

Information for Parents

Congratulations you are bringing your child into the family of God, the Church.

Baptism is the first of the Seven Sacraments of the Catholic Church. It welcomes your child into the Church community. They will become a member of the Body of Christ, the Church.



There are certain norms involved with bringing your child forward for this welcome. By doing so you are committing to forming your child in the faith. Both the *Code of Canon Law* and *Rite of Baptism for Children* define the normal procedures for Baptism. Significant emphasis regarding the Baptism of Infants is placed on the following aspects:

Parent Instruction

Can. 851 "The celebration of baptism must be prepared properly; consequently: The parents of an infant to be baptised and those who are to undertake the function of sponsor are to be instructed properly on the meaning of this sacrament and the obligations attached to it. The pastor, or others working on the pastor's behalf, will personally take care so that the parents are properly instructed through both pastoral advice and common prayer, bringing several families together and, where possible, visiting them."

Rite of Baptism for Children (5.1) adds that parents should be provided with suitable means such as "books, letters addressed to them and catechisms designed for families. The pastor should make it his duty to visit them or see that they are visited. He should gather a group of families together and prepare them for the coming celebration by pastoral counsel and common prayer".

So... what does this formal language mean?

Parent Responsibilities

Parents are responsible to help their child live out his/her Baptism. This responsibility is contained in what might be termed the **Three R's of Baptism**. They are named at the very beginning of the rite of Baptism.

The priest enters into dialogue, with the parents saying:

You have **REQUESTED** to have your child Baptised. In doing so you are accepting the **RESPONSIBILITY** of raising him/her in the faith. Do you clearly **REALISE** what you are undertaking?

When parents answer, "I do" to this question, they are taking upon themselves before God and the faith community a task of great importance. This is particularly important in today's world where the values of Christ are not as evident as they were in the past.

Baptism is a responsibility which is not entered into lightly, and that is why preparation for Baptism is so important. It gives parents a chance to think everything through before making the commitment.

Parents interested in presenting a child for Baptism need to contact their local parish.