

Saint George Antiochian Orthodox Church

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SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM - ECCLESIASTICAL REQUIREMENTS

THE SACRAMENT

Baptism is a covenant, an agreement between God and man. God promises to be our Father and we promise to be His children. Baptizing infants, before they are aware of what will take place, is an expression of God's great love for us. It shows us that God loves us and accepts us before we can even know Him or love Him. It shows us that we are wanted and loved by God from the moment of our birth. Baptism is necessary for salvation (Mark 16:15-16) and in accordance with the Holy Tradition, must be performed by triple immersion in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20). It is through baptism that one becomes of fully participating member of the Church.

PLANNING FOR THE SACRAMENT

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

- Exercise the greatest care in selecting an Orthodox Christian Godparent, who will accept the moral responsibility to provide the proper religious education, example and inspiration to his/her Godchild.
- Select one name of Christian origin to be given to the child at the time of baptism.

REQUIREMENTS OF GODPARENT

- Must be an Orthodox Christian, and if married, must have been married in the Orthodox Church. If divorced, must submit an Ecclesiastical Decree of Divorce.
- Must be a Parishioner in Good Standing of St. GEORGE or provide a letter, if he/she belongs to another Orthodox Parish.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF GODPARENT

- Accepts the sacred responsibility to represent the child, who is being admitted to the Church through the Sacrament of Baptism and is unable to make the necessary confession of Faith.
- Is prepared to recite the Nicene Creed during the baptism.
- Makes a faithful lifetime commitment of love and joins the parents, guided by the Church, to assist and guide the baptized child through the Christian walk of life.
- Brings the child to church regularly for Holy Communion especially the three consecutive Sundays following the baptism.

PREPARING FOR THE SACRAMENT

It will be useful to have a spiritual meeting between the priest, the parents and the Godparents; few days prior to the date of the Holy Baptism; preferable at the house of the parents or of the Godparents. An extensive explanation of the Sacrament of the Holy Baptism will be presented and all questions will be answered.

AT THE DAY OF BAPTISM

- **Provide the following items for the baptism:**
 1. Complete change of white baptismal clothes for the child
 2. A Cross for the child
 3. One white candle
 4. One white bath towel
 5. One white hand towel