



ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΣ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΣ ΚΑΘΕΔΡΙΚΟΣ ΝΑΟΣ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΥ

CHILD BAPTISM GUIDE

Dear Parent(s),

We are honored and excited to be planning your child's Baptism at Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral. Let us be the first to say congratulations! Below are listed some important facts and frequently asked questions in regards to planning your child's baptism.

I. PLANNING YOUR CHILD'S BAPTISM

- A. **Cathedral Dean Meeting:** The first step in the process of planning your child's baptism is meeting with the Cathedral Dean. He will go over and confirm with you the date and time as well as priest availability for the baptism.
- B. **Documentation:** Once you have a date on the calendar from the Cathedral Dean, it is then your responsibility to reach out to our office to schedule a meeting with the Administrative Assistant to go over all necessary documentation. A copy of the child's birth certificate, informational worksheet, and fee payment is to be sent directly to the Administrative Assistant.
- C. **Picking A Sponsor:** One sponsor (or godparent) is the maximum needed and allowed on the certificate for each child. Sponsors must be practicing Orthodox Christians in good ecclesiastical standing with an Orthodox Parish which also includes being a current financial steward of the Parish. Once picked, your sponsor must obtain a Letter of Good Standing from his/her parish and send it via email or mail to Saint Nicholas.
Note: Have your sponsor take care of this requirement early on, as it sometimes can take a while to retrieve a Letter of Good Standing so that it does not become an obstacle to the planned Baptism date.
- D. **Parental Waiver** (if necessary): In the case of divorce, legal separation, shared custody situations, etc. both parents must provide their consent on the Parental Waiver form (received in writing and notarized) for the child's Baptism. Please ask our administrative assistant for the consent form.
- E. **Fee Structure:** Stewards, as defined by a contributing member in the last 2 calendar years, of St. Nicholas Cathedral have a baptism fee of \$300. The non-steward baptism fee is \$500. Included in this fee are Chanter and sexton services.
Note: Fees are due at least 30 days before the scheduled Baptismal date, and if not received by the due date, the baptism is considered forfeited and would need to be rescheduled. An additional honorarium to the clergy is customary and left to your discretion

II. PREPARING FOR YOUR CHILD'S BAPTISM

- A. The **Sponsor** should familiarize themselves with the **Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed**, which s/he must recite *loudly and clearly* as part of the service that precedes the Baptism.
- B. Two children (old enough to hold lit candles safely) should be selected to participate in the procession around the baptismal font, which takes place in the middle of the service. In lieu of children, the child's grandmothers have also customarily filled this role.
- C. Please bring the following items on the day of your child's baptism:
 1. Complete white Baptism outfit for child (including T-shirt)

2. Small (about 4 oz.) bottle of olive oil
3. Baptismal Cross – usually gold and preferably not a crucifix
4. Hand-held, decorated baptismal candle (along with two smaller ones for procession)
5. Bar of soap (optional)
6. Two white hand towels (please no 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)

D. 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**.

III. FOLLOWING THE BAPTISM

A. Holy Communion: The child must be brought to communion in their baptism outfit (preferably by the sponsor) two additional, consecutive, times to complete the cycle of three. For example, if the Baptism service takes place on a Saturday, the child must be brought to the Sunday Liturgy the next day and on the Sunday following. As the child is brought forward, with the Baptism candle lit, they should always be held with their head on **your right arm**.

Note: 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 it along with the child.

B. Special Washing Instructions for Baptismal Items: All clothing and towels used in the Baptism must first be **hand washed**. The water used to wash them must be poured outside into a garden or flower pot - not down the drain - so as to prevent the blessed oil and Holy Chrism from entering the sewer system via your washing machine.

IV. THE BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE

A. You will receive your child's Baptismal Certificate immediately following the Baptism, and 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, we encourage you to place it in a secure location or safe deposit box.

V. THE BAPTISMAL CROSS

A. The baptismal cross is an important and valuable symbol of your child's initiation into the Faith. We encourage having the child's name engraved on the back. Following the Baptism, like the certificate, it should be kept in a secure location.

Note: 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 likely someday thank you for taking this precaution.



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CHILD BAPTISM WORKSHEET

(please fill out a separate worksheet for each child being baptised)

Father's Name: _____
First Middle Last

Mother's Name: _____
First Middle Last

Mother's Maiden Name: _____
First Middle Last

Father's Phone: _____ Mother's Phone: _____

Father's E-mail: _____ Mother's E-mail: _____

Father's Birthplace: _____ Mother's Birthplace: _____
City, State, Country City, State, Country

Father's Church Affiliation: _____ Mother's Church Affiliation: _____
(ex. Orthodox, Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, etc.)

Married by: _____
(ex. Orthodox Church, other Christian church, justice of the peace, etc.)

Marriage Place: _____ Marriage Date: _____
City, State, Country Month/Date/Year

Child's Current Address: _____
Street, City, State, Zip

Child's Place of Birth: _____ Child's Date of Birth: _____
City, State, Country Month/Date/Year

Child's Name on **Civil** Birth Certificate: _____
First Middle Last

Child's Intended Baptismal Name _____

SPONSOR INFORMATION

Name of Sponsor: _____

Sponsor Address: _____
Street, City, State, Zip

Parish which Sponsor Attends: _____
Name of parish, City, State, Country