

GUIDELINES FOR THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

ACCORDING TO THE ARMENIAN ORTHODOX AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH

1. A date shall be set for baptism in joint consultation with the Pastor and arrangements must be made three months prior to the sacrament.
2. All baptisms are to follow the Canons of the Armenian Orthodox Church. The Sacraments will be explained by the Pastor.
3. Baptisms can take place on any day of the week. According to the canon, practice and tradition of the Armenian Church, the Sacrament should be administered anytime during the eighth to the fortieth day after the birth of a child. We do not recommend delaying or deferring the rite for a later time in order to safeguard the spiritual salvation of the child.
4. According to a directive of the Eastern Diocese, the Godfather of the child to be baptized must also be a baptized and chrismated member of the Armenian Orthodox Church. Each child to be baptized will have only one Godfather and one Godmother. If only of the Godfather is a baptized member of the Armenian Orthodox Church, the Godmother must at least be baptized in the Christian faith.
5. The Armenian Church has no explicit provisions for a Godmother at Baptism. We can consider a Godmother the person who takes care of the child during the performance of the Order of Baptism by holding the child during the ceremony, and dressing and undressing the child at the prescribed times.
6. The Godparents at Baptism, like the parents, accept a responsibility in teaching and sharing the Faith with their Godchild. It is expected that they watch the spiritual growth and development of the child by their own Christian example, by education and full participation in the life of the Church and parish community.
7. The specific items needed for baptism (should be provided by the Godparents) are the following:

Infants

- A chain and cross for the Neophyte (Newly Baptized). The cross must be Armenian in style. “Crucifix” style crosses are **not** part of the tradition of the Armenian Church.
- A white outfit to be worn after the Chrismation, which symbolizes purity and being born into a new faith.
- One or two new large white towels not to be used for any other purpose.
- A “Narod” will be provided by the church. It is recommended that the Pastor meet with the parents and Godparents at least once, prior to the Baptism, in order to explain the Sacrament.

Adults

- Wear loose fitting clothing, but at the same time, the adult should be dressed modestly and appropriately for the church sanctuary.
- If possible, refrain from smoking, drinking and eating anything from waking up the morning of the baptism until the baptismal service. The adult will receive Holy Communion for the first time and should receive this on an empty stomach. Drinking water is permissible. If health issues are involved and eating something is required, please discuss this with the pastor.

8. The full washing of the child is to be done at home on the third day after the Baptism preferably with Godparents present. The water used for the bath is not to be emptied down the drain, but is to be collected and poured in the soil of a garden or lawn. The reason for this is that there may still be some Holy Muron left on the child's body which was transferred into the water. Also, when the undergarments of the child are washed for the very first time after the Baptism, the water should be dispensed in the same manner.
9. Photographs may be taken at any time during the ceremony. Caution should be used by the photographer (or videographer) not to blind the eyes of the Priest, Deacon or any other member of the baptismal party. At no time, nor for any reason, will the photographer ascend the steps of the Altar or be at the Altar itself.
10. A baptism is a sacrament of the Armenian Church and a public service and no person may be excluded from the Church, except where the invited list approximates the seating capacity and if cards of admission have been issued.
11. All donations are suggested and the responsibility of the family/person involved. It is a tradition in the Armenian Church that the Godparents incur the costs of the church portion of the expenses as well as any participating clergymen. There is one suggested donation of \$500, which includes:
 - a. A donation to the Church,
 - b. Maintenance of the church facility (heating, AC, electricity, etc.)
 - c. A stipend for the clergyman
 - d. A stipend for the deacon
 - e. Other related expenses directly connected with the administering of the sacrament

All donations made out to St. Sarkis Armenian Church should be given to Fr. Ghevond or Annie Ghannoum at least one week prior to the sacrament. Please contact Annie Ghannoum, via text, phone or email, informing her of the donation which is being made. Her contact information is 214-718-2111 and annie.ghannoum@yahoo.com. If you have questions or concerns about the suggested donation, please speak with Fr. Ghevond.

12. Before any guest priest is invited, the Pastor must be consulted. According to the etiquette of the Armenian Church, the Pastor must be the one to invite any guest clergy. If the guest priest is a member of the Armenian Church he may be invited to perform all or part of the service. In addition to an Armenian Priest, should a priest of a different Christian denomination be invited, the Pastor shall decide the appropriateness of his participation. The Pastor will assign to him those portions he sees fit according to the Canons and traditions of the Armenian Church and it should be clear that any priest of a different denomination is an invited guest and not a co-celebrant.
13. If the Pastor, deacon or other guest clergy are to be invited to a reception, they must be notified in advance.