



APPLICATION



**FOR
BAPTISM**

Dear Parents

By now you may have had the opportunity to read the booklet entitled 'Thoughts for parents considering Baptism'. We hope it is full of good news, constant encouragement and sound teaching.

Since both parents are requesting the gift of Baptism for their child it would seem wise for both of you to be able to share a common understanding about this precious gift from God and His Church. On those occasions when parents are not properly informed about the meaning of Baptism then there is always the unfortunate possibility that the celebration will be regarded as something nice but of no great relevance to real life and real living.

Nothing could be further from the teachings of the Church. Baptism is intended to have a real positive effect upon the development of the life of your child as well as your own lives as a couple. Baptism is also intended to have a real impact upon the development of the relationship that both you and your child will have with Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God. Remember His wonderful words 'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.' Baptism enables us to enter into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ the Son of God. He wants to take an interest in the life of your family. He regards you as important. He considers you as people who matter. When you and your child experience Baptism it is a way of saying 'I want Jesus Christ to be part of me and to be part of everything that I am doing.' Know that Jesus Christ is interested in your life even those parts that may seem dull, repetitive and thoroughly boring!



We request the gift of Baptism from the Parish on behalf of our child. We have both read the documents provided by the parish priest and we pledge to do our best to bring up our child in the active practice of the Catholic Faith. We promise to do this with the help of God who is the giver of every good gift.

Signed by both parents: _____

Date of Baptism: _____

The details on this application form will be inserted in the Baptism Register of our parish. Your child will be a member of the Catholic Church and a member of this parish.

Surname of the child: _____

Christian names of the child: _____

Child's Date of Birth: _____

Father's full name: _____

Mother's full name: _____

Mother's maiden name: _____

Present address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Names of Godparents: _____

Only the names of one godfather and one godmother will be entered into the register.

What does this document contain?

This document will provide you with guidance and information on topics such as Godparents and their responsibilities, the appropriate choice of a Baptism name for children in the Christian church. There is information on appropriate Baptism Fees and clarification on what constitutes a valid marriage within the Catholic Church. There is also an opportunity for parents to put into writing the reasons why they are having their child Baptised. There is guidance on the topic of Baptism Promises and responsibilities. Experience shows that parents often asks questions about these matters.



What are Baptism Promises?



Parents are reminded that they are the **first teachers** of their children in the ways of faith and especially in the ways of the Catholic faith. Religion is often caught not taught! Our local parishes are most anxious to try and develop the religious instincts that God has planted inside each of us. However, the process becomes very difficult if there is little attempt to foster some kind of religious atmosphere in our family and in our homes. It becomes even more difficult when the family have little contact with the worshipping community in their parish. We may be Catholics in name but that is perhaps as far as it goes. Without the effort to develop some sort of Catholic atmosphere in our homes and without the effort to join in the life of our parish communities in an enthusiastic and committed fashion, then our Catholicism can become as relevant as the tooth fairy, the Easter bunny and Father Christmas.

What do I do next?

It is **very important** that both parents have read the two documents produced by the parish on the topic of Baptism. It is also vitally important that some effort is being made to come to **Mass** on Sunday. When there is no connection with the parish we really have to ask ourselves why are we doing this.

If you still wish to have your child baptised the priest will establish a date for the celebration. You will need to fill in the application form and return it to the parish priest. He will need the details for his registers.

You will need to buy a baptism candle from the repository at the back of church. This can be obtained after Sunday morning Mass.

A white Christening shawl is necessary for small children. Older children may wear a white shirt or a white dress.

A fee of £50 together with a signed Gift Aid Form is suggested. This should be given to the priest before the baptism takes place. Godparents may wish to pay this fee.

A Letter to my child

Many children are never baptised. Parents will give a variety of reasons for this. They may not be church goers themselves and feel that a baptism is inappropriate. Others feel that they should allow their children to make up their minds themselves when they grow older. They may also feel they do not have the right to impose baptism on their children. Each of these views provides an opportunity for us to reach our own informed decisions before arranging Baptism. In a few years time, your child may ask you ‘Mum, dad, why did you have me Baptised?’ It is a very good question. When we have well thought out reasoned answers, we can approach baptism with a greater sense of understanding and commitment.

Write a **short letter** to your child and place it in a sealed envelope. Include it with these documents. Tell your child why you applied to have them baptised into the Catholic Church. Concepts such as God’s gift, a feeling of belonging, divine blessing, being cherished by God, the passing on of values. These may be some of the ideas you may want to include in your letter to your child. 12

At the start of the celebration of Baptism parents and godparents will be reminded of their responsibilities as Christian parents and Godparents on the day of the child's Baptism. They will be asked to make **Baptism Promises**. They will be asked to do their best to impart unconditional love, a good sense of values based upon the teachings of Jesus Christ and to bring up their child in the practice of the Roman Catholic faith especially by bringing the child to Mass. Before making these promises it will be necessary for parents to give the matter some thought.



Every encouragement, therefore, is given to your whole family to be proud of your Catholic identity and to live it with a sense of joy and honour. **Our faith is a wonderful gift.** It has been passed down to us from Jesus and His apostles as well as generations of people in all sorts of places who tried their best to live by it. There were times when it was not easy. Many of them suffered dreadfully and underwent the most horrific conditions and persecutions. However, they were prepared to live out their Catholic faith because it was the right thing to do. 5

Can I have some Godparents?

It is possible to have as many Godparents as you wish. However, since your child is being baptised into the Roman Catholic faith, it is necessary that at least **one Godparent** should be a Mass attending Catholic. Unfortunately this can often cause problems since many Catholics do not attend mass.

Your Godparents should be the best possible role models you can find for your child. They should be of good moral standing, dependable and willing to undertake the obligations of a Godparent. In order to help your Godparents this booklet has a list of responsibilities that Godparents are asked to consider before undertaking their role. We suggest that Godparents publicly recite these promises in front of your child. Then they can sign the form in your presence. It would be a written testimony to their authenticity and generosity of heart.



Any cheques should be made payable to **the name of our parish not the priest**. The priest takes nothing. Notice that since it is a gift to the church, it is possible for the parish to claim back tax through the **Gift Aid scheme**. With your authority we can claim an additional 25p from the Chancellor for every £1 that you give to the parish. It all helps. An envelope and Gift Aid form is included with this booklet. It should be returned with your fee before the Baptism takes place and given to the priest. It can be a little disappointing when families offer nothing to the church.

Sometimes godparents are only too anxious to provide this offering to the church on behalf of their godchild. They regard it as part of the privilege of being chosen for such a great honour.



How much does it cost?

The church does not attach a cost to a Baptism. A Baptism is beyond price. It is a **gift from God**. Nor does the priest expect any remuneration. However the family are asked to make an offering of **£50** to the church as a **thanksgiving** to Almighty God. The money goes to the parish and helps to pay its considerable running costs. You might like to ask yourself how much you will be spending on the celebration afterwards?

In the local registry office, it is possible for families to experience a very brief ceremony called a **Naming Ceremony**. This has neither religious nor legal implications. In a more secular age it is an alternative to Baptism. It may cost as much as £500 or as little as £250. The comparison may be helpful when deciding to make an offering to the church.

I promise to pray regularly for my Godchild.

I promise to set a good example through my lifestyle.

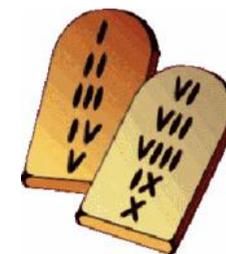
I promise to take an active interest in my Godchild's religious life which also includes helping my godchild to practise the Catholic Faith.

I promise to be a source of support for my Godchild in the ordinary things of life.

I promise to try my best to be a source of support for my Godchild's parents. This will include assisting them in their religious duties.

Almighty God, I thank you for the gift of my Godchild who is about to become a baptised member of the Catholic Church. With your help may I become a source of constant support and good example. We who are Godparents sign these pledges.

Signatures:



What about baptism names?



Choosing an appropriate name for your child is a most important task. We all want names that will be suitable for our children. Names that will stand the test of time. However it is worth

remembering that Baptism is a Christian tradition and the names that we choose for our children should reflect **Biblical and Christian tradition**. Names taken from celebrities that appear on television may not always be suitable. Our children may not always thank us as they grow older. Traditional biblical and Christian names do stand the test of time. They are suitable for us when we are aged one and also when we are aged one hundred and one. Your child's middle name might even reflect this fine tradition. The priest will probably remind you of this responsibility and if a biblical or Christian name has not been chosen then it may be suitable to choose one for the Baptism.

Is there a problem with my marriage?

Sometimes there can be a great deal of confusion surrounding Catholic **marriage**. Frequently couples see no distinction between the marriages celebrated in Registry Offices, the Catholic Church and Churches of other denominations. However, all baptised Roman Catholics are guided and informed by the Law of the Church. We are instructed that Roman Catholics celebrate their marriages according to the Rites and Rituals of the Catholic Church in the presence of a Catholic Minister in a place designated for Catholic worship. This does **not include** the local hotel, a beach in the Bahamas, the Registry Office or the local non-Catholic Church. Many people do not realise this. As a result their marriages may be **legal** in terms of the state but **invalid** in terms of the church.



Often it is possible to regularise these marriages and make things right with the Church. If you are unclear about this why not have a chat with the priest? He will be most anxious to help and guide you.