

Infant Baptism
Saint John Vianney Church
Gladwyne, PA



A Baptismal Guide for Parents and Godparents

Dear Parents / Guardians:

Congratulations! We joyfully extend our best wishes to your family on the occasion of the blessed arrival of your newborn child! As your parish family, we share your joy and look forward to assisting you in preparing the celebration of the great Sacrament of Baptism for your child and for welcoming your beautiful child formally into the Catholic Church.

We are delighted that amid all your new joys, challenges, responsibilities, and exhaustion, you have chosen to share your Catholic faith in order to ensure that your child will receive God's grace in the Sacrament of Baptism. Preparing for your child's Baptism is an extremely important step in the life of your child and in the spiritual life of your entire family.

Our Lord Jesus Christ instituted the Sacrament of Baptism as the first of Sacraments and entrusted the Sacrament to His Church to be celebrated for the good of His people. The grace of Baptism brings about (a) the removal and forgiveness of all sin (both actual and original sin), (b) the configuration of the soul to Christ, (c) the incorporation into the Body of Christ, which is the Church, and (d) our inheritance of heaven as His adopted sons and daughters.

Baptism is the gateway to enter the Church and is necessary for salvation and for access to all the graces of the sacraments. Please take a few minutes to look over this Baptismal Guidebook, which has been prepared to assist you in the preparations for the joyful celebration of the Baptism of your child. If there is anything that we can do for you, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Bill Donovan, Pastor

General Information about Baptism

At Saint John Vianney Parish, we baptize infants (understood as those who have not yet reach the age of reason, which is age 7) generally on one Sunday of the month. Those who are not infants (i.e., children older than seven years of age and adults) prepare for Baptism by their participation in the OCIA program.

Baptisms are generally celebrated at 12:00 Noon in the Parish Church on the selected Sunday of the month. The monthly celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism is subject to change due to holiday or other reason; kindly check with the Parish Office to confirm the date of the monthly celebration of Baptism.

Registration for Baptism

Parents are asked to contact the Parish Office (610-642-0938) to register for the Baptism of their child. General information about the child (i.e., the name of the child, the date of birth, place of birth, etc.) will be obtained at the time of the Registration for Baptism.

Baptismal Preparation Class (also called Pre-Jordan Class)

Church law mandates that prior to the reception of any sacrament for the first time, the recipient of the sacrament should be properly prepared about the nature and effects of the Sacrament. Normally, those who are to receive any sacrament (such as Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Marriage, etc.) spend some time preparing for the fruitful reception of the sacrament. These sacramental preparation classes often share general information about the sacrament such as the history, the nature, the essence, and effects of the sacrament. In the case of infant Baptism, on behalf of the child, the parents and godparents undertake the sacramental preparation class (also called Pre-Jordan Class).

Baptismal classes (also called Pre-Jordan class) are generally a one-hour session which are available through the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and some parishes. In addition, the one-hour course can be found online:

- 1) Visit <https://formed.org/signup>
- 2) Sign up for a free account
- 3) Scroll down to the section called “The Sacraments”
- 4) Click on “Reborn: You, Your Child, and the Heart of Baptism”
- 5) Both parents together view Episodes 1 (A New Creation), Episode 2 (Entering the Mystery), Episode 3 (Nurturing the Life of Grace)
 - a. It is also recommended (though optional) that the parents watch the episode entitled “Reborn – The Mission to Love: 7 Keys to Catholic Parenting”
- 6) The godparents must also follow these log-in instructions but are only required to view “Reborn – The Gift of Godparents: More than Cards and Presents”
- 7) Please notify Saint John Vianney when these episodes have been viewed

In a case where the godparent lives outside a reasonably commutable distance to our Church, arrangements may be made for the godparent to review an online Baptismal program, which will satisfy their obligation to be prepared by the Church to serve as godparent. If parents and godparents have taken the course in the last 3 years, they are not required to take it again.

Please contact the Parish Office for more information regarding the online program.

A Guide to Choosing Godparents

A godparent is an important person in your child's life. The purpose of the godparent is to be a living, active model of faith for your child. It is the duty of the Pastor of the parish to ensure that every child has a Catholic godparent who will faithfully fulfill their role.

In order to protect the rights of the infant child to have godparents who have the Catholic faith and practice that faith, Church (canon) law mandates that godparents meet the following requirements.

If for some reason, a person does not qualify to serve as godparent, it certainly does not mean that the person is not a good person or a well-loved person, but it simply means that the person cannot serve in the office of godparent for the child.

The Church law requirements for godparents are:

- 1) The godparent is to be selected by the parents or the pastor;
- 2) The godparent may not be one of the child's parents;
- 3) The godparent must be at least 16 years old (which presumes a certain level of maturity in the faith). The Pastor may, in some circumstances, dispense this requirement for valid reasons.
- 4) The godparent must have received all three Sacraments of Initiation (i.e., Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion);
- 5) If the godparent is married, the godparent must be married according to the laws of the Church;
- 6) The godparent must also be a practicing Catholic, striving to live a life in harmony with the faith;

The Godparent will need to obtain from his/her own parish a "Certificate of Eligibility" which indicates that the potential godparent is registered in their parish and is a practicing Catholic and meets the above criteria to serve as godparent.

Godparents are often from out-of-town or away on military service. If they are unable to be present on the day of the Baptism, they can be represented by proxy. A proxy can be a family member, a friend, or a parishioner who will stand in for your official godparent on the day of the baptism.

Special circumstances for Sponsors and Christian Witnesses

While only one Catholic godparent is necessary for Baptism, typically there are two: a Catholic godfather and Catholic godmother. The second godparent must be the opposite gender of the first godparent.

In some cases, while the first sponsor must be a Catholic godparent, the second sponsor can be a Christian Witness (i.e., one who is baptized in a Christian non-Catholic church).

Certificate of Eligibility for Godparents

Each of the godparents must obtain from their current parish church a “Certificate of Eligibility” to serve as godparent. It is the responsibility of the godparents to supply a letter of eligibility from their home parish (the one they currently attend) verifying that he or she is eligible to serve as a godparent. In order to obtain a Certificate of Eligibility, the godparent must contact his/her parish for the document, and the Certificate of Eligibility is sent to Saint John Vianney parish.

Final Preparations and Checklist for Baptism

Two weeks prior to the scheduled celebration of Baptism, the following should be accomplished and handed into the Parish Offices:

Member Registration: If parents are not registered parishioners, parents must be registered in the parish of Saint John Vianney Church for the child to be baptized. To be registered, one can go online at <https://www.sjvgladwyne.com/join-the-parish>.

Permission: If the parents are not members of Saint John Vianney parish, they must provide a Letter of Permission from their pastor at their current parish. In order to obtain the document, kindly contact their current parish and request a Letter of Permission to have your child baptized at Saint John Vianney.

Birth Certificate: As part of the process of preparation for baptism, it is necessary to forward a copy of the child’s birth certificate to the Parish office.

Adoption: If your child was adopted, it is necessary to present the adoption decree, which includes the name of the court that entered the adoption order and the date of the order. A copy will be made.

Stipend: On this joyful occasion, it would be most encouraged to make a financial offering (\$150) to the parish in thanksgiving for the gift of your child’s Baptism. Please prepare your donation ahead of time by placing it in an envelope with the name of the child who is baptized on the outside with the date of baptism. Please drop off the stipend at the Rectory.

Arrival time: Please arrive at least 15 minutes early on the day of the Baptism in order to receive instructions for your participation in the ceremony.

Checklist for Baptism:

- Parents have registered for the Baptism with Parish Office;
- If parishioners, parents are registered at Saint John Vianney;
- If not parishioners, parents have obtained Letter of Permission to have child baptized at Saint John Vianney from the pastor of their current parish;
- A copy of the child's birth certificate has been forwarded to the Parish Office;
- Parents have completed the Baptismal Sacramental (Pre-Jordan) Class or the online Baptismal course;
- Godparents have completed the Baptismal Sacramental (Pre-Jordan) Class or the online Baptismal course;
- Godfather and godmother have obtained their "Certificates of Eligibility" from their parish and the certificates of eligibility have to be submitted to the Parish Office;
- A suggested sacramental offering of \$200.00, which defrays administrative costs, employee wages, and facilities expenses, has been offered.