

WHAT ABOUT GODPARENTS?

The role of godparent is not only an honour, but a serious commitment to support the parents and child in the faith. Although only one godparent is required for your child's baptism, it is customary to have two. Godparents must be 16 years of age or older and at least one must be a practicing Catholic who has received the Eucharist and the sacrament of Confirmation. The other godparent need not be a Catholic, but must be a practicing Christian. If you select godparents who live a great distance away, they need not be present at the baptism. You may have a proxy stand in for the official godparents. More godparents may be included in the ceremony, but there is only space for two in the church's register as official godparents.

DOES MY CHILD NEED SPECIAL BAPTISMAL CLOTHING?

A white garment, symbolizing new life in Christ, may be worn for the ceremony.

REMEMBERING THE BAPTISM

This is a special occasion that you want to remember for many years to come. The baptism should be memorable first as a prayerful worship experience. Although cameras are welcome, picture taking should be discreet during the ceremony so that the rite itself is not disturbed. Pictures may be taken before and after the ceremony. The presider will be happy to participate in picture taking and will

help in any way he can to make this event a reverent celebration. The ceremony may be videotaped without special lights from a stationary position out of the sight lines of the assembly.

OFFERINGS

The suggested offering is £60. If this is a burden, please speak with the parish priest.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

A priest on the staff of Saint Joseph Church usually presides at baptisms celebrated in our Church. If you wish to have a visiting priest or deacon baptize your child, please discuss this well in advance with the parish priest. If it is appropriate for a visitor to preside or participate, one of the priests will communicate with him about our normal parish procedures and other matters.

FINAL WORD

Thank you for choosing Saint Joseph as your spiritual home and we commit ourselves in walking with you and your family in faith for many years to come.



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Baptism

BAPTISM IS A CELEBRATION

The birth of a baby is a precious gift and a major step on a family's faith journey—a journey that will be filled with surprises as the mystery of this new life unfolds with all its uniqueness, joys and challenges. With this birth, God is doing a new thing, creating a family anew. With a child's baptism, the family of the Church is created anew as well. Together as family and as Church in this particular community of Saint Joseph, we are charged with welcoming and nourishing the life of this child in every way—physically, spiritually, emotionally. In the baptismal rite, we are reminded of our own faith commitment and challenged to live it more fully for the sake of this child and the world.

Baptism is a family affair. Infants who are brought for baptism cannot voice their desire to become part of the Catholic faith. Their parents must speak for them and pass on their own faith to the child. Infants are baptized into a community of believers.

During the ceremony, the symbols of water, light, oil, Sacred Scripture, and the community itself, are used to initiate the child. Those present are asked if they will support the parents of the child in their task of raising the child in the Catholic faith. The community gives witness by its worship and the way its members live out their faith.

WHY A SPECIAL PREPARATION FOR THIS BAPTISM?

Just as you prepare lovingly and carefully for the arrival of your baby, it is equally important to prepare yourself to help your child live his or her life as God's son or daughter. Every child deserves this kind of care and special attention, even if there are other baptized children in the family. With this new arrival, family circumstances and relationships as well as your own faith journey will change and that is cause for reflection.

Throughout the history of our Church, the practice of preparing for baptism has ranged from no preparation at all to years of instructions for catechumens. Vatican Council II separated the celebration of baptism into two different rites—one for adults, usually celebrated at the Easter Vigil, and one for children under the age of seven. Baptism has always been understood to initiate each person into a personal relationship with God that brings salvation. The new rite visibly reaffirms an ancient, deeply held understanding that baptism also brings us into membership in the Church, the community of believers that mediates and forms that relationship.

For a child, the most important faith community is the family where he or she first experiences love and begins to understand God's unconditional love. In the baptismal rite, parents make a faith commitment on behalf of

their child and promise to help the child's faith grow. The Church promises to be present to and for the child as together we learn to be disciples of Jesus. Because this sacrament is such an important moment and because it is the first step in an ongoing process of faith-filled living, we ask parents to join us in preparing for this celebration, to use the weeks before the baby's baptism to explore the meaning of this event for them and their child.

PREPARING FOR BAPTISM AT ST. JOSEPH

Baptismal preparation at St. Joseph's involves a Welcoming Mass and an input session for parents. Godparents do not need to attend. This happens on the First Sunday of every month at 10am Mass and the session at 11 is facilitated by Baptism Coordinator.

WHEN DO BAPTISMS TAKE PLACE AT ST. JOSEPH?

Baptisms take place at St. Joseph's usually twice a month on the Second and Fourth Sundays of every month at 3pm. Other times may be arranged if there is an emergency.

DAY OF BAPTISM

Parents and godparents are asked to arrive at least fifteen minutes before the scheduled time of the baptism so that they can meet the priest and be given necessary instructions.