

# Immaculate Conception Parish

Franciscan Friars

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## **Baptism Information & Guidelines**

### **FOR THE PARENTS**

As you prepare for the Sacrament of Baptism for your child, you are presented with a unique opportunity to reaffirm your own Christian faith. On the strength of your own faith, you are asking the rest of the Church to welcome your child as a new member of this faith community. In doing so, you are making a promise to God, the Catholic Church and your child that you will do your very best to help develop the spiritual potential of your child and guide them to grow in the knowledge and love of Jesus and His Church.

**Baptism is the door and the key to the rest of the sacraments.** As such, Baptism is also a Rite of Initiation into our faith community and the beginning of a life-long commitment...*not just a one day celebration*. In the long run, it is the parents' sole responsibility to ensure that their child is given every opportunity to become a faithful follower of Jesus within their faith community. In short, if the strength and presence of God's love is not nourished in the home, by the parents AND within the Church community, the significance of Baptism is lost, and the Sacrament becomes just another "social event" with no real meaning.

**If you have been away from the weekly Sunday Eucharist, this is a wonderful time to return to the table of the Lord. It is Jesus who desires to nourish and feed us each Sunday at the table of the Word and the table of the Eucharist.**

### **BELONGING TO A PARISH COMMUNITY**

Baptism initiates a person into the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. When Baptism is celebrated in a Church, the person is also initiated into that particular believing community, and they assume the rights and privileges of being Catholic. Belonging is important. From the moment of birth, children seek to belong. To know the faces, voices and touch of those we call mother and father is essential in the development of a child. The need to belong is not limited to our family. When a person comes seeking Baptism into the life of the Church, they are asking to belong. Although through the sacrament of Baptism one is initiated into life in Christ and the Church, there is another important way to belong.

**We state our desire to belong to a parish community by formally *registering* in the parish. Registering is a rather simple act that brings responsibility and commitment. Belonging to a parish community is more than filling out a registration form. Registration means that we want to gather each Sunday with our brothers and sisters in Christ to worship God, and that we want and intend to support the work of the Church.** In practical terms, the registration form allows the parish to know how many families live in the parish and it allows parish staff to contact families on special events. Supporting the work of the Church is the responsibility of all registered members. A weekly offering assists in the Church's ministry needs, provides much needed funds to support the Church and the community. Using offertory envelopes assists everyone and it allows the church to provide a yearly receipt for income tax.

Although a parish is busy with many activities, the primary works of the Church are to praise and worship God, to proclaim the gospel and initiate new members. All these are the work of the entire parish community (all registered members). When someone is seeking to celebrate a sacrament, it is only natural for the Church to inquire if the family is registered with the parish. ***Registration is a concrete sign that the family is involved in the life and work of the Church.***

**Parents of a child to be baptized must be REGISTERED members of Immaculate Conception Church for at least two months before scheduling a baptism.**

**If you are not already registered, you may do so by visiting the parish office.**

## **CHOOSING THE GODPARENTS**

In infant Baptism, the Godparent(s) with the parents present the child for Baptism. Godparents support the baptized to lead a Christian life to fulfill faithfully the obligations inherent to the sacrament. The selection of godparents is a critical choice in the baptism of your child. As we begin to prepare for your child's Baptism, you are invited to reflect on the role and the selection of the godparents. Prior to inviting a relative or friend to assume the role of the godparent for your child, it is important that you understand what our church teaches with regard to the godparents.

### **QUALIFICATIONS TO BE A GODPARENT**

- **Godparents must be 16 years of age or older (at the time of the baptism) and should have received all three Sacraments of Initiation** (Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation).
- **Godparents must be Catholics in good standing, enthusiastically living their faith and active participants in the life of the Catholic Church.**
- **Godparents represent the church** (not the family as they promise, on behalf of the Church at large, to help the parents in raising the child in our Catholic faith).
- **You must have a least ONE Godparent. If you choose to have two godparents, the MUST be one male and one female** (you cannot have TWO Godfathers or TWO Godmothers).
- **Non-Catholic Christians (i.e. Anglicans, Baptists, etc.) may NOT be godparents. They may be "Christian Witnesses" but they may not be the official "godparents".** Non-Christians are not suitable to be either godparents or Christian Witnesses.

**If you have any questions or doubts about selecting the godparents,  
please do not hesitate to ask the priests or parish office BEFORE you ask the godparents.**

## **PREPARATION STEPS FOR THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM**

1. The first step in preparing for your child's Baptism is to make sure that you are a registered member of Immaculate Conception Church. If you are not registered, please visit the parish office to register. You may also register for offertory envelopes at this time. Please note that you must be registered for at least 2 months before the Baptism date.
2. Fill in the Baptism Registration Form attached to this package. Please Print Clearly while filling out the form.
3. Choosing Godparents – Please see above for suggestions in choosing Godparents, again, if you have any questions or doubts about godparents, please call the parish office.
4. Documents needed to register for Baptism:
  - a. Baptism Certificate of Mother
  - b. Baptism Certificate of Father
  - c. Copy of Infant/Child's Birth Certificate (preferably the long form)
  - d. Godmother's Baptism Certificate
  - e. Godfather's Baptism Certificate
5. **Baptism Ceremonies at Immaculate Conception Church are the 4th Sunday of the month following the 11:30am Mass. You MUST attend the 11:30 mass as the Baptisms will start as soon as the mass is over.**
6. Offertory – An offering envelope will be given to you with your Baptism package. Please make sure to clearly write your full name, address and postal code in the appropriate area. Enter your parish envelope number if you know it. This will allow the parish to issue a tax receipt to you at the end of the year. This offering may be given at the time of the collection at the 11:30am Mass or may be given to the priest on reception of the Baptism Certificate at the end of the ceremony.
7. After the ceremony, please note that you are more than welcome to take as many pictures as you would like. The priest will also make himself available for pictures if you so desire. We ask that pictures taking be done only during the actual Baptism itself around the Baptismal Font. Otherwise, please refrain from taking pictures during the ceremony.

## For the Godparents:

### GODPARENTS FOR LIFE

Congratulations! The relationship between a godchild and godparent is unique and lifelong. You are embarking on a special journey, one that will last years. On the day of Baptism, the Church asks the godparent if he or she is ready to assist the parents in raising the child in the Catholic faith. The role of the godparent is not limited to the day of Baptism. The Church invites you to be an active presence in the life of your godchild.

Weekly participation in the Sunday Eucharist is foundational to our life as Catholics. Weekly participation in the Sunday Eucharist is the centre of our lives. As a godparent you will model what it means to live as a Catholic Christian.



### THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS MAY ASSIST YOU IN YOUR ROLE AS A GODPARENT.

- Pray for your godchild each day.
- Regular visits with your godchild are encouraged.
- Begin a sacramental scrapbook for your godchild. Later you can work on it together.
- Write a letter to your godchild telling him or her how you felt on the day of the Baptism.
- Whenever possible, the godparent and godchild should participate in the Sunday liturgy and other liturgical celebrations together.
- It is important for a godparent to continue to grow in his or her faith. Therefore, take advantage of retreats, special workshops or presentations offered in your parish or by your local catholic school.

***As you journey with your godchild may both of you discover more and more about the mystery of God's abiding love. We pray that God will bless you and your family as you continue to grow in faith.***