

## The Baptism Question: Registration and Baptism

As a child is registered for religious education, it is important to ask the following questions:

**Has the child been baptized?** (*Ask for a copy of the child's baptismal certificate to be attached to the registration form.*) The child's placement in a sacramental preparation program depends on the answer.

- **If NOT, is the child of catechetical age (7 years)?**  
*If not*, the child should be prepared for baptism as an infant in the Church with instruction for parents, godparents, and the child. The child should be registered in a regular religious education class.
- ***If the child is of catechetical age and has not been baptized***, the child should be placed in RCIA, with adaptations of the Rites for Children.
- **If YES, where was the child baptized?** (*Copy of the baptismal certificate is required*)
  - **Catholic Church – which one?** (Roman, Albanian, Chaldean, etc.)
    - ***If the child was baptized in the Roman Catholic Church (Latin Church)***, the child may be registered in the regular religious education program.
    - ***If the child was baptized in an Eastern Catholic Church that is in communion with the Latin (Roman Catholic) Church***, check on which sacraments the child received as an infant. Most Eastern Catholic Churches Confirm and possibly administer Eucharist at Baptism. The child may be registered in the religious education program, but if the child is in sacramental preparation, Sacraments of Initiation are NOT repeated. To check whether the Ritual Church of Baptism is in full communion with the Latin Church, check the document "Ritual Church Ascription" prepared by the Archdiocesan Tribunal found at the link provided below.
    - In the case of one parent being a member of the Eastern Church and the other a member of the Latin Church, the parents, in agreement, make the choice of the Ritual Church for the child. If there is no agreement, the child is ascribed to the Church of the father. The child may be enrolled in the religious education program with the understanding that if they have already received a Sacrament of Initiation

(Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist), that sacrament is not repeated and they remain members of their specified Ritual Church.

- Care should be taken to encourage the faithful to worship according to their own proper ritual tradition as far as possible, and they should not in any way be encouraged to seek a transfer of Church ascription (CCEO c.31)

➤ ***Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, or Assyrian Church?***

- These Churches are not in communion with the Latin Church, although Pope John Paul II called both “two lungs of the same body.” Most of the Orthodox Churches administer all 3 Sacraments of Initiation at Baptism. The children are subject to the rules of their Church.

➤ ***Non – Catholic – which denomination?*** (The baptism may or may not be valid, i.e. Trinitarian, with water, proper disposition)

- A list of Churches that celebrate valid baptism, as well as those which *do not* may be found at the link provided below.
- Once the validity of a child’s baptism has been verified, if the child is of catechetical age (7 years), and it is the parents’ desire that they raise their child in the Catholic Church, the child will make a Profession of Faith prior to the reception of the other Sacraments of Initiation. The child may be enrolled in the regular religious education program. It is important, however, to determine placement based on what catechetical formation the child has already received and to consider all pastoral issues.
- If the child is older (9 – 13 years) and has not received catechesis in the Catholic Church, he/she should be well formed in the faith prior to preparation for the other Sacraments of Initiation. This may take the form of a special class designed for those in similar circumstances.

While upholding the teaching of the Church, each situation calls for a pastoral response on the part of those who are in communication with the parents, children, and families of those who will be served in our catechetical programs. It is better to address these questions up front than to face them in the middle of the year.

If there is any question about a Church of Ritual Ascription or a particular situation, please contact the Metropolitan Tribunal at 313.237.5756.

Go to:

<http://www.aodonline.org/AODOnline/Offices+and+Ministries+12009/Education+12110/Religious+Education+2161/Faith+Formation+and+Catechetics+-+Information.htm>

for copies of the documents mentioned above.

May the Lord bless you as the registrations roll in!

Patty Chase

Regional Coordinator – Sacramental Preparations