

# PARENT INFORMATION CONCERNING INFANT BAPTISM



JESUS WAS BAPTIZED  
IN THE JORDAN BY  
JOHN  MK 1.9

SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST PARISH  
NEWTON - PLAISTOW  
NEW HAMPSHIRE

## CHRISTIAN FORMATION MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish in regard to Christian Formation is to form each person to know Jesus Christ, and to belong to His Church. Our faith-life is a journey that begins with the Sacraments of Initiation and continues throughout our lives; thus each of us is responsible, with the help of God and with assistance of the Church, to unite ourselves to Jesus Christ and to be empowered with His Holy Spirit. In all of our programs of Christian Formation, each person is joyfully welcomed and invited to appreciate God's constant call to conversion, to proclaim the Good News by living a Christian life, to celebrate the Liturgy in community, to witness God's love and forgiveness, and to serve others unselfishly.

## WELCOME AND CONGRATULATIONS!

We rejoice with you at the birth of your child. A new life born into the human family and into our world is a joyful and happy event, an event that changes people's lives for the better. Each birth gives promise and hope that the world will become a better place because of this new life. We share these hopes with you and we want to do everything possible to make them come true. These guidelines will help to answer some questions and will inform you about the important commitment you are making in asking for the Sacrament of Baptism.

## WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Baptism is the external sign (Sacrament) celebrating the entrance of a person into the Christian community. Baptism celebrates God's forgiveness and adoption, and initiates a child into a life-style of lifelong worship, religious instruction, and service with the whole Catholic community.

## PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

In order for a child's Baptism to be fruitful, parents must give, under Church Canon Law, an assurance that upon the child's Baptism, the child will be given every benefit of Christian and Catholic upbringing.

This responsibility of raising a child in the ways of faith begins immediately after Baptism and extends all the way into adulthood. If parents are not able to give this assurance or make this solemn commitment to the Church, they should consider delaying Baptism until they are prepared to make a serious commitment to undertake these responsibilities.

## SOME IMPORTANT CHURCH REGULATIONS

We are permitted to baptize the children of parent(s) who are registered members of Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish. The Rite of Baptism is always celebrated in a Catholic Church

except in an extraordinary circumstance. Parents are expected to be participating in the life of the Parish community; newly registered families are typically asked to participate in Parish life for at least three full months before any date for Baptism can be scheduled. Participation in this case is defined as regularly attending Sunday Eucharist. If parents have recently moved into the Parish and not registered, they must obtain a letter from their former Parish Pastor indicating that they are practicing Catholics.

Parents must receive the benefit of adult catechesis (religious instruction) concerning the responsibilities of Catholic parenting from the Church. Our Parish offers this instruction and parents are required to attend. Parents will also have a chance to meet with the Pastor before the Baptism of their child. The Parish also has excellent resources to assist couples in their new role as parents.

## CHOOSING GODPARENTS

Godparents are chosen by parents to assist them in roles as Christian parents. They should be outstanding examples of Christian faith and should be willing to model, by word and example, the Good News of Jesus Christ. One godmother and one godfather should be chosen keeping in mind the role of godparents. Church Canon Law requires that at least one godparent (called the “Sponsor” in Canon Law) must be a practicing Roman Catholic and meet the requirements of Church Canon Law.

## A Sponsor:

- must be over the age of 16
- must have received the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation
- must be a “practicing” Catholic; that fact verified by the proposed Sponsor’s own Pastor
- must not possess any impediment as regards to Church Canon Law regarding the Sacrament of Marriage

Church Law requires one Sponsor for Baptism; typically a godfather and godmother fulfill the role of Baptismal Sponsors. However, Canon Law allows for one godparent to act as a Christian Witness. The Christian Witness must be a Baptized Christian and may serve as godparent alongside the designated Sponsor.

If Catholic godparents are chosen who reside outside of Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish, each godparent (Sponsor) must obtain a “*Certificate of Eligibility*” or “*Sponsor Certificate*” from their local Pastor. For Godparents serving as Christian Witnesses who are not Roman Catholic, a letter from their respective Church minister stating that they are members in good standing in their respective Churches must be obtained.

The Parish Office will assist you in obtaining these certificates or letters.



## WHEN ARE BAPTISMS CELEBRATED?

Since Baptism incorporates a person as a member of the Body of Christ, the ideal time for the Sacrament's celebration is when the community gathers on Sunday (or Saturday evening) for Mass. The Rite of Baptism during Mass consists of a welcome for the candidate at the beginning of Mass, and the actual Baptism immediately following a Profession of Faith. Baptisms are scheduled with the Pastor for the 4:00 pm vigil Liturgy on Saturday, or the 7:30 am, 9:00 am or 11:00 am Liturgies on Sunday.



There are certain Liturgical celebrations (Christmas, RCIA dates, First Eucharist dates) and Liturgical seasons (notably Lent) when Baptism is not celebrated. The Pastor will help you in choosing a date and time that best fits your needs.

There are unusual circumstances when Baptism is celebrated outside of Mass. Accommodations are made to help you and your family celebrate with our Parish family in an appropriate way. The Pastor will assist you in this regard.

**A Baptism preparation session for parents is held on the first Sunday of each Month. Check the Parish Bulletin for specific dates, or call the Parish Office at (603) 382-8324.**