

Homework for the Parents!

Before your child comes to the first 'Baptism session, we ask that you chat with them about their **name**... how did you choose their name? Is there a story behind it? Are they named after somebody? Do you know what their name means?

Our Lady of Dolours Catholic Parish

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Clergy

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Children's Ministries

Co-Ordinator
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A Parent's Blessing for a Child

(pray this at home together)

Father,
Bless our child, (name),
whom you have placed in our care.
May he/she know, truly and deeply,
how precious he/she is,
how much you delight in him/her.

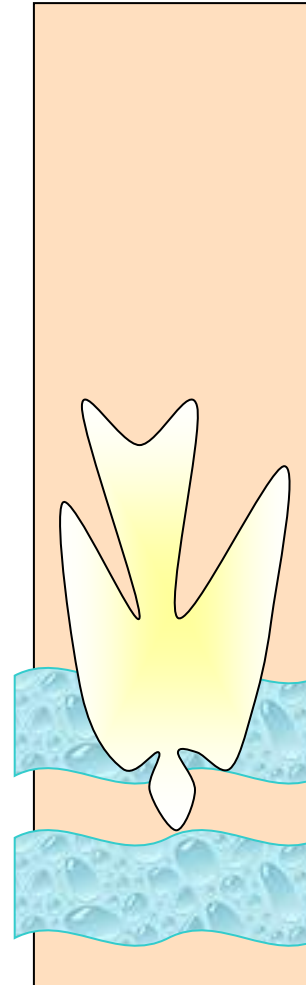
Jesus, be a steady friend
and companion to this child.
Help (name) to grow in truth and wisdom
and may he/she always turn to you for guidance.

Spirit of God, send your love upon our child.
Fill him/her with your peace
and protect him/her from harm.

We ask this in the name of the Father,
the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Childrens Baptism

Preparation for children aged 6-12 years
At Our Lady of Dolours, Parish Chatswood



'My child would like to become a Catholic.'

'I would like my child to become a Catholic.'

Wonderful! We welcome your enquiry and look forward to understanding more about you and your child and the events which have led to this request to become a Catholic. The first step is to make contact with our Children's Ministries Co-Ordinator.

The Catholic Church is a world-wide family of believers who follow the ways and teachings of Jesus Christ. Catholics share a distinct way of life characterised by certain beliefs, values and patterns of worship. The Catholic Church is not just a 'what' - a religion, but a 'who' - a people, a community.

Becoming a Catholic is a very serious commitment and entails certain obligations. It is not simply a 'membership badge', but a commitment to a community and a way of living.

A child being baptised will need support to grow into this commitment and way of life. Usually this support comes from a child's Catholic parent/s who are raising their child to be Catholic. In a situation where neither parent is a Catholic, it is important that we discuss with you what support is available to your child and whether or not the decision to baptise your child is advisable at this time.

Parents teach and model the Catholic faith

Parents are the prime educators of their children. The Catholic Church recognises this and takes their role very seriously. That is why baptising a young child when neither parent is Catholic is not an automatic step, but requires careful thought and discernment by both parties: the family and the parish. Going to a Catholic school is a support, but it does not replace the Catholic upbringing a child receives at home.

[* Note: **Children's Liturgy** does not operate during school holidays]

'My child wants to become a Catholic. What do I do now?'

Step one:

Become acquainted with our parish community (if not already). One of the best ways to do this is to start coming to the 9am Sunday Mass with your child. This is a 'Family Mass' and on some Sundays it includes **Children's Liturgy*** - some special activities for the children to teach them about Jesus and to involve them in the parish community. Just turn up at church before 9am Mass, sit towards the front, and encourage your child to join in with the other children as invited by the priest. Or, you can also just sit in the pews and watch what goes on.

Step two:

If you have been coming to church for a while and your child is still keen to be baptised, approach our Children's Ministries Co-Ordinator or one of our clergy to arrange a meeting. Alternatively, you can submit a 'Kid's Baptism Enrolment' form (available from the Parish website) and a parish team member will contact you.

Step three:

After meeting with parish staff, if Baptism is considered an appropriate step, we will invite you and your child to attend our **Childrens Baptism** preparation sessions. This is for children who are preparing to be baptised and their parents.

Step four:

During the preparation sessions we encourage you to continue to bring your child to the **9.00am Family Mass** and to participate in **Children's Liturgy*** and other activities for children held in this Mass. In this way they

continue to learn about Jesus and to develop the habit of coming to church and mixing with their Catholic peers.

Step five:

On a set Sunday of the month, the children preparing for baptism will receive a special **anointing and prayer** during the 9am Mass. We call this step 'the Presentation'.

The Baptism itself

The baptism ceremony is a special family time. It is also special for our parish community, because baptism is the time when the Christian community welcomes a new member into its midst.

There are a number of symbols used in the baptism ceremony: water, oil, candle, a white garment. We will talk more about these symbols at **Childrens Baptism**.

The child to be baptised must have at least one godparent who is a fully initiated, practising Catholic over the age of 16.

The godparent/s stand beside the parents during the ceremony. Their role is to support the parents in raising their child in the Catholic faith. They are called to take a special interest in their godchild's personal and spiritual development.

If your child does not already have a Christian name (a saint's name), he/she may like to choose one for the Baptism.



When does my child receive Holy Communion?

Baptism is the first step of initiation into the Catholic Church. There are other sacraments (sacred rituals) which complete your child's initiation: Confirmation, First Communion and also Reconciliation. Your child is eligible to prepare for these sacraments when he/she has been baptised, and is 8 years of age or older.

The parish has a 12-18 month process called the **Children's Sacramental preparation program** by which a child prepares for and receives these sacraments.

Further information & enrolment details are available on the Parish website and in the bulletin during the enrolment period.