

The Sacrament of Baptism and your Child 2018



The Church of
St. Edmund of Canterbury,
Beckenham
20 Village Way, Beckenham, Kent. BR3 3NP

The Sacrament of Baptism at St. Edmund's



Introduction

Thank you for deciding to have your child baptised. This is a vital step, offering your child an unique gift, eternal life. Through baptism your child becomes a member of Christ's Mystical Body, the Church, and a child of God. The whole treasures of the Church are laid open. From this moment a whole way of life opens up, immersed in the Holy Spirit, one blessed richly by God the Father.

Baptism is a sacrament, the beginning of your child's life in the Church, as a member of God's family free from sin and intimately united with Jesus Christ. It is a life for which you, as parents, are primarily responsible.

I am sure you have happy memories of your First Holy Communion Day, complemented perhaps by memories of going to Confession or Confirmation, or your Marriage, or friends made in the Parish or at your Catholic school. Each of us has our own personal story, but what we have in common is our desire to pass on that precious relationship with God which has been first given to us. However, none of this can be taken for granted. Our society is increasingly hostile to the values of the Gospel and this affects our children. If your children are to be brought up in the Faith then all of us, parents, priests, catechists and teachers, need together to make a concerted effort to pass on what is so precious to us.

The people primarily responsible for passing on the Faith are parents. The Catholic community has a duty to support you, welcome you and encourage you. To this end we offer a special programme beginning with preparation for baptism. This is followed by preparation for First Confession and First Holy Communion and completed with preparation for Confirmation.

THE PROGRAMME

Baptism Preparation Course

We would like to meet both of you so we can explain how we approach baptism in this Parish, to answer your questions and to explain how the Church understands what baptism is so that you can freely choose this sacrament for your child, knowing exactly what you are letting yourself in for! To this end please come along to one of the Baptism Preparation Sessions. The dates are given overleaf.

2018

BAPTISM PREPARATION

If you want your child baptised you will need to attend one of the following sessions.

You are welcome to attend before you have had your baby.

21 January

15 April

15 July

28 October

All sessions take place in the Church Hall on a Sunday and begin promptly at 3.00 p.m.

**YOU WILL NEED TO COMPLETE A
BAPTISM APPLICATION FORM WHICH CAN BE
DOWNLOADED FROM
www.saintedmunds.net
(Copies of the form can also be found at the
end of this pack)**

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First Holy Communion and Confession

For children at St Mary's School this preparation takes place in the Church Hall after school, or for those not at a Catholic School, through the Saturday Catechism Group.

The school programmes are run by volunteer catechists in conjunction with the Parish Clergy.

The Saturday Group meets once a month in term time on Saturday mornings and is run by the Parish directly through a team of catechists. This is a two year programme beginning with First Confession at the age of 7 and First Holy Communion at the age of 8. Children should enrol at the age of 6.



This pack contains a series of sheets that explain how to set about arranging your child's baptism. There are various things to think about and some important decisions to be made. Please read the pack carefully before filling in the application form.

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Information

It can be hard work organising anything if you have a young baby or child in your family, and gathering family and friends together for a baptism and a party afterwards takes time and energy.

We can't help with the party, but here is some information which should help.
Please read everything before completing the forms.

Dates and Times

Afternoon baptisms take place on the **second** and **fourth** Sunday of each month. They begin at **3.00 p.m.** and usually the ceremony will be shared by other families. (We keep to a maximum of four.)

Baptisms can take place as part of a Sunday Mass, and if you choose this you will probably get the date you want. Please approach one of the Priests about arranging a baptism during a Mass. There are no baptisms during Lent. Easter is an especially appropriate time for celebrating the sacrament of Baptism.

The Ceremony

Parents and godparents should arrive at least ten minutes early. **ONE OF THE GROUP SHOULD GO INTO THE SACRISTY AND LET THE CELEBRANT KNOW THAT THEY HAVE ARRIVED.** They can then find seats near the font for their party and make themselves comfortable. Parents and Godparents and Witnesses should sit together - they will need to move to the font - and grandparents might like to sit behind them, as some celebrants like them to assist in anointing the child.

During the service the celebrant will direct all the participants. He will show them what to do, where to stand, what to hold.

If there are older siblings let them join you at the font so that they too are part of the service.

Traditionally, christening garments are white, but you can dress your child in whatever you wish. The only requirement is that you **bring a white garment** to put on the child at the appropriate time which is a symbol of the gift of holiness and freedom from sin which Baptism imparts. This is usually a white shawl that can be easily draped over the shoulders, but a cardigan or a piece of white fabric is fine too. It is a good idea to let one of the Godparents be responsible for holding on to this.

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Another Godparent can be responsible for lighting the Baptismal Candle. This Candle is lit from the Easter Candle and is a sign of the new Life which Jesus has shared with your child at his / her Baptism. Remember to take this home with you and keep it safe. It can be re-lit on the anniversary of the child's baptism, and increasingly they are used to light candles when the child gets married.

Babies cry at christenings! If yours does don't worry, try to keep calm. If you want to get up and move around with your child, do. If you have a baby that needs feeding, go ahead and feed. Stick to your routine!

Other Points

Do let visitors to our Church know that there is a lavatory at the front of the Church behind the blue velvet curtain. It is suitable for disabled people.

Celebrants have differing views on whether video recordings and photographs should be taken during the service. **Please ask first.** Celebrants who are not happy with it will usually pose for photos once the service is over, those who have no objections can suggest the best position for the photos / recording to be taken.

A Commemorative Baptism Certificate is usually supplied at the end of the service - subject to the vagaries of the Computer! This will give the date of the Baptism and the relevant details to enable you to ask for an "official" Baptism Certificate when one is required - such as if you wish your child to attend a Catholic school.

And finally..... It is a long-standing tradition in the Catholic Church to give a "thanks offering" to the priest or deacon who conducts your service (known as a "Stole Fee"). For the priest or deacon, this forms an important part of his income so please give it serious consideration.

No charge is made for the Preparation Course or the Certificate and the Baptismal Candle is a gift from the Parish.



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Naming Your Child

At the beginning of the Baptismal Ceremony you are asked what name you have given your child. This is a solemn part of the ceremony where you proclaim to the Church the name that you have given your child. This name is a lifelong gift from you and because you have chosen to have your child baptised in the Christian Church it is assumed that you will give your child a Christian name.

The Church requires that **AT LEAST ONE** of your child's name be a Christian name, and that none of the other names you choose goes against our Christian faith, morals or principals in any way. A Christian name is normally the name of a Saint. Every culture and nation has its own lists of Saints. If you are in any doubt you should ask now.

Sometimes Saints' names come in different versions: e.g., *Callum* and *Colum* are versions of Columba who was a Celtic Saint and *Jean* is the French form of John. Either version is acceptable.

Sometimes a Christian name is not a Saint's name but refers to a Saint - *Assunta*, *Maris-Stella*, *Montserrat* and *Carmel* all refer to Saint Mary, Mother of Jesus.

Your baby's birthday might be a Saint's day. You might like to make one of your child's names that of the Saint. It is a good way of acknowledging the date.

If possible find out the meaning of the names you give your child: *Chukwu*, a Nigerian Christian name means *God's Gift*, just as *Christopher*, a Greek name means *Christ Bearer*. You can get this information from the larger public libraries. Ask the Reference Librarian for help. It may take a little work and looking around, but remember, the names you give your child are gifts for life. It is worth making a special effort now to make your choice Meaningful and prayerful.



*'Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you.
I have called you by your name, you are name.'*

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Choosing the Godparents

Godparents, sometimes called 'sponsors', are specially chosen to give support and encouragement to you as parents as you bring up your child in the Christian Faith.

Your choice of Godparents is important. It is not simply a social gesture or compliment to a member of the family, or an old friend. You are choosing for the good of **your child** and the people you choose should be discussed and thought about by both of you as parents before you approach them.

The Catholic Church requires only one Godparent, but you may have two. Godparents should be Roman Catholic, ideally confirmed and practising. *If there are any difficulties please see Deacon Seán or Deacon Rob or one of the priests as soon as possible.*

Godparents are people who can set a good example of what it means to be a Catholic for their Godchildren. You must be sure that they will care for the child spiritually as it grows up and be able to offer advice and encouragement. They should play a supportive role in its faith development and be present at special occasions such as First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

During the Baptism Service they make certain public promises which are explicitly Catholic and it is important that they understand this. It is an important commitment for Godparents to make, and it is important for your child's faith and future maturity to have Godparents who are willing to undertake this commitment.

If you have found someone who is **not** a Catholic but baptised and practising friend / member of the family from a different Christian denomination whom you would like to be a Godparent, though they cannot actually fulfil the role of Godparent we are happy to welcome them in the role of Witness. This is a role similar to that of Godparent but without the implication of having to set an example of being a good Catholic. For, while all Christians have the same faith in Jesus Christ, we do have important faith differences which affect the life and shape of our different faith communities. So, for example, some Christians do not believe in the real Presence of the Eucharist which alters the support and part they can play in preparation for First Holy Communion. *It is out of respect for these differences* that we acknowledge the different role they will play in the faith development of your child and therefore hope that this enables them to take on this important role with integrity.



This pack contains a number of forms titled Godparent / Witness - Statement of Commitment. Give one to each adult that you chose. Those you ask should tell you what their decision is and only if they agree to be Godparents or Witnesses should they complete the form and return it to us. If you need more forms please feel free to make more photocopies.

Godparent - Statement of Commitment

Godparents are specially chosen to give support and encouragement to Christian parents as they bring up their child in the Faith. They set an example of what it means to live the Christian faith as a practising Catholic. Through prayer, interest and thoughtfulness they act as an extended family and represent the Church in the care and commitment given to their Godchild and the child's parents throughout its life. Please think through carefully if you are ready to take on this commitment.

Baptism is a sacrament, which marks a person's entry into God's family, the Church, and the Church regards your part in this sacrament as important.

Before returning this form please tell the parents of the child of your willingness to be a Godparent.

EACH GODPARENT NEEDS TO COMPLETE A SEPARATE FORM

I _____
(Please print your own name as you wish it to appear on the certificate)

I undertake to sponsor, as a Godparent

_____ *(Full name of child)*

at the Sacrament of Baptism

I was baptised as a CATHOLIC in _____

on _____
(Place and date of your Baptism)

***I understand the duties and obligations of being a Godparent
and freely undertake to fulfil them***

Signature _____

Print your name _____

Please return this form to:
Baptism
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Village Way, Beckenham, Kent. BR3 3NP

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EACH GODPARENT NEEDS TO COMPLETE A SEPARATE FORM

I _____
(Please print your own name as you wish it to appear on the certificate)

undertake to sponsor, as a Godparent _____
(Full name of child)

at the Sacrament of Baptism

I was baptised as a CATHOLIC in _____

on _____
(Place and date of your Baptism)

***I understand the duties and obligations of being a Godparent
and freely undertake to fulfil them***

Signature _____

Print your name _____

Please return this form to:
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Church of St. Edmund of Canterbury
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Godparent

Witness - Statement of Commitment

Godparents and Witnesses are specially chosen to give support and encouragement to Christian parents as they bring up their child in the Catholic Faith. Through prayer, interest and thoughtfulness they act as an extended family and represent the Church in the care and commitment given to the child and the child's parents throughout its life.

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Before returning this form please tell the parents of the child of your willingness to be a Witness.

EACH WITNESS NEEDS TO COMPLETE A SEPARATE FORM

I _____ undertake to act as a Witness
(Please print your own name as you wish it to appear on the certificate)

at the Sacrament of Baptism _____
(Full name of child)

I was baptised in the _____
(Enter denomination)

on _____
(Place and date of your Baptism)

***I understand the duties and obligations of being a Witness
and freely undertake to fulfil them***

Signature _____

Print your name _____

Please return this form to:
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Before returning this form please tell the parents of the child of your willingness to be a Witness.

EACH WITNESS NEEDS TO COMPLETE A SEPARATE FORM

I _____ undertake to act as a Witness
(Please print your own name as you wish it to appear on the certificate)

at the Sacrament of Baptism _____
(Full name of child)

I was baptised in the _____
(Enter denomination)

on _____
(Place and date of your Baptism)

***I understand the duties and obligations of being a Witness
and freely undertake to fulfil them***

Signature _____

Print your name _____

Please return this form to:
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Baptism at St. Edmund's

Please complete this form in **BLOCK CAPITALS**. We use this information to complete your child's certificate. Please make it clear. Any problems call 020 8650 0970.

Your * Son / Daughter's Surname: _____
(* Please indicate as appropriate)

Your * Son / Daughter's Names: _____
(Please make these appropriate for your Child's Baptism, at least one must be a Christian, e.g. Saint's name.)

Your * Son / Daughter's date of Birth: _____

Your * Son / Daughter's Address: _____

(N.B. If your Child is not resident in this Parish, please speak to a Priest or Deacon)

Home Phone No.: _____

Your Child's Father's (Full) Name: _____

Your Child's Father's Religion / Denomination: _____

Your Child's Mother's (Full) Name: _____

Your Child's Mother's Maiden Name: _____

Your Child's Mother's Religion / Denomination: _____

Place and Address of marriage: _____

The date that **both of you** will attend /have attended the Parish Baptism Course: _____

Agreed date of Baptism (to be arranged with Priest / Deacon): _____

Godparents: _____
(Must be baptised Catholics.)

Witnesses: _____
(Must be christened in a Christian faith.)

Signed: _____ (Mother) _____ (Father)

Date: _____

Please return this form to the Parish Office.