

Sacred Heart Parish Baptismal Preparation Program

Purpose

The birth of a child in the life of a young married couple is a very important time. A transformation takes place- the couple is no longer “two” but become a family. The question usually arises: “What do we want to share with our child?” Hopefully, our Catholic Faith and heritage will be on the top of every couple’s priority list. In order to help couples realize the importance of Christian parenting and raising their child in the Church, Sacred Heart Parish has launched a new baptismal preparation program which will include several elements:

1. Couples who are having their first child or are new to the parish will be visited by a couple from the parish to introduce them to the program; and often times, to welcome them into the parish.
2. Couples who are having their first or second child are asked to attend a formal Baptismal Preparation Program to be held on a Sunday morning in the CYO Room at Parish Office building. The program will be about 90 minutes long and child care will be available for children. This segment of the program will consist of a presentation by a priest and by a team couple. There will be opportunity to ask questions.
3. Following the program, parents will be given the choice of having their child baptized during the special baptismal liturgies being scheduled during the year at 10:30 on a Sunday morning, or at 11:45 on a Sunday morning (right after 10:30 Mass)
4. Team couples will continue their ministry of shepherding to the young couples and families of the baptized by keeping a regular contact with them, arranging social gatherings and at least two potlucks per year.

To participate in the program, couples must register with the parish office. The child need not be born in order to participate in the program. Couples can do the program during pregnancy. Couples should call the parish office three months before they intend to have s child baptized. There will be only four baptismal preparation program a year.

The purpose of the new program is to help and better affirm couples in their roles of being Christian moms and dads.

HOME VISIT

Couples who are prepared to make home visitation and be part of the Baptismal Preparation Team should have a copy of “GOD’S OWN CHILD” by Twenty-Third Publications.

The following couples will be visited at home:

- a. Couples who are having their first child baptized; and
- b. Couples who are having their first child baptized at Sacred Heart.

The visiting couple will be called by the Chair Couple or by the parish secretary and will be given the basic information about the parents: name, address, phone number. The visiting couple will make an appointment and visit at the convenience of everyone involved.

The Home Visit may (should) include the following elements:

- Welcome to the Parish
- Spend time getting to know each other
- Share information about the parish
- Encourage parents to tell their story
- Be understanding if the couple is not married in the Church. Encourage them to make an appointment with a priest to see if the marriage can be blessed (validated) within the Church.
- Use the materials in Section One of **God's Own Child**, "Faith and the Church" (pages 11-23).
- Basic Question: Why Baptize this Child?
- Emphasize that the Baptism should take place within the context of the Mass. Encourage the parents to have their child baptized at one of the **10:30** Sunday Liturgies. Give the couple the upcoming dates. We **do not** baptize at other Sunday Mass.
- If they do not wish to have the child baptized during a Sunday Liturgy, Baptisms are celebrated at **11:45 on Sundays**. The parents need to call the parish secretary for a date.
- Explain that parents who are having their first child baptized at Sacred Heart need to attend the Baptismal Preparation Program at 9:00 AM on Sunday. Give them the upcoming dates. The Program will last about 90 minutes. Babysitting will be available.
- Develop a bonding with the couple and continue to shepherd them by staying in touch with them and occasionally getting together. Explain to them the teams' plan to have two potlucks per year where the team and families of the newly baptized get together to socialize.