



ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΣ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΣ ΚΑΘΕΔΡΙΚΟΣ ΝΑΟΣ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΥ

BAPTISM ARRANGEMENT GUIDE

Dear Parent(s),

We are excited to be planning your child's Baptism. One sponsor (godparent) is the maximum needed and allowed for each infant. S/he must be a practicing Orthodox Christian in good ecclesiastical standing, which includes being a financial steward of St. Nicholas Cathedral or another Orthodox parish. If from another parish, the sponsor must have his/her parish submit a Letter of Good Standing (*signed and sealed by parish priest*). Please have your sponsor take care of this requirement early, so that it does not become an obstacle to the Baptism.

In the case of divorce, legal separation and shared custody situations, etc, both parents must provide their consent (in writing and notarized) for the child's Baptism. Please ask our administrative assistant for the consent form.

Fees: Stewards (existing pledging members) of St. Nicholas Cathedral pay a Baptism fee of \$300. Those who are not Cathedral stewards pay a \$500 fee, which includes your stewardship contribution for the year. Chanter and sexton services are included. Fees must be completely paid at least a month before the scheduled date in order for the Baptism to proceed. Offering an additional honorarium to the clergy is customary, but at your discretion.

ON THE DAY OF THE BAPTISM, plan to arrive **a half hour before the scheduled time.** Videos and still photos may be taken only from specific areas by designated official photographers. Guests may take photos from where they are sitting but are **not allowed onto the solea.** Two children (old enough to hold lit candles safely) should be selected to participate in the procession around the font, which takes place in the middle of the service. (In lieu of children, the child's grandmothers have been known to fill this role.) The sponsor should familiarize him/herself with the **Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed**, which s/he must recite *loudly and clearly* as part of the service which precedes the Baptism.

FOLLOWING THE BAPTISM, the child must be brought to communion (preferably by the sponsor) two more consecutive times (to complete the cycle of three). If the Baptism takes place on a Saturday, this means bringing the child to Sunday Liturgy the next day and on the Sunday following that. The child should be brought forward in his or her white Baptism outfit with the Baptism candle lit. A child brought forward for communion should always be held with its head on **your right arm.** Whether you or a sponsor is bringing a child for communion, it is important to remember that you are setting an example for the child. Consequently, an adult should never (without good reason) bring the child for communion without receiving along with the child.

SPECIAL WASHING is required of clothing and towels used in the Baptism. These must all be first **hand washed** and the water poured into a garden or flowerpot – not down the drain – so as to prevent blessed oil and Holy Chrism from entering the sewer system via your washing machine.

THE BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE which you receive following the Baptism is an important piece of documentation. Not only will your child someday need to present it to the church when it comes time for marriage, but it often serves an important piece of supporting documentation and identification in civil matters. So, as with any important document, it should be placed in a safe deposit box or secure location.

THE BAPTISMAL CROSS is an important and valuable symbol of your child's initiation into the Faith. It is a nice touch to have the child's name engraved on the back. Following the Baptism, it should be kept in a safe place and you may wish to purchase a less expensive cross and have it blessed during the service for your child's everyday use. Some parents present their child with his or her baptismal cross only when he or she is older and more responsible, such as upon graduation from high school. Your child will someday likely thank you for taking this precaution.

FINALLY, not all of this information and/or instructions may apply in your case. The Cathedral clergy encourages families to contact them with questions. Familiarizing yourselves with this information – and asking any relevant questions – ensures that your child's initiation into the "Army of Christ" will be smooth, meaningful and memorable.

✂ **NOTES** ✂

BAPTISM CHECKLIST

PAPERWORK	DUE DATE
Last page of Baptism arrangement guide, completed	On day of scheduling
Parental consent form (if applicable)	On day of scheduling
Copy of child's birth certificate	30 days prior to Baptism
Letter of good standing for godparent, or proof of stewardship at St Nicholas Cathedral	14 days prior to Baptism
Baptism fee (\$300 for stewards, \$500 for non-stewards)	30 days prior to Baptism

THESE ITEMS SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO CHURCH FOR THE BAPTISM:

- 1. Complete white Baptism outfit for child (including T-shirt)**
- 2. Small (about 4 oz.) bottle of olive oil**
- 3. Cross – usually gold and preferably not a crucifix**
- 4. Hand-held, decorated baptismal candle (along with two smaller ones)**
- 5. Bar of soap (optional)**
- 6. Two white hand towels (not washcloths)**
- 7. Two white bath towels**
- 8. Twin-sized, white bed sheet for protection of sponsor's clothing**
- 9. Martyrika (witness ribbons)**
- 10. Bombonieres (candy-covered almonds wrapped in tulle)**

