



Incarnation Catholic Church

STEPS FOR BAPTISM

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Mt.28:19).”

1. **Register in the Parish:** Parents of the child to be baptized must be registered members of Incarnation for at least two (2) months prior to scheduling a baptism. If you are not already registered, you may do so by picking up a parish registration form from the office or online at <https://incarnationchurch.org>.
2. **Selecting Godparents:** Godparents play a very important role in your child’s spiritual life. They should serve as role models of the faith. The child should be able to look to their godparent as an example of how the Church teaches us to live our Catholic faith. They should support not only the child but you, the parents, as well. Additionally, in their role as godparent, they represent the larger Church community. Being a godparent is not only an honor, it is a tremendous responsibility. Therefore, the godparents should be carefully chosen. In recognizing the importance of the godparents and their duties, the Church has provided guidelines to help parents choose the best possible godparents for their children. Incarnation Church strictly adheres to Canon Law in all aspects of Baptism. If potential godparents are not practicing members of the Church or have converted from the Catholic faith to any other faith, they should not be considered and cannot be accepted for this role.

The Church requirements for Roman Catholic godparents are:

- A child must have one practicing Roman Catholic godparent in good standing with the Church.
 - This Catholic godparent must be at least 16 years old and be mature enough to understand, accept and carry out the duties of a godparent
 - A godparent must have received the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation.
 - A godparent must be living an exemplary life consistent with faith and morals as taught by the Roman Catholic Church.
 - A non-Catholic, baptized Christian may be chosen as a Christian Witness, as long as one godparent is Catholic.
 - If two godparents are chosen, they may not be of the same gender.
 - There may be no more than two (2) godparents.
 - If both are Catholic, both must meet all the criteria above.
3. **Sponsor Letter:** All godparents, other than those from Incarnation Church and Christian Witnesses, must obtain a certificate/letter from their own parish/church stating that they are members in good standing and are eligible to act as a godparent for Baptism. These sponsor letters should be submitted to the Incarnation Church office as soon as possible after the initial baptism registration. Without these letters there may be a postponement of your child’s Baptism.

4. **Baptism Preparation Class:** All first time parents are required to attend a Baptism Preparation Class. This one (1) hour class is held the first Thursday of each month in the Parish Center Conference room at 7:00 PM. Parents are encouraged to attend a class prior to the birth of their baby. All godparents are welcome and encouraged to attend the class.
5. **Scheduling the Baptism:** Baptisms are scheduled at 12:00 noon on the second and last Sunday of the month. Call the Parish Office to set a Baptism date, 941-921-6631.
6. **Naming your Child:** The name you select in addition to your family name will provide your child with a unique identity. The long-standing tradition of the Church has been to give at least one (1) name of a saint or person from our Biblical tradition. A Christian name will provide your child with a model for Christ-centered living.
7. **Pictures at the Baptism:** Photographs and videos are encouraged at the Baptism ceremony. These are excellent means of sharing the memory of this joyous and special day with your child as he/she grows in age and faith. They will also turn out to be a good teaching tool. Please be sure to follow the instructions of the celebrant to insure that you will be getting the best pictures and not interfering with the ceremony.
8. **Clothing and Candle:** A white Christening gown is customary but not required. Whatever clothing is worn should be loose enough at the neck to allow anointing of the child's breast. If a hat is worn, it should be removed before the Baptism. The parish will provide a white Baptismal bib and a decorated candle. After the ceremony they will be yours to keep as a reminder of this joyous milestone. The candle can be burned on Baptismal anniversaries and when the child receives other sacraments in the future.
9. **Baptismal Record and Certificate:** The Baptism will be recorded in the permanent records of the parish from the information you provide. Therefore, please be sure of the accuracy of information and the spelling of names. A Baptism certificate will be mailed to you following the baptism. Later, whenever a certificate might be needed it can be prepared from the parish record.