



BAPTISMAL PREPARATION HANDBOOK

Holy Rosary † St. Mary's
Hilmar † Stevinson

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Dear Parents,

Congratulations! We rejoice with you as you look forward to and plan for your son's/ daughter's Baptism. It is natural for you to want to give the very best to your child, and we are glad that providing for your child includes a deep concern for his/ her spiritual life. The joy and peace that comes from a relationship with God is the best gift that your child could ever receive. Your child is fortunate to have you plan for his/ her spiritual growth by making these preparations for Baptism. Baptism is considered the single most important religious moment in the life of a person. Our parish community wants your child to have a close relationship with God and we are committed to offering you all the help we can give. Our prayers are with your family.

Holy Rosary † St. Mary's Church

The Mission of our Christian Formation

The mission of all our Christian formation programs is to help people become committed followers of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Our formation programs aim to unlock the riches of the sacraments, scripture, prayer, and the Christian life. Sacraments are the meeting grounds between God and His people.

The process of Christian Initiation begins with preparation for Baptism and then is lived out throughout one's life – which involves a continual turning toward Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

The Catholic journey towards God, however, is not a solitary one – we live and move as a community – as the People of God – His Church. The Catholic Church is God's gift to us. It is in this Church that you are asking your child to be initiated into!

What is Baptism?

“Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as children of God; we become members of Christ and are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission...” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1213)

Parental Responsibilities

When an adult is baptized, Baptism follows a rigorous period of instruction. In contrast, when a child is baptized, the Baptism precedes instruction. In light of this, the Church requires that parents give assurance that, upon the child's Baptism, the child will be given every benefit of Christian and Catholic upbringing. The primary responsibility of raising a child in the ways of faith rests with the parents. This obligation begins with Baptism and extends all the way into adulthood. Our parish is always happy to assist parents in their role as primary educators of their children in the ways of faith.

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.

Parish Responsibilities

- Church law permits priests to baptize the children of parents who are full-time or part-time resident of their parish. Except in an emergency, the Rite of Baptism can only be celebrated in a Catholic church building.
- Infants from outside the parish may be baptized at Holy Rosary St. Mary's with the written permission of their pastor. Parents are responsible to make arrangements for us to receive this letter one month before the Baptism.
- It is the responsibility of the parish to prepare the parents and godparents for the celebration of Baptism of their child. This is a mandatory program that both parents and sponsors need to attend. Parents or Sponsors who are from outside of Holy Rosary † St. Mary's parish can attend this formation program in their home parish and submit their participation certificate to the parish office prior to Baptism.

Godparents

- Godparents should be chosen by parents primarily to be good religious examples to their child and not because they want to bestow a family/social honor. Godparents will be asked to assist parents in teaching the child about the Christian faith and are required to provide an example of the Christian life. As representatives of the Christian community, godparents give witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ, in word and example.
- The parish is responsible to make parents aware of the requirements concerning godparents:
 - The birth mother or the father of the child to be baptized is not permitted to serve as godparent.
 - Catholic godparent(s) must have received the sacraments of Baptism, First Holy Communion, Confirmation and if married, married in the Catholic Church and must be actively practicing their Catholic faith. (Non-married couples who are cohabitating are unable to serve as godparents).
 - Only one male or female sponsor is required or one of each gender should be chosen.
 - Together with a Catholic godparent, a person baptized in a non-Catholic Christian community may be admitted as a "Christian Witness". Parents should determine this person to be a good example of Christian living (Canon 872-874).
- Godparents who are not members of Holy Rosary † St. Mary's parish are requested to affirm the questions on the "Godparent/Sponsor Eligibility Certificate" given and have their pastor complete and seal the bottom portion of the form. (Godparents from our parish need only to affirm the questions). This certificate should be provided to the parish prior to scheduling the baptism.

Celebration of Baptism

Before deciding on the date and time of baptism, please call the parish office at (209)667-8961 to check availability. Ordinarily, Baptisms will be celebrated on Sundays provided all requirements and attendance of preparation class have been met. Arrangements should be made with the Pastor by calling the parish office.

What is the Donation to the Church?

Many parents and godparents inquire about a donation to the Church on the occasion of a child's Baptism. Although there is no stipend requested, donations are gratefully accepted. A suggested donation of \$50 will help the church to defray the costs.

After Reading this Brochure

If you have any questions, please call the parish office at (209)667-8961, Monday through Thursday, 8am to 12pm & 1pm to 4pm.

Baptism classes are held monthly in both English and Spanish. Please contact the parish office to sign up to attend. Remember that BOTH parents AND godparents need to attend.

- English classes are the FIRST Tuesday of each month at 6:30pm in the Msgr. Minhoto Meeting Room.
- Spanish classes are the FIRST Friday of each month at 6:30pm in the Msgr. Minhoto Meeting Room.

Date of Baptism: _____

Before scheduling the date for baptism, please provide the following documents:

- _____ Parents' registration form
- _____ Copy of Birth Certificate
- _____ Sponsor's form with pastor's approval & seal
- _____ For Non-Catholic Christian Witnesses, a letter from the church he/she attends together with a certificate of Baptism.
- _____ For parents & sponsors who attended Baptismal Preparation class outside of our parish, a letter of their participation.