

The Parish of St. Christopher
Red Hook, NY 12571
THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

“Then Jesus approached and said to them, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

Congratulations! – This is a time of great joy for your family as you celebrate the birth of a child. It is also the time to prepare for your child’s “second birth,” his/her rebirth in Christ. These simple guidelines will help you to prepare for that moment.

The Celebration of Baptism for Parishioners – Roman Catholics who live in our parish are most encouraged to have the celebration of Baptism for their child at St. Christopher’s Church. If you are not registered with the parish, we will be happy to have you join our parish family. On occasion, parishioners request that the Sacrament of Baptism be celebrated in another Catholic Church. We are happy to give permission to registered parishioners, provided that arrangements are made for the Baptismal Preparation Meeting either at St. Christopher’s or in the parish of Baptism.

The Celebration of Baptism for Non-Parishioners – Normally, the Sacrament of Baptism should be celebrated in the parish where the family resides. However, permission can be granted for the Baptism to take place at St. Christopher’s Church if the family has a special relationship to the parish (grandparents still live here, health reasons, etc.) Before a date can be set, a **letter of permission** must be obtained from the family’s home parish, and parents must attend the baptismal preparation program of their home parish.

Choosing the Day of Baptism – Parish Baptisms are scheduled every Sunday at 1:00 pm. A date may be scheduled only after meeting with a priest or deacon of St. Christopher’s Parish. The parish does not celebrate private baptisms. Infant Baptisms are not celebrated on Christmas, Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday or on most Sundays of Lent.

The Minister of Baptism – A priest or deacon of St. Christopher’s Parish usually celebrates the Baptism. On occasion, families have a close relationship with a priest/deacon whom they would like to have as Celebrant. Visiting priests/deacons are very welcome. Please make sure that you have a confirmed date and time with the priest/deacon and our parish.

Baptismal Preparation at St. Christopher’s Involves Two Meetings – At the first meeting, both parents will meet with a priest/deacon. All the important information will be written down, and we will talk together about the significance of the Sacrament of Baptism. The second meeting will be held on the second Monday of the month at 8:00 pm in St. Christopher’s Rectory.

The Role of Parents – It is hoped that parents show a level of commitment to Jesus Christ and His Church, as evidenced by their sincere efforts to lead Christian lives. It is hoped that parents are registered members of our parish, participate regularly at Sunday Mass, are growing in love for God and neighbor, have found prayer and faith to be important elements in their daily lives, and working to eliminate unjust attitudes and practices from their lives. Parents should be ready and eager to meet their responsibilities as Christian parents.

The Role of Godparents – Godparents are expected to profess the faith in which the child is to be raised. Godparents show the newly baptized how to live the Gospel in personal and social life and sustain them in difficult times. Therefore, Godparents must be suitable for this role and must intend to fulfill it. At least one Godparent must be chosen. If the Godparent cannot be present, a Catholic proxy may be chosen, and the Godparent must sign a letter stating their desire and willingness to assume the role of Godparent. Godparents must (universal Church law):

- Be designated by the parents or whomever stands in their place.
- Be mature enough to undertake the responsibilities (minimum age is 14).
- Have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation, and living a life consistent with the Roman Catholic Faith.
- If married, living in a marriage recognized by the Catholic Church.
- Not be the father or mother of the child.
- Obtain a Sponsor Certificate from St. Christopher's or the parish in which they reside, stating that they are qualified to act as Godparent. Certificates should be placed in an envelope listing the name of the child and the date of Baptism and returned to our church office as soon as possible before the Baptism.

The Christian Witness – When, for a just cause, parents wish to have another baptized and believing Christian from a separated church or community act as Christian Witness, these norms are to be followed (universal Church law):

- Before extending the invitation to a non-Catholic, parents should consult with their parish priest/deacon.
- A Christian who has been validly baptized in another denomination can be admitted, with a Catholic Godparent, as a Christian Witness. In this case, the responsibility for the Catholic education of the child belongs to the Catholic Godparent.
- A non-baptized person may not be a godparent or Christian Witness since they do not profess faith in Jesus Christ.
- A Catholic who cannot be a godparent because he/she is not living a life consistent with the faith cannot act as Christian Witness.

Church Donation – There is no fee for Baptisms. We request that you make a generous offering to the Church. Please place your offering in the envelope provided and give it to the priest/deacon on the day of Baptism.

The Day of Baptism – All are welcome to attend! Please arrive before 1:00 pm and sit in the front pews of church. The Liturgy of Baptism will last 30-45 minutes. Flash photography is allowed. Video photography is allowed, but no additional lights may be used. Feel free to take pictures after the ceremony. We hope that you have a wonderful day!