

Stella Maris Parish

Catholic Parish of Christchurch Diocese
739 Ferry Road, Woolston, Christchurch 8023
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Having your baby baptised



Why does the Church baptise children?

From the very beginning, the Church has always baptised children as well as adults. Our Lord said: "Unless a person is reborn in water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

This means that children should not be deprived of baptism. Children are precious to Jesus. He loves them dearly. He wants to save them by giving his blessings to them as they grow up in the spiritual family he began, the Church. We experience the Church and belong to the Church in our local parish. It is there that we gather to worship God and to learn together about the ways of God. So, baptism takes place in our parish Church for it is there that the parish family gather.

***For more information Contact: Pastoral Worker – Janette Bradbrook 02102936508
or email Janette@stellamarisparish.org.nz***

Is “Christening” the same as “Baptism”?

The word “baptism” means washing or cleansing in water. It comes from the Greek language. In the Church, baptism does not mean just ordinary washing or bathing with water. It has a sacred meaning. Baptism always means the washing with water that has the spiritual meaning given to it by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. That is why it is also called ***Christening*** but more correctly it is called the ***Sacrament of Baptism***.

What is the spiritual meaning of Baptism?

When a child is baptised by the Church, Jesus baptises that child. He sends the Holy Spirit into that child. The Holy Spirit makes this child a ***child of God***. No man or woman can do that. Only God can make someone his son or daughter. God does this in the Sacrament of Baptism, and that is why we should ensure that our children are baptised.

When is the right time to baptise my child?

Ordinarily, once baby has been born and you have settled back at home, you should make contact with the parish to see about Baptism Preparation and arranging the date of the baptism of your child.

How do I prepare for the Baptism of my child?

We ask that mother, father, and the godparents attend a preparation session to explore the meaning of this sacrament which you are requesting for your baby. Ideally you would arrange a baby-sitter for that meeting. It is important, where possible, that the godparents attend this session with you as their role is very important. You can also join this preparation session before your baby is born. The Sacrament of Baptism can only take place once the preparation evening has been attended. Preparation details will be published in the news bulletin.

When is the Sacrament of Baptism celebrated?

In our parish we celebrate baptisms on the **fourth Saturday** of every month at 11.30am. There may be other families to christen their babies. This is because the rite of Baptism is a celebration for the whole family of the Church, not just your family!

How do I choose the godparents?

To be a child's godparent is an honour and a privilege. It means that the parents want this person to be an influence for good on their child; to be a good example; to be a guardian and helper "in the things of the Holy Spirit and of faith". For this reason, a godparent should be a Catholic over 16 years of age, who has received the Holy Eucharist and who lives a life of faith.

Baptism preparation for parents

*(This baptism preparation program is for those children who are under catechumenal age-under age of seven and **not** for those children whose parents are non-Catholics)*

To attend this baptism preparation program, at least one of the parents must be baptised Catholic and their children must be under seven years. One of the Catholic parents must give us a copy of the baptism certificate along with the completed baptism information sheet or with the google form.

OCIA: The Order of Christian Initiation of Adult

This program is run only once a year.

It is about becoming Catholic. If both parents are not Catholic and wish to become Catholic, they need to go through the OCIA program. It is a journey to know about the Catholic faith, Sacraments, Bible and about Catholic teachings and practices. The reception of the non-Catholics into the Catholic Church takes place after the completion of this program. Normally the reception of non-Catholic into the Catholic Church takes place on the Easter Vigil. Their reception could be delayed if they have not completed the program. Contact Fr Job: frjobs@gmail.com

OCIC: The Order of Christian Initiation of Children

This program is run only once a year.

If the children are above the age of seven, these children have to go through the OCIC program. The reception of the non-Catholics into the Catholic Church takes place on Easter Vigil after the completion of this program. It is requirement that at least one of the parents has to be Catholic. Contact Janette Bradbrook 02102936508 or Fr Job.

To know more about the OCIA/OCIC program, contact priests or the pastoral worker.

[Download a copy of this Baptism leaflet in pdf.](#)

[Please complete Google form and submit it to register for the baptism preparation and baptism.](#)

STEPS TO TAKE

1. If both parents are non-Catholics, this program is not for them. They may please contact Fr Job and know how they can make the journey to become Catholic.
2. If one of the parents is catholic, contact the pastoral worker and give her the completed Baptism information form along with the copy of the baptism certificate or complete the **google form**.
3. The pastoral worker will arrange to include you in the next Baptism Preparation Programme. This is held once in every month. Get in touch with the parish office (Janette) to know the day, time, and venue.
4. Only those who are registered with the parish worker will be allowed to attend this baptism preparation program.
5. Both parents and godparents have to attend this program.
6. If you live outside our Parish boundary and do not worship at *Stella Maris Parish*, you should have your child baptised in the parish where you live. Contact should be made with your local Parish Priest.
7. If you are coming to *Stella Maris Parish* (e.g. for Christmas or holidays or any other purpose) and wish to have your child baptised, you should obtain a letter **of permission** from your parish for the baptism to be celebrated here. This should be forwarded to us in good time before you arrive.
8. Please bring a **Baptism Candle** on the day of Baptism. It is available to buy from the Catholic shop.
9. It is customary to make an **offering** (called a "stole fee") after a baptism (as with a marriage or funeral). This is not retained by the Priest personally but goes towards the upkeep of all the priests of the Diocese. This is an offering and is never insisted upon, as we do not "pay" for sacraments. No-one is ever refused the sacraments because of a difficulty in making an offering.