

St. Rita Baptismal Preparation

Baptism is a beautiful new beginning in Christ, and we're honored to walk this journey with you. We've put together some answers to common questions to help guide you.

Getting Started

If you are seeking baptism for a child **7 years or older** or for an **adult**, please contact Jenna at jenna@saintritaparish.org. Adults will join the **Order of Christian Initiation for Adults (OCIA)**. You can learn more about OCIA here: saintritaparish.org/ocia.

If you are seeking baptism for a child from **infancy through age 6**, please follow the steps below.

Who can request a baptism?

- **Parents:** The child's parents can register for baptism at saintritaparish.org/baptism. If you're a family member or godparent, please share this link with them.
 - **St. Rita Parishioners:** If you regularly attend Mass with us but aren't registered, we encourage you to sign up on our website [here](#).
 - **Non-Parishioners:** You'll need a letter from your home parish pastor permitting you to baptize your child at St. Rita. Please mail it to our office or email it to Kristy at kristy@saintritaparish.org.
 - **Families Outside Our Diocese:** If you live outside the Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee, please email Kristy at kristy@saintritaparish.org to discuss your situation. Keep in mind that the church where your child is baptized becomes their home parish for all future sacramental records.
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Preparing for Baptism

We ask for **six weeks** of preparation before your desired baptism date.

What does preparation involve?

1. **Registering Online:** After you register, Kristy will email you our baptism preparation guidelines and a sponsor form.
2. **Selecting Godparents:** You'll choose one or two godparents for your child's baptism (one male and one female).
3. **Sponsor Forms:** Godparents are required to submit a signed sponsor form that includes their pastor's signature and their local parish seal.

4. **Baptism Classes:** Parents and godparents must take baptism classes at St. Rita or provide a certificate of completion from a class taken within the last year.

Who can be a sponsor/godparent?

A sponsor must:

- Be at least 16 years old.
- Be a practicing Catholic who has received the sacraments of Baptism, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation.
- Regularly attend Sunday Mass.
- If married, be married within the Catholic Church.
- Read and sign the sponsor form, which their pastor must also sign and seal.

Does a godparent have to be Catholic? Yes, a sponsor must be a practicing Catholic because their role is to support your child in their faith journey. The child will need at least one sponsor. A baptized, non-Catholic may stand as a **Christian Witness**, and their name can be recorded in the sacramental book.

Baptismal Classes

You'll watch the **Reborn** video series (six episodes on the Formed app) and schedule a one-hour visit to our atrium for a special presentation. Once your child's baptism is scheduled, please check your email for instructions on accessing the videos. To schedule your visit, please email Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Director, Ticia Gallo, at ticia@saintritaparish.org.

If you have already taken a baptism class within the last year at another parish, you can email a certificate of completion to Kristy at kristy@saintritaparish.org. If it has been more than a year, we ask that you walk with us through our preparation process.

Baptism Ceremony Details

When are baptisms celebrated? Baptisms are typically held on **Saturday mornings at 11:30 a.m.** If this time doesn't work for you, please let us know, and we'll do our best to find an alternative.

Who will baptize my child? You may request a specific priest or deacon, and we'll do our best to accommodate you, though we can't guarantee who will officiate. If you'd like a visiting priest or deacon to officiate, they must be approved by our diocese and pastor by submitting a letter of good standing.

What if a godparent is unable to attend? If a godparent is unable to be physically present, you may appoint a **proxy** to stand in for them. A proxy does not need to be Catholic.

What if one parent is not involved or doesn't consent? The sacrament can still be administered as long as one parent gives consent, though the other parent should be made aware of the baptism if possible.

Other Questions

- **St. Rita Parishioners Baptizing Elsewhere:** If you are a registered parishioner of St. Rita and wish to baptize your child at another parish, please contact Kristy at kristy@saintrita-parish.org for a permission letter from our pastor. You will need to check with the other parish for their specific requirements.