

Alive in Christ

You, your family, & Holy Baptism



Baptism is the first of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation. Through Baptism we are freed from sin, and reborn as children of God. Through Baptism we become members of the Body of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and begin to share in her life and mission.

The Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist (Holy Communion) will complete the initiation that begins with Baptism. Those baptised as infants celebrate these Sacraments at a later date. Adults - and children over the age of reason - celebrate all three Sacraments in a single celebration, usually at Easter.

Baptism is a beginning...

Baptism is a sacramental celebration. But it is about much more than the celebration alone: it marks the beginning of a life lived in Christ.

If Baptism is to bear fruit, the celebration of the sacrament has to be followed by an active living of the life of faith - by the family, parents and child. Living, and trying to live, according to the example of Jesus enables the gifts of baptism to flourish as a child develops and grows.

Our community is delighted that you wish to raise your child as a Christian, as a member of the Roman Catholic church. We will do all we can to offer support to your child's growth and development in the faith. But no-one and nothing can replace the role of a parent.

As a parent, you have a most important role in helping the promise and potential of baptism to be fulfilled. Parents are the first and most important teachers of their children in the ways of faith by what they do and say.

Practicalities

- 1. The Basics:** Before a child can be baptised is necessary that at least one of the parents (or guardians) of the child consents to the baptism and that there is a well-founded hope that the child will be brought up in the practice of the Catholic faith. This is normally demonstrated by at least one of the parents being a member of our parish community and attending Sunday Mass regularly in the parish church.

- 1. Preparing for Baptism**

In our parish preparation for baptism has three parts:

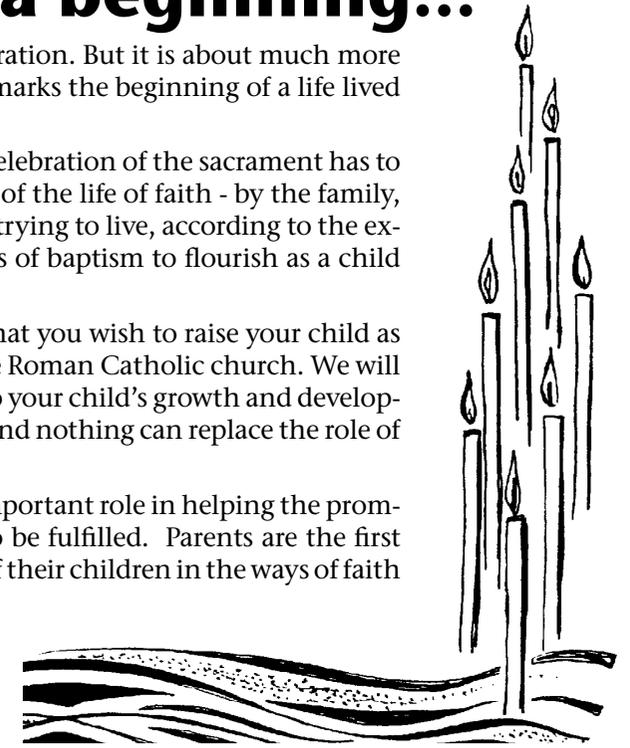
A. An introductory meeting for parents at which you will meet other families preparing for baptism, and our parish Baptism Preparation team.

Together we reflect on

- the importance of our names,
- why baptism is important to us, and what it means for the Church.
- the ministry of Godparents and who is eligible to be a godparent.

This meeting is also the form-filling meeting. So please complete the form below and bring it with you to this first meeting.

B. A home visit from Fr Allen Following the introductory meeting Fr Allen will arrange to visit you at home - which gives you an opportunity to discuss with him any particular matters concerning the baptism of your child.



C. A second group meeting for parents, and to which godparents-to-be are also welcome. This begins with the 11am Sunday Mass (usually on the 3rd Sunday of the month) which will include prayer and a Blessing for you as parents.

After Mass we meet in the Benedict Room for about 45 minutes to reflect

- on the responsibilities (and joys!) of being a father, a mother, a family.
- on how a family can share faith together and help deepen its Christian identity (or in a family where members have different faiths or none, how the faith of the Christian members may be fostered while being respectful of the needs of other family members)
- And we take a walk through the baptism service, so there are no surprises on the day!

1. Date of Baptism: Baptism is celebrated twice a month in the parish, usually on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month at 12.30pm. NB The date for any particular baptism will be confirmed **ONLY** after the godparent(s)' forms have been completed and returned to Fr Allen.

2. Godparents: A child must have one godparent (either godfather or godmother) and may have two, in which case one should be a godfather and the other a godmother.

Godparents must be practicing Catholics (eg attending Mass weekly, and trying to live their daily lives following the teaching of Christ). They must also have been confirmed, and be at least 16 years old.

In some cases it is possible for a Christian of another Christian denomination to be invited to be a 'Christian witness': this will be discussed at the Introductory meeting), and as such take the same role in the service as a godparent.

At the first preparation meeting we discuss the role of godparents and you will receive a letter to give to those you are inviting, and a form for them to take to their parish priest for his confirmation that they meet the Church's requirements.

It is awkward to dis-invite people who have been invited but who cannot meet these expectations. *So please wait until after the first preparation session before inviting people to be godparent.*

3. Baptism of older children.

Children of catechetical age, ie who have reached the age of reason (around the age of 6 or 7) are baptised on the basis of their own faith. That faith needs to be developed and nurtured so that they might be able to understand what they promise at baptism, and what baptism means. Children over the age of five receive a much more extended process of preparation for baptism, which usually includes the parish first holy communion programme.

4. Offering.

There is no set fee for Baptism. If parents wish to make an offering to the priest, they are of course free to do so!

Please complete this form and bring it to the Preparation meeting. Session is for parents only, please.

Child's surname		
Child's Christian names		
Child's date of birth		
Father's name		
Father's religion		
Mother's name		
Mother's maiden name		
Mother's religion		
Parents' address	Post code	
Telephone number	Email	
Marriage	Place	Date
Other children of the family (names and ages)		
Please note that during the Preparation there will be a discussion of the role of Godparents. You might like to hold off inviting anyone to be Godparent until then.		
<small>OFFICE USE ONLY</small>		
Preparation I / II / III		Home visit
Godparent I		Confirmation received
Godparent/Christian witness II		Confirmation received
Date of baptism	Baptised by	