCC, n. 1212). Parents, godparents and the whole community, in choosing baptism for an infant, accept the responsibility to continue the initiation of the baptized through Confirmation and the Eucharist. It is important to know that Confirmation and the Eucharist are *necessary – and not optional* – for full initiation into the Christian life and the Church.

St. Joan of Arc Roman Catholic Church
3801 E. Greenway Rd. – Phoenix 85032

BAPTISM REGISTRATION FORM – Please fill out!

CHILD'S NAME

FIRST Name MIDDLE Name LAST Name
____ / ____ / ____ _____ _____
Date of Birth City of Birth State of Birth

Is child adopted? Yes No

FATHER'S NAME

FIRST Name LAST Name

Baptized? Yes No
Religion

MOTHER'S NAME

FIRST Name MAIDEN Name

Baptized? Yes No
Religion

Home Address _____ City _____
State _____ Zip Code _____
Best Phone # (____) ____ - _____ E-mail _____

GODMOTHER'S NAME

LAST Name FIRST Name

Baptized? Yes No
Catholic Parish

GODFATHER'S NAME

LAST Name FIRST Name

Baptized? Yes No
Catholic Parish

BAPTISM REQUEST FORM

Today's Date _____

Name of Child being Baptized _____

Name of Father _____ Name of Mother _____

RITE OF BAPTISM REQUEST

Dates Requested: (First choice) _____, (Second choice) _____

Witness (Baptismal Coordinator) and Date _____

Infant Baptisms at St. Joan of Arc Roman Catholic Church

Information & Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I begin the process?

Call the parish office and ask for Brian Hanson (Coordinator of Infant Baptism: 602-867-9171 x311); or email Brian at bhanson@stjoanofarc.com. The process directly corresponds to the needs of the family for the nurturing and growth of faith and conversion to the mystery of God's love in Jesus Christ. Discerning this process begins with a personal conversation.

2. What is required of parents in order to celebrate baptism for their child?

First and foremost, parents are called to renew their own conversion to Jesus Christ, striving to pattern their life and the life of their family on the teachings of the Gospel. They are expected to have some experience of the company of Christians through contact with the parish community, and to be familiar with the Christian way of life.

3. How do I know what Catholic parish I belong to?

Your physical home address constitutes the parish you should be registered with. However, you can choose to register with a Catholic Church parish outside of your geographical area. In order to be considered a Catholic in good standing, you must be committed to a Catholic Church parish so as to ensure that you and your family members are both sharing and benefitting from reception of the sacraments and overall life of the parish community.

4. What if I am not a registered parishioner of St. Joan of Arc, can I still have my child Baptized here?

Normally, sacraments are to be administered in one's home parish. If St. Joan of Arc is your parish, we ask that you be registered and active for *at least three months*. However, if you belong to a different parish, and you believe there are reasons to have your child baptized at St. Joan of Arc, the criteria mentioned in no. 3 above still normally applies. Parents are strongly encouraged to have a personal conversation with their pastor or his designated minister in order to foster a relationship and to discern a suitable path for preparing your family for the celebration of baptism.

NOTE: We may need to consult with your pastor or his delegated minister prior to planning the celebration of baptism. He or his designated minister are welcome to provide a letter indicating your status in his parish.

5. When and where will Baptisms take place?

When: Baptisms are normally held on the Fourth Sunday of the month at 2:00pm (Spanish) and 3:00pm (English).

Where: In the narthex (vestibule) of the main church.

NOTE: Available dates will be discussed directly with the baptismal coordinator.

6. Who celebrates the Baptism?

A parish priest or deacon ordinarily celebrates Baptism.

NOTE: If you request a priest or deacon whose assignment is not in the Diocese of Phoenix, a “Letter of Suitability” is required from the bishop of that celebrant’s diocese, stating that the prospective celebrant is in good standing. It is the responsibility of the parents to obtain and present this letter to the Baptismal Coordinator at least two weeks before the Baptism.

7. Are their required classes parents need to take?

The life of the parish is the “class”: parents are expected to be (or become) immersed in the Christian way of life in the parish community of St. Joan of Arc for at least three months prior to the celebration of Baptism. Because the faith of the Church is living, it presumes that what we all believe and pass on to others (e.g. our children) is fully integrated into our lives. By joining the community in reflecting on the value of knowing Jesus Christ, especially through participation in Mass, parents are expected to renew their own faith, nurturing a life in union with Jesus and his Church. This immersion in the Christian way of life in the parish community is achieved in four ways:

- 1) **Encountering Jesus each Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation.** Participation in Mass and the Eucharist is central for our lives; it is the source and summit of our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, the Word of God, which is celebrated in the Liturgy of the Word each Mass, should become an intimate part of one’s life, fostering a sense of the mystery of God’s love for us in Jesus Christ.
- 2) **Living faith within the parish community.** In various settings, parents learn how to witness and share their faith with others within the community, and practice love of neighbor – even at the cost of self-renunciation. This can only happen by spending significant time with the community, meeting others and forming relationships.
- 3) **Worship and Prayer.** Parents actively and consciously participate in Sunday liturgies (e.g. Mass); they also learn how to pray with others in communal settings, as well as develop prayer in their daily lives and in their home, which is the first place prayer is learned and practiced.
- 4) **Witness and Service.** Parents learn how to work actively with others to spread the Gospel and build up the Church by the witness of their lives. This is the meaning of living a baptismal life.

These four disciplines in the Christian way of life are what “make up” the ordinary life of the parish in its various activities. The process for parents is meant to be suited to a spiritual journey that is appropriate for each family. This will vary according to the many forms of God’s grace as well as the circumstances that make up the lives of the parents, including their own cooperation and that of the community. Everyone’s journey is unique; what is necessary is for one’s conversion and faith to become strong through immersion in the life of the parish.

8. What if one parent is not a baptized Catholic?

In the event of a mixed religion marriage, the Catholic spouse must remember their commitment to living out their own baptism as expressed in their wedding ceremony: to raise their children in the faith of the Catholic Church. At least one parent must be a baptized Catholic, and there must be a well founded hope that the child will be brought up in the Catholic religion.

9. ***What if the parents are not legally married?***

- Parents are strongly encouraged to look into Marriage in the Church, which is a natural requirement of love (and not optional), and a vocational calling for those who are baptized. Responding to the call to Marriage is the *first and greatest witness* given to children who have a right to the love that is demanded by the Marriage itself.

NOTE: If parents are not married or merely in a civil union, it is not an impediment *per se* to celebrate the baptism, so long as they are aware of their duties and responsibilities to train their children in the practice of the faith. The greatest way parents can do this is to live a life that is consistent with the faith they profess and into which they are having their children baptized.

- If the parents are unmarried, we will not be able to list the name of the father of the child unless we receive one of the following:
 - A copy of the child's birth certificate which lists the father's name;
 - A copy of a legal document that lists the father's name, establishing his paternity;
 - A sworn declaration by the father himself in the presence of the parish priest and two witnesses.
 - **NOTE:** this sworn statement must be notarized.
 - **NOTE:** At least one of these documents or the sworn declaration must be provided *at least two weeks* prior to the celebration of Baptism.

Choosing a Godparent:

Dear Parents,

Godparents have an important responsibility in the life of your child. They will stand by your side as you strive to train your child in the practice of the faith, witnessing what it means to live a baptismal life in the Church.

I want to impress upon you the seriousness of this decision. Please take time to discern and pray about this. Just as you as parents can never be replaced, neither can godparents; the office of godparent is sealed in the celebration of the baptism of your child.

Godparents are chosen by parents on the basis of their example in living the Christian way of life. They have the responsibility of showing your child how to practice the Gospel throughout life, to sustain them in moments of hesitancy and anxiety, and to guide them in the progress of their baptismal life as disciples of Jesus Christ.

The following information in the packet is meant to help guide you as you pray about your choice of godparents. Please read through this carefully, and contact us if you have any questions. Please be assured of my prayers for you during this time.

In Christ,

Fr. Dan Connealy,
Pastor, St. Joan of Arc

Selecting Godparents

Information & Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the requirements for someone to be allowed to serve as a Godparent?

For the grace of baptism to unfold, it is important to have the help of godparents. The role of the *godfather* and *godmother*, who must be firm believers, must be able and ready to help the newly baptized on the road of Christian life.

Godparents officially represent the Church by witnessing what it means to live a **baptized** life, **confirmed** in the Holy Spirit and faithfully participating in the **Eucharist**, the source and summit of the Christian life. Below are the official requirements of godparents:

- They must be at least 16 years of age and living a life that is consistent with the function they have been asked to undertake.
- This means that they have received the sacraments of **Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion.**
- If they are married, this means they are married in the Church. *A “civil marriage” by itself does not actually constitute a marriage in any sense for the baptized.*
- Their *pastor* signs the **Godparent Form** (pages 11-14 in this packet), indicating that they are registered in a Catholic parish, are in good standing with the Church and actively living their faith as disciples of Jesus Christ, and regularly participating in the Sacraments and life of the Church.
 - **NOTE:** The **Godparent Form** must be completed and turned in *at least two weeks* before the Baptism.
- Through a suitable process of preparation, they are expected to have undergone a conversion in mind and action in a spirit of faith and charity.
- If there are two Godparents, they must be of the opposite sex.
- If someone was ever baptized as a Catholic and currently claims to “...have left the Catholic Church,” then he/she cannot be a Godparent or a Christian Witness.

2. How many godparents can I have or do I need?

You are required to have at least one active, confirmed Roman Catholic Godparent who is in good standing with the Church (see the criteria listed in Question #1 above).

3. What if the Godparents cannot be present for the Celebration of Baptism?

If a Godparent cannot be present at the Baptism, a proxy should be designated to witness the Baptism itself. As proxies, they should normally meet the same qualifications as Godparents (refer to Question #1 above). They will be listed in the baptismal registry as “proxies”. They must be designated by the **godparent**, and *approved by the parents*.

4. What is a Christian Witness?

- If there is only one Godparent, another person may serve as a Christian Witness. A Christian Witness is someone who simply “witnesses” the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism as a *non-Catholic Christian*.
- The Christian Witness is an individual, *at least 16 years of age*, who has been baptized into Christ in a *non-Catholic* Christian community.
- The Christian Witness is *not a Godparent*, and therefore does not assume the responsibilities of a godparent.

5. Who can/cannot serve as a Christian Witness for the sacrament of Baptism?

- Only someone who is a baptized non-Catholic **can** be a Christian Witness for the Baptism.
- A Christian Witness **cannot** be listed as a Godparent because their life does not fully witness to the practice or support of the Catholic way of life to which you, as parents, are professing to your child.
 - **NOTE:** A Christian Witness must provide some written indication or proof of a valid Baptism (e.g. a baptism certificate) to the Baptismal Coordinator (Brian Hanson) *at least two weeks* before the scheduled Baptism.

* **Please note:** if someone was baptized a Catholic and currently claims to “...have left the Catholic Church,” and/or has not yet received the sacrament of Confirmation, then he/she **cannot be a Godparent or a Christian Witness**.



Godparent Form

PLEASE SIGN & RETURN TO ST. JOAN OF ARC,
MUST BE RECEIVED PRIOR TO SETTING DATE OF BAPTISM

[See further explanations on other side]

I, _____, phone number, _____,
(print your name)

have been asked to be a Godparent for _____.
(please print child's name)



A godparent is an important person in the life of the person to be baptized. They are: 1) a spiritual role model, 2) an example of the Christian life and 3) the official representative of the Body of Christ, the Church, into which a individual is being baptized. They are to be a source of guidance, support, and inspiration to this child on his or her faith journey and, when appropriate, help the parents in the Christian formation of this child.

Please circle either YES or NO for each question:

YES NO Are you a Roman Catholic?

YES NO Are you at least 16 years old?

YES NO Have you received Confirmation and Holy Eucharist in the Catholic Church?

YES NO Do you attend Mass regularly on Saturdays/Sundays and receive the sacraments of the church regularly?

Answer the following only if married:

YES NO Was your present marriage celebrated in the presence of a Catholic bishop, priest, or deacon or in another denomination with the written permission of a Catholic bishop? (If not please provide an explanation.)

Answer the following only if unmarried:

YES NO Are you living with another person in a romantic relationship or as a couple?

I affirm that I meet the qualifications, and accept the responsibilities, of being a godparent. I am an active and participating Catholic and promise to the best of my ability to serve as an example in encouraging this child to participate in the sacramental life of the church.

Godparent's signature _____ Date _____

Pastor's signature (Godparent's pastor) _____

Name of Parish _____ Phone # _____



Drop off or mail to
ST. JOAN OF ARC CATHOLIC
CHURCH 3801 E. GREENWAY ROAD
PHOENIX, AZ 85032
FAX NUMBER: 602-482-7930

Serving as a Godparent comes with great responsibilities. Below are the requirements set forth by the Church in her Code of Canon Law:

GODPARENTS/SPONSORS

Can. 872 *Insofar as possible, a person to be baptized is to be given a sponsor who assists an adult in Christian initiation or together with the parents presents an infant for baptism. A sponsor also helps the baptized person to lead a Christian life in keeping with baptism and to fulfill faithfully the obligations inherent in it.*

Can. 873 *There is to be only one male sponsor or one female sponsor or one of each.*

Can. 874 §1. *To be permitted to take on the function of sponsor a person must:*

- *be designated by the one to be baptized, by the parents or the person who takes their place, or in their absence by the pastor or minister and have the aptitude and intention of fulfilling this function;*
- *have completed the sixteenth year of age, unless the diocesan bishop has established another age, or the pastor or ministry has granted an exception for a just cause;*
- *be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist and who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on;*
- *Not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;*

§2. A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community is not to participate except together with a Catholic sponsor and then only as a witness of the baptism.

Regarding the questions:

1. **RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION:** A godparent must be a Roman Catholic because the godparent is an official representative of the Catholic Church. Christians of other denominations whose baptism is recognized as valid in the Catholic Church may serve as a Christian Witness for the baptism of a Catholic. Christians whose baptism is not recognized as valid in the Catholic Church and Non-Christians may not serve as a godparent or Christian Witness.
2. **MINIMUM AGE:** A godparent must generally be 16 by the date of the baptism. (exceptions by pastor may be made with reason.)
3. **SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION:** a godparent is a baptized Catholic who has received Confirmation and Holy Eucharist in the Catholic Church.
4. **FREEDOM TO RECEIVE THE SACRAMENTS:** The godparent is a practicing Catholic who is free to receive Holy communion when he or she come to Mass.
5. **MARITAL STATUS:** A Catholic godparent who is married must be in a marriage that is recognized by the Catholic Church. Those in their first marriage must have been married either a) in a Catholic Church ceremony or b) in a church/synagogue ceremony with the permission of the Catholic Church. Catholics in second marriages must have had their first marriage annulled and their second marriage recognized or convalidated by the Catholic Church. Catholics presently in civil or common law marriages are not eligible to serve as a godparent.
6. **UNMARRIED STATUS:** If unmarried, a godparent must be living a life consistent with a single person as defined by the Catholic Church. Anyone cohabitating with another person, e.g. living in a romantic relationship or as a couple, is ineligible to serve.





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Answer the following only if unmarried:

YES NO Are you living with another person in a romantic relationship or as a couple?

I affirm that I meet the qualifications, and accept the responsibilities, of being a godparent. I am an active and participating Catholic and promise to the best of my ability to serve as an example in encouraging this child to participate in the sacramental life of the church.

Godparent's signature _____ Date _____

Pastor's signature (Godparent's pastor) _____

Name of Parish _____ Phone # _____



Drop off or mail to
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CHURCH 3801 E. GREENWAY ROAD
PHOENIX, AZ 85032
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St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church

Pre-Baptism Check List

(All to be completed at least **two weeks** prior to Baptism)

Parents of Child

1. Registered and participating parishioner for at least **three months** prior to the celebration of Baptism. _____
2. Scheduled time to meet with Brian Hanson (English) or Maria Diaz (Spanish). _____
3. Turned in **completed Baptismal Registration Form** (page 4 in the packet). _____
4. Chosen a **qualified Godfather and/or Godmother** (see packet for details). _____
5. Discussed a process of formation with Brian Hanson (English) or Maria Diaz (Spanish). _____
6. Submitted a copy of child's **birth certificate**. _____
7. Obtained written **permission to baptize** outside of St. Joan of Arc. _____ (if applicable)
8. Submitted **written request for visiting priest or deacon** to celebrate Baptism. _____ (if applicable)

Godparents

9. Discussed the suitability of chosen godparents and their process of formation. _____
10. Provided a **godparent form** (in this packet). _____

(NOTE: The *original* needs to be provided with a parish seal. NOTE: Another option could be for the godparents to request a letter or form from their own parish if they are not parishioners of St. Joan of Arc. The letter or form needs to be signed by their pastor with a parish seal).

11. Provide a **new/recent baptismal certificate** from the parish where the godparents were baptized. _____

Christian Witness (if applicable)

12. Provided some written indication or proof of baptism (e.g. a baptismal certificate) with their full name. _____

Baptism by Proxy (if applicable)

13. A letter from the **Godparent** for whom the proxy will take his/her place stating their resolve to be the active Godparent of the child. _____