

How do I get my child baptised?



Having your baby baptised is quite a simple process. You need to go to see your parish priest and ask him to make the necessary arrangements. If for any reason you wish the baptism to take place elsewhere, the permission of your parish priest should be sought.

Baptisms are normally carried out on Sundays, either in the afternoon, late morning after the last Mass, or during a Mass itself. In some parishes it is the custom to baptise several babies in one ceremony. The normal length of a baptism service is 25-40 minutes.

You will probably be expected to attend some form of preparation before the baptism, commonly two sessions. This is partly to enable you to participate actively in the service, but also because baptism has always been seen by the Church as connected with personal faith and repentance. Babies cannot repent or have faith themselves, but from earliest days the Church has baptised them in the expectation that their parents will nurture the gift of faith as they nurture the physical and mental life of their children. The priest or deacon performing the baptism is therefore obliged to make sure that there is a well-founded hope that your child will be brought up in the Catholic faith.

Baptism can only be administered when at least one parent is a Catholic. If the other parent is not a Catholic, they are under no obligation to assist in the Catholic upbringing of the child, though of course it can be a great help if they do.

You will be required to choose at least one godparent to assist in the Catholic upbringing of the child, but can have two if you wish. The godparent should normally be 16 or over and a practising Catholic who has been confirmed and made their first holy communion. Baptised Christians of other Churches can be witnesses in addition to the Catholic godparent. If you cannot find a suitable godparent yourself, the parish priest can nominate someone. If the godparent cannot attend the baptism, they can act by proxy.

Baptisms are recorded in a register kept in the parish Church, and you will be issued with a certificate which is a copy of this entry. You or your child can obtain a copy of this certificate at any subsequent time, but only by contacting the Church where the baptism took place: there is no central register of baptisms.

Children over the age of seven will undergo preparation for baptism differently, through the Rite of Christian Initiation for Children. Contact your parish priest for information. Baptism cannot be

repeated, and baptism carried out in other Christian Churches is normally recognised as valid by the Catholic Church.

“For the Catholic Parish of St. Lawrence and St. Paul, Chipping Sodbury and Yate, you should contact either, our Parish Priest, Father Jim Williams or, our Parish Deacon, Deacon Vincent Calder. You will find their contact details in the Contacts Section of the Parish Web Site.”