

Introduction

The policies that follow are not a substitute for a thorough study of the Rites of Baptism, of Confirmation, or of Christian Initiation of Adults, their *praenotanda*, or the canonical requirements set out by the Church in the Code of Canon Law. Rather, they are developed for pastors, catechists, parents and sponsors, and are intended to provide a quick point of reference when preparing candidates for the Sacraments of Initiation.

Infant Baptism (600-608)

The Rite of Baptism for Children is used exclusively for the initiation of children under the age of reason (7 years of age). It is hoped that the participation of family with the parish in their child's Baptism will provide a foundation for subsequent participation in their local parish as a member of the Body of Christ.

A request for Baptism is not ordinarily refused. However, a Baptism may be delayed until such time as the parents, or at least one of the parents, are ready and able to assume the responsibility entrusted to them in the rite. This occasion should be viewed as an opportunity for evangelization, not as placing an undue burden on the parents, but helping them to grow in the spiritual life.

Forms referred to throughout this policy are found in the Appendices.

Baptism of Children of Catechetical Age (7-14 yrs) (610 – 611)

The process by which children over the age of reason are initiated into the Catholic Church is the Rite of Christian Initiation adapted for children.

This rite is intended for use with:

- Children and teens, not baptized as infants, who have attained the age of reason (seven years or over)
- Children and teens validly baptized in another ecclesial community who have attained the age of reason

These young people seek Christian initiation either at the direction of their parents or guardians, or on their own initiative, with parental permission.

RCIA adapted for children often begins in the fall, with the journey leading to the Easter Vigil for the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation. Depending on the parish, programs may begin at other times during the year, and may need to be adapted to the needs and readiness of each individual to receive these sacraments.