



St. Stephen Catholic Church  
5049 Bell Shoals Road  
Valrico, Florida 33596  
Religious Education Office  
813.671-4434  
Fax #813.671-2994

### **Infant/Young Child Baptism Preparation Requirements (birth to 6 years of age)**

Congratulations! We believe that every child is a precious gift of God. It is truly wonderful that you wish to share your faith with your child, for Jesus Himself said: "Let the children come to me." As you begin bringing up your child in the Catholic Church, you undoubtedly have many questions and concerns. We would like to share with you the rich depth and beauty of what it means to be a Catholic parent.

The Infant Baptism preparation program is designed to help parents appreciate the religious significance and meaning behind the use of symbols during your child's Baptism ceremony. Our Baptism Ministry also share with the parents, the rituals and traditions of the Catholic faith, and the responsibility and joy of being the first teachers of their children in matters of faith.

Baptism Sessions are offered twice a month at the following location and times (please refer to Baptism Preparation and Baptism Schedule enclosed in white baptismal packet). There is no cost for the class and pre-registration is required. Please call the Religious Education Office at 671-4434.

*Location: Church, Room 7- Upstairs  
Saturdays at 10:00 – 12:00 p.m.  
Sundays at 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.*

**Church Registration:** We warmly welcome everyone to our parish family. New members are invited to register by attending a special meeting any Sunday at 10:45 a.m. in Room 2 (back hallway of the church). Parents desiring baptism for their child must be registered members of St. Stephen at least one month prior to the baptism.

**Baptisms** will take place in the Church following the 11:30 Mass. We ask that you please be on time, and take into consideration that traffic on Bell Shoals Road can be quite hectic at times, especially on Sunday afternoons. You will be welcomed by our Baptism Coordinators who will help you with seating and any questions you may have.

**Godparents:** A Candidate for baptism may choose one or two godparents (male and female). The godparents chosen must be at least 16 years of age, already Confirmed, and regularly attend Sunday Mass, and take seriously the role and duties that she or he is undertaking. The godparent should be leading the life of faith in harmony with the teachings of the Catholic Church; if married, he or she has received the Sacrament of Marriage. A baptized person belonging to a non-Catholic Christian denomination may be admitted as a Christian Witness to baptism, but only along with a Catholic godparent.

**Required Documents:** Parents are asked to complete a baptism registration form. Godparents must provide a Godparent/Sponsor (letter of eligibility form) issued from their parish that attests to their qualifications as a godparent. If your godparents are members of St. Stephen, we will provide a letter of eligibility form they will need to read and sign. All required forms must be completed and submitted to the Religious Education Office two (2) weeks prior to the baptism of your child.

**Photography:** Photography and Videography are permitted. We ask that the photographer and videographer respectfully stand in a location where he or she is not blocking or interfering with the ceremony. The Priest or Deacon celebrating the baptism will be more than happy to pose for photographs following the ceremony.

**Dress:** Usually, infants and small children are dressed in white when they receive the Sacrament of Baptism. White is a symbol of being baptized into Christ. If the child is wearing another color, a white bib or stole will be placed upon them at the appropriate time of the ceremony. Please let our Baptism Coordinator know in advance.

**Offering:** It is customary to give the Celebrant (Priest or Deacon) a stipend for baptisms. The amount is entirely up to you. The recommended amount is \$25 to \$50. If writing a check, please make payable to St. Stephen Catholic Church. An envelope for your convenience is provided in your baptismal packet. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.