



Dear SKD Family:

Congratulations on the birth of your new baby! We the faith community of Saint Katharine Drexel rejoice with you in this great joy and the celebration of new life. We welcome your family to our Church. May the Lord bless you and watch over you and your family.

We are so excited that you are seeking baptism for your child. Baptism is a beautiful beginning to a lifelong journey of faith in Jesus Christ. Together with the parents and sponsors, our entire Catholic Family is happy to be here to offer love and support to help your child grow in the faith. The following information is intended to help you and your family best prepare for the sacrament of baptism and the faith commitment you are about to enter with your child.

Baptism is a rite of initiation into the Catholic Church, a welcoming of your child into the Christian family. From the baptismal font is born the one People of God of the New Covenant, which transcends all the natural or human limits of nations, cultures, races, and sexes: *“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body”* (1 Corinthians 12:13). Through Baptism we receive the grace of God and become sharers in the Church’s mission. It is the first of three sacraments of initiation and is the basis of the whole Christian life.

This information is ONLY for the baptism of children under 6 years of age. Older children because they are capable of learning about their faith, must take religious instruction before being baptized. Please call the Faith Formation Office (239) 283-0525 for more information about those classes.

The Baptism of your infant child is an expression of your desire to share your faith with your child. Faith is a gift from God, a gift that needs to be nourished. We do this through prayer, Scripture reading, regular attendance at Mass on Sundays & Holy Days of Obligation, actively participating in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and being of service to other people. In the sacrament of Baptism your child is being initiated into the Catholic Church because you, as parents, are promising God and the Church to raise your child in the practice of the Catholic faith. You are taking on a great responsibility of being the first teachers of your child in the ways of faith. May your example of day-to-day living of the Catholic faith make you the very best of teachers.

1. Requirements for Parents:

Parents should be registered members of Saint Katharine Drexel for at least six (6) months and attending Mass regularly before registering for a pre-baptismal class. Attendance is verified through weekly receipt of offertory envelopes/Online Giving. While waiting for your pre-printed Saint Katharine Drexel envelopes, you can use any envelope with your name and the word "Baptism" on the front and put in Sunday's collection basket (with a free will offering). After you have been a registered and practicing member of the parish for at least six (6) months, please call the parish office (239) 283-9501 to register for Pre-baptismal class.

2. Requirements for Godparents/Sponsors:

The selection of the child's godparents is an important decision and should be made with the child's growth in faith in mind. Church law permits only one godparent of each gender – a Godfather and Godmother. Godparents accept the responsibility, along with you, of providing for the faith formation of your child in the Catholic Church. Their beliefs and lifestyle should reflect the responsibility they are accepting. Consequently, the Church requires the following of the Godfather and Godmother:

- Cannot be the parents of the one being baptized
- Must be at least sixteen years of age
- Practicing Catholics, i.e., attend Mass and receive Holy Communion regularly
- Received the Sacrament of Confirmation

After considering these qualities, the parents should select the godparents (sponsors) for their child. At least one godparent (sponsor) must obtain a letter from the pastor of their home parish with the parish seal embedded in the letter, stating that they are a practicing Catholic in a good standing.

N.B.: If two practicing Catholics to be the godfather and godmother are not available, then one godparent/sponsor can be Catholic and the other a *Christian witness*, if that person is a baptized Protestant Christian in good standing. The same applies as above, a letter must be obtained from the pastor of that Protestant Church.

3. Pre-baptismal Class:

Both parents (and if possible, godparents) **must** attend the pre-baptismal class. The purpose of this class is to gain a fuller appreciation of the Sacrament of Baptism and what it means to raise a child in the Catholic faith.

4. Celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism:

Upon receipt of the completion of the pre-baptismal class and godparents signed forms, the Priest or Deacon will schedule a date for the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism.

*** IMPORTANT NOTE:** What delays the date of baptism is the failure to submit all completed and signed forms from the godparents.