

A Manual of Preparation
for a Baptism in the
Greek Orthodox Church



St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Cathedral
102 Russell St. Worcester, MA 01609

PLANNING YOUR CHILD'S BAPTISM IN THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

Congratulations on the birth of your beautiful child! You have made a wonderful decision to baptize your child in the Orthodox Church and make him/her a Christian. This is a very important day in the lives of everyone in your family, and we at St. Spyridon Cathedral are here to help this day be as spiritually meaningful and memorable as possible.

We hope this booklet provides all the necessary information for the baptism of your child.

SETTING THE DATE

Parents should set the date of the Baptism well in advance for more options. You can set the date by calling the Church Office.

Days when Baptisms are not permitted: According to the Church Calendar, baptisms are permitted all year except on major holidays. Since there is typically a celebration following every baptism, we encourage families to have baptisms outside of Fasting Periods, though please understand that they are still permitted. If you have questions about specific dates, please do not hesitate to reach out to us for help.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PARENTS

1. The parents of the child must be Stewards of our Church before setting the date and time of the Baptism. Please call the office to check on this status.
2. Parents who are Stewards should meet with our parish priest to set the date, complete the application, and discuss the baptism. You may call the Church Office at 508-791-7326.
3. Parents are responsible for selecting a godparent. This person should be a responsible member of the Eastern Orthodox Church, a person who actively lives his/her faith and will assist them in teaching their child the Christian way of life. The sponsor must be an active member of the Faith and if married must have celebrated his (her) marriage in the Orthodox Church, and be in good financial standing.

4. Non-Orthodox Christian sponsors are allowed as long as there is at least one other Orthodox sponsor in good standing participating.
5. The parents select the names of the child, not the sponsor.
6. On the day of the baptism the mother of the child selects a responsible person to care for the child during the Sacrament (undress and dress the child). It is traditional that the grandparents fill this role.
7. Please make sure that all the parties are present at least 10 minutes prior to the sacrament.
8. Parents designate one person to be the official photographer. More than one photographer is often disturbing to the services by taking pictures. The official photographer must speak to the officiating priest before the service begins. If video cameras will be used, please keep in mind that lighting on the camera will not be permitted. You can bring lights on stands that can remain on throughout the service.
9. When there is another sacrament after yours, please leave the Church area as quickly as possible in order to avoid delays in the sacraments following.
10. Should there be a change of date or time, please notify the Church Office immediately, so that this date may be made available to others.

NAMING THE CHILD

The giving of the name of a newly baptized child is the right of the parents. It is not the prerogative of the sponsor. Traditionally, the name is formally given on the eighth day after birth in a special blessing service done by the Priest. The name-giving is not necessarily connected with Baptism, but has gained that connection in recent years.

It is important for the parents to remember that their child should be given an Orthodox Saint's name and not a name that is chosen at random. The saint's name the child bears facilitates a connection between him/her and the saint in a unique way that insures the prayers of the saint for child. It is traditional to name the child after a grandparent, with the name of the paternal grandfather or grandmother having priority.

FEES

The only cost for your sacrament is \$50 that will be given to the caretaker for his work preparing the baptismal font and cleaning after the service. This should be given to the Office in cash or check prior to the sacrament.

SOME REGULATIONS CONCERNING HOLY BAPTISM

1. Under no circumstances can any duly baptized Orthodox Christian be re-baptized. Even a baptism of extreme emergency performed by a layman (male or female) is regarded as valid and is merely completed later by the Sacrament of Holy Chrismation.
2. The sponsor must be a baptized member of the Orthodox Church and, if married his/her wedding must have been performed in the Orthodox Church. He/she must be in good financial standing with his/her church.
3. The sponsor must be at least 13 years of age.
4. A parent may not sponsor his/her own child in baptism.
5. Members of the Clergy or of Monastic orders may not sponsor a child in baptism.
6. A Christian name (name of a Saint) should be given to the child.

ITEMS THE SPONSOR MUST PROVIDE

1. If the sacrament is to be performed in a parish other than his/her own, the sponsor must obtain from his/her priest a written verification of his/her spiritual good standing in the Orthodox Church and that he/she is a contributing member of their local church.
2. A small bottle of olive oil
3. A bar of white soap
4. A large, flat white sheet
5. Two (2) large white towels
6. One (1) white hand towel
7. A white suit or dress for the infant
8. A baptismal cross (cross must be an Orthodox Cross)
9. Three (3) white candles, one can be traditionally decorated
10. Sponsor must be prepared to recite the Nicene Creed
11. Sponsor must participate in the dialogue during the "Service of the Catechumens"

REMINDERS AFTER THE BAPTISM

- Because the child is anointed with Holy Chrism (a sacrament of the Church), he/she should not be bathed until the third day after the baptism. This will allow for the Chrism to be absorbed by the child's skin.
- The baby's clothes following the baptism should be washed in a separate basin (not in the washing machine) and the water should be poured into the earth where people generally do not walk (such as a garden or flower bed).
- The baby's diaper used following the baptism should either be burned or buried into the ground.
- The child should be brought back to church to receive Holy Communion during the next three Sundays. Please be sure to bring and light the child's baptismal candle before receiving Holy Communion.

Congratulations, once again on the birth of your child! We are excited to initiate your child into the Christian Faith. We are one spiritual family and are available to help with anything that may arise. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the Church Office for help answering any questions that you may have.

You and your young one are invited to join our Little Angels Ministry. This is a fellowship group for parents and children ages birth-5 years old. We meet on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of every month and would love for you to join us! Please contact the office for more information and how to get involved.

May God bless your family and walk with you throughout your spiritual journey.