Saint James the Apostle Catholic Church

1000 Decatur Road, McDonough, GA 30252

GUIDELINES AND POLICIES FOR THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Baptism is your child's first step on their faith journey! The greatest gift you can give to your child is the gift of Baptism – claiming them for Christ from the beginning of their lives! Just as you would make necessary preparations for a long trip or maybe just as you have prepared for the arrival of your child, you must now prepare for the most important journey in your child's life. Baptism is not merely something for the baby or a family celebration; it is a sacrament. As the Church teaches, sacraments have three functions: "to make people holy, to build up the Body of Christ, and finally to give worship to God."

BAPTISM PREPARATION

1. Families participating in any sacramental program must be registered at St. James the Apostle Parish for at least 3 months or have your pastor's permission. If you are not registered, please do so as soon as possible by completing a Parish Registration form and turning it in to the Parish Office.

2. Baptism Preparation Classes are normally held on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm in Rooms 210/211. There may exceptions during holidays, so please confirm the date with the Parish Office. Please go to our website to register to attend a Baptism class.

   Parents must attend the class; Godparents are invited, but not required to attend the class. Parents who have attended the class more than two years ago must complete the class again.

3. Once we receive the following documents and you have attended the parent class, we can schedule you for a Baptism date:
   - Baptism Registration Form (included in this packet)
     Parents are asked to choose a Saint Name for their child, which will be used during the celebration. If your child is named after a saint, you may use that name or kindly choose a valid saint name and indicate that on the registration form.
   - Verification letters for Godparents (please refer to the section on page 2 - Basic Church Guidelines Concerning Sponsors or Godparents)

4. After attending the Baptism Preparation Class, **families must call the Parish Office to schedule the Baptism Celebration.** Baptisms are normally celebrated the first Saturday of the month at 10:30 am, however during certain times of the year, there may be exceptions. Under special circumstances, Baptisms can be scheduled at another time. If the Baptism will take place at another Church, please provide the name and address of the Church along with the date of the Baptism and we will gladly send a letter of permission to that Church for you that will confirm your completion of our Baptism Preparation Class, as well as your registration status at our parish.

CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

The celebration of the sacrament of Baptism normally takes place on the first Saturday of the month at 10:30 am. For valid reasons, Baptisms may be arranged at another time. This can be done by calling the Parish Office.

If the Baptism will take place at another Catholic Church, permission from the pastor of St. James the Apostle is needed. This permission includes verification of your registration status at St. James and your attendance at the Baptism Preparation class. Please call the Parish Office to request this letter of permission.

Families not registered here at our parish requesting the sacrament of Baptism at St. James the Apostle Parish must secure a letter from their pastor testifying to the fact that a) they are registered members of that parish, b) they have attended a Baptismal Preparation program, and c) have their pastor's permission to celebrate the sacrament of Baptism here at our parish.

Photos and videos may be taken during the Baptism, but care should be taken that the solemnity of the occasion is not disturbed.

There is never a fee for the celebration of the sacraments, however a stipend to the priest or deacon is appropriate.

During the celebration of the sacrament, while in the Church, kindly ensure that your children and other relatives stay in the pews.

BASIC CHURCH GUIDELINES CONCERNING SPONSORS OR GODPARENTS

It is the very ancient custom of the Church that at the celebration of the sacrament of Baptism or Confirmation, a sponsor is present. The function of the sponsor is: a) together with the celebrant who baptizes or confirms, to represent the Church in receiving the person into the communion of the Church; and b) to assist the person in Christian initiation and formation.

In accord with Canon 874 of the Code of Canon Law, the Church can admit a person to the role of sponsor if, a) he or she is not less than sixteen years of age; b) is a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the Holy Eucharist and lives a life of faith which befits the role to be undertaken, and c) is not either the father or the mother of the person. Additionally, the maximum number of godparents is two, one male and/or one female.

Given the functions and role a sponsor exercises, a non-Catholic Christian cannot be admitted as a sponsor; however, he or she can be a witness. A non-Christian cannot serve in this latter capacity but is welcome to be present at the ceremony.

Note that the Catholic seeking to be admitted as a sponsor "lives a life of faith which befits the role to be undertaken." This phraseology means that the candidate for sponsor: a) sincerely believes and strives to put into practice the Word of God as taught by the Catholic Church; b) regularly takes part in the Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation and c) if married, was married in accordance with the requirements of the Catholic Church and is not in an invalid marriage.

Consequently,

- Those Catholics who are not actively affiliated with a Catholic Church,
- Those Catholics who are invalidly married, as for example, before a Justice of the Peace, or without proper dispensation, before a minister of a Protestant denomination or before a rabbi, and who did not validly contract marriage according to the "form" of the Catholic Church,
- Those Catholics who are divorced and invalidly remarried, and
- Those Catholics who have not received Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist;

do not qualify to be admitted as a sponsor.

If a godparent is a member of another parish other than St. James the Apostle Parish, we require a letter from their parish stating they are a practicing Catholic who seeks to be admitted as a sponsor and solemnly affirms that they fulfill the requirements of the Catholic Church for this role. This letter must be received prior to the Baptism Preparation Class.

Godparents should make every effort to attend the celebration of the Baptism; however, proxies may represent godparents or witnesses who cannot be present on the day of the baptism.

Should you have any questions regarding these guidelines and policies for the celebration of the sacrament of Baptism, please contact the Parish Office at (770) 957-5441.

May God bless your child and your family, as all of you continue
to grow deeper in your knowledge of the Catholic faith and love of our Lord!

PLEASE REMEMBER TO SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING FORMS PRIOR TO SCHEDULING A BAPTISM:

1. Baptism Registration Form

- please see next page

2. Verification letters for Godparents and/or sponsors

- have Godparents/sponsors contact their parish of registration

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Baptism Registration Form

Please complete all information and check for accuracy
This information will be used for recording purposes.

Name of Child
To be Baptized: _____
Last Name First Name Middle Name

Patron Saint Name of Child (can be child's first name if it is a Saint's name): _____

Date of Birth: _____ Sex: _____ Male _____ Female

Place of Birth: _____
City State Country

Home Address: _____
Street (or P.O. Box) City, State, Zip

Phone Numbers: (home)_____ (cell)_____

Email Address : _____

Father's Name: _____
Last Name First Name Middle Name

Roman Catholic? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes: * Are you registered at St. James the Apostle? _____ Member #
Do you attend church regularly _____ _____

If no: Are you baptized? _____
What is your religion? _____
Are you active in your Church? _____

Mother's Name: _____
Maiden Name First Name Middle Name

Roman Catholic? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes: * Are you registered at St. James the Apostle? _____ Member #
Do you attend church regularly _____ _____

If no: Are you baptized? _____
What is your religion? _____
Are you active in your Church? _____

* Note: One parent must be registered at St. James the Apostle Parish or have your pastor's permission.
Please refer to our "Guidelines and Policies for the Sacrament of Baptism."

Mother and Father: Are you married? _____ Yes _____ No
If yes, were you married according to the form of the Catholic Church? _____ Yes _____ No
If no, please select: _____ Minister _____ Justice of the Peace _____Other

Godfather's Name:

_____

Last Name First Name Middle Name

If Roman Catholic:

Is he 16 years of age or older? _____ Yes _____ No
Is he confirmed? _____ Yes _____ No
Is he active in his Parish? _____ Yes _____ No

Name of Parish: _____

Location: _____

* If not Roman Catholic, what religion is he? _____

Godmother's Name:

_____

Last Name First Name Middle Name

If Roman Catholic:

Is she 16 years of age or older? _____ Yes _____ No
Is she confirmed? _____ Yes _____ No
Is she active in his Parish? _____ Yes _____ No

Name of Parish: _____

Location: _____

* If not Roman Catholic, what religion is she? _____

*Given the functions and role that a sponsor exercises, a non-Catholic Christian cannot be admitted as a sponsor; however, he or she can be a Christian witness.

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARISH OFFICE

Date of Baptism Preparation Class: _____ By: _____

Godparent / Sponsor Verification:

☐ Member of St. James the Apostle Parish ☐ Letter attached from another parish

Remarks or additional information: _____

Date of Baptism: _____ Time: _____ Celebrant: _____

Update Member Information in ParishSoft: _____ Certificate Issued: _____

Recorded in Register: (Date) _____ (By) _____

Remarks/Notations: _____

Proxy: _____