

Preparing and Planning a Baptism

Congratulations on the birth of your baby. This baby belongs to you, your family and is related to grandparents and the wider extended family. Your desire to have your baby baptised is an act of faith on your part, since you see baptism as a value for your child and something that is good. When you bring your baby to the Church, we will welcome him/her into the Christian family, where he/she will become a child of God and share in the very life of God Himself through His Holy Spirit.

During the baptismal ceremony parents and godparents are invited to express their readiness to bring the child up in the faith and to teach him/her how to pray. This commitment begins with baptism and continues throughout their lives. Baptism is not a magical rite! Faith has to be fostered and nurtured by the parents' example and the practice of their own faith both in the home and by attending church. This is a commitment you make to God; a solemn promise to bring your child up to be a responsible Christian adult.

Parents are the first and best of teachers of their children. The child absorbs everything he/she sees and hears in the home. He/she is like a sponge, taking everything in and learning from your example. It has often been said that Christianity is "**caught not taught.**" In other words, the child imitates and copies everything that you do and say. As you can see, your input into the upbringing of your child is the most important factor in his or her young life. If God is absent from your home, then the child will have no knowledge or understanding of God. Also, if the child never sees you praying, then the child will not learn to pray. And if the church plays no part in your life, neither will it play a part in the child's life. All of this is simple and straightforward, and you already know and understand these facts, but, regrettably some do not fulfil their responsibilities to their children before God. To refuse to bring your child to church, to refuse your child the knowledge and ways of Jesus is to deny your child Jesus.

Planning a baptism is a relatively easy procedure. We recommend that you contact the parish clergy first to arrange the date. Baptisms takes place immediately following the 12 noon Mass in St. Michan's Church, **on first and third Sunday**, but please be sure to set a date with the parish clergy before you begin to plan.

1. Contact the parish clergy and decide on a date for the baptism.
2. Decide on your child's godparents. Godparents are often thought of in non-religious terms as the people who will care for your children if something were to happen to you. In religious terms, godparents are meant to help guide your child in the ways of your religion. Choose people you feel are best suited for the job, and who are also people you trust and admire. Godparents should be close friends or family members. It is preferable for the godparents be practising and confirmed members of the Catholic faith.
3. **Make an appointment to call to the Parish Office in the St. Michan's Church, Halston Street to**
 - * confirm the date for the baptism
 - * hand in a copy of the child's **birth** certificate
 - * the offering for the baptism (we suggest €50)
 - * clarify any other points relating to this very special event
4. Choose a dress or outfit for your child to wear during the ceremony. The traditional colour for a baptismal gown is white. You may also want to make arrangements for the gown to be preserved for you after the ceremony has taken place. If you have a baptismal gown from your childhood, you may wish to use it for your child.
5. Once you have the dates, and godparents chosen, as well as all of the details ironed out with the parish clergy, let your friends and family know of the date and time for the ceremony. It is a celebratory occasion, a day for all the family, but please remember, a suitable dress code is required for church. **Dressing for church is quite different from party dress!** Remember that we are going to the house of God.

On the day, bring

- * white shawl for the child
- * baptismal candle.
- * We allow limited use of cameras (both video and still cameras) in the church, but it is advisable to mention to the priest before the ceremony to let him know that you would like to take photographs.

Photograph of the restored Baptismal Window in Halston Street Church. Here we see a mother presenting her baby to the minister of the Church for baptism. The minister prays in these or similar words – "By God's gift, through water and the Holy Spirit, we are reborn to everlasting life. In his goodness, he will continue to pour out his blessings on all these sons and daughters."

