

YOUR CHILD'S BAPTISM
AT ST MARY'S, SOUTH RUISLIP
(CHURCH OF ENGLAND)



A Guide for Parents: Preparing for your Child's Baptism

Children are a priceless gift from God. Just as children enrich the life of their home family, so to do children enrich the life of the Church family. Baptism welcomes them into the Church family as children of God. This leaflet will help explain something of the significance of the Sacrament of Baptism, and provide some practical advice to help you prepare for the baptism of your child.

What is Baptism?

Baptism:

- Washes away Original Sin
- Is the way in which we are made able to go to heaven
- Is the means by which we become members of the Church
- Makes us part of the Body of Christ
- Implants the life of God within us (Sanctifying Grace)
- Calls us to be saints
- Gives us the gift of faith, and the obligation to practise the Faith

What does Baptism achieve?

We might ask, 'How can Baptism give eternal life?' and we can find the answer first in the words of Jesus Christ when He told the apostles to 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.' (Matthew 28:19) Baptism makes us disciples because through baptism we enter into the communion of the Church, Christ's mystical body.

In the Church we are supported in our faith and in our everyday life by a circle of Christian friends. We grow in communion with them by participating regularly in the sacraments, and particularly in Sunday Mass. By regularly participating in Mass, we also grow in communion with Jesus Christ, and He shapes our lives by inviting us into greater Grace. It is through this Grace that flows from Jesus Christ that eternal life becomes possible for us. Baptism is the first door that opens us to this amazing, life-changing Truth!

In other words, Baptism is the beginning of something extraordinary. In deciding to have your child baptized, you are giving him or her a priceless gift. Jesus said that He came into this world so that we may have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10). God does not intend that we merely have a life which is a bit good. Rather, God wants us to have life in all its fullness, the very life of God Himself. God promises this to us through the gift of Baptism.

How do I arrange my child's Baptism?

If you would like your child to be baptized, please contact one of the clergy of St Mary's. Arrangements will need to be made so that at least one of the clergy will discuss Baptism preparation with you, along with possibly other members of the Parish's Pastoral Team. The Baptism preparation will help you get to know more about St Mary's and the family provisions that are offered at St Mary's. Baptism preparation will also provide opportunities to discuss the nature of Baptism, your role in the rite of Baptism, and your responsibilities in raising your baptized child in the Christian faith.

What practical things must I consider?

You must first consider how you will pass on the Christian faith to your child. As parents, you are the first teachers of the Christian faith to your child, and this is both your right and responsibility.

You will need to choose godparents for your child. At least two are necessary, and at least one must be of the same sex as your child. Godparents must be baptized themselves, and should also be confirmed. You may have more than two godparents, but it is discouraged to have more than four. At least one of your godparents should be a practicing Christian – someone who regularly goes to church, reads the Bible, and has a visible prayer life. Godparents, after all, have the task of making sure that your child is brought up in the Faith. If you wish to have additional witnesses who are not practicing Christians, then the witnesses could respond along with the godparents at the Baptism ceremony, but only the Christian godparents would be written into the register.

How can I learn more about the Christian faith?

If you are an adult who is not yet baptized and confirmed, you should speak with one of the clergy about receiving instruction in the Faith.

A child's Baptism can be an opportunity for parents to learn more about their own faith. If you feel you would like to learn more about your own Christian faith, you might consider attending talks or a course offered by St Mary's. It is expected that parents are to attend Sunday Mass as they prepare for their children's Baptism, as this provides a direct way of understanding the Christian faith. Moreover, Sunday Mass attendance by parents should then become a lived-out model for children as they grow older. As your child grows, there will be opportunities for your child to also grow in faith through Sunday school, children's programmes, and youth programmes. Please speak with one of the clergy for more details.

How do I get in touch with St Mary's?

The best way to discuss the arrangement of your child's Baptism is to come to a Mass and speak with one of the clergy right after the Mass. You can find information about Mass times at www.stmarychurchruilsip.co.uk, or you can call the church at 020 8842 3783.