



The Sacrament of Baptism

A Guide for Parents

Welcome

Congratulations on the birth of your child! We are delighted that you are presenting your child for Baptism. This leaflet gives you background information on the Church's teaching on the Sacrament of Baptism. The Baptism Preparation Team will be glad to help with any other queries you may have.

What is Baptism?

Baptism is not simply a "naming ceremony" or even just a blessing for a new baby. It is the beginning of the Christian life and the gateway to eternal life. Because of this, the sacrament is taken very seriously in the Church.

It is a sacrament: a sacred ritual, a gift from and action of Jesus Christ in his People, who are the Church. In this sacrament, Jesus Christ:

- Forgives Original Sin and opens heaven for us.
- Welcomes us into his Church.
- Adopts us as sons and daughters of God.

The Symbols of Baptism

During the rite, we use rich symbols to express the spiritual reality of what is happening to your child.

1. The Sign of the Cross

The ceremony begins with the reception of the child. The child is presented for Baptism by the Parents and Godparents.

2. Water

Water is a symbol of both life and death.

- **Death to Sin:** When we are baptized into the death of Jesus, our former life dies with him. Jesus triumphed over sin and death, and we are raised to share in eternal life with Him.
- **New Life:** The waters of baptism wash away Original Sin and make us a new creation in Christ.

3. Oil of Catechumens

Before the water ritual, the priest anoints the child on the breast (chest) with this oil. It symbolizes the person's need for the help and strength of God to profess faith and live as a child of God.

4. Oil of Chrism

This is a perfumed olive oil consecrated by the Bishop during Holy Week. It is used to anoint the crown of the head. In ancient times, men and women were anointed to bring God's message to the world. We are anointed as "priest, prophet, and king," just as Christ was, to bring the Good News to others by the way we live our lives.

5. The White Garment

Once claimed for Christ through the water, the child is clothed in a white garment. This is an outward sign of our Christian dignity. It signifies that we have "put on Christ" and must always walk as His follower.

6. The Lighted Candle

The Light of Christ is passed on to us in a candle, lit from the Paschal Candle. We are called to be the light of Christ in the world and to keep that light burning brightly by our daily practice of the faith.

Responsibilities of Parents

By asking for Baptism, you are accepting the responsibility of training your child in the practice of the faith. The ceremony assumes a well-founded hope that you will bring your child up in the faith.

- Teach your child to pray every day.
- Teach your child to lead a Catholic life.
- Teach your child the Catholic faith.
- Come to Mass every Sunday.

Choosing a Name:

The child should have the name of at least one saint. This gives the child a patron, an annual feast day, and an immediate friend in heaven who prays for the child.

Preparation:

Pre-baptismal instruction will take place to enable parents and Godparents to reach a fuller appreciation of the faith they are bringing their children into.

The Role of Godparents

To be chosen as a Godparent is a special honour. You have been entrusted with the responsibility to participate in this child's Christian life and education. It is a relationship that will last throughout this life and beyond.

Who can be a Godparent?

A Godparent can neither be the father nor the mother of the child.

- Be at least **16 years of age**.
- Be a **practising Catholic**.
- Have received the three sacraments of Initiation: **Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation**.
- Have made **First Confession**.
- Have the **maturity of faith** to guide another soul and the intention of fulfilling the role.

Sponsorship Details:

- One Godparent is sufficient. If choosing two, one must be male and the other female.
- A non-Catholic Christian who has been validly baptized may act as a **Christian Witness**, provided the other sponsor is a fully initiated, practising Catholic.
- **Important:** A Godparent is a permanent choice. The name cannot be changed or removed from the official record later, even if there is a disagreement or loss of interest.

The Ceremony Checklist

To ensure the day runs smoothly, please review the following:

- Bring a **White Garment** (Baptismal robe, shawl, or blanket).
- Bring a **White Baptismal Candle**.
- Please arrive and be seated **10 minutes before** the scheduled time.

Contact Information

If you have further queries regarding dates or preparation, please contact the Parish Office.

Cappagh Parish

Address: 4 Killyclogher Road, Omagh, County Tyrone BT79 0AX

Phone: 028 8224 3375

Email: info@cappaghparish.com

Website: <http://www.cappaghparish.com>