

# Baptism Preparation

At Our Lady of Dolours, Catholic Parish of Chatswood

Congratulations on the safe arrival of your baby into God's beautiful world. Your child is at the threshold of life's journey and we know you wish the very best for him/her.

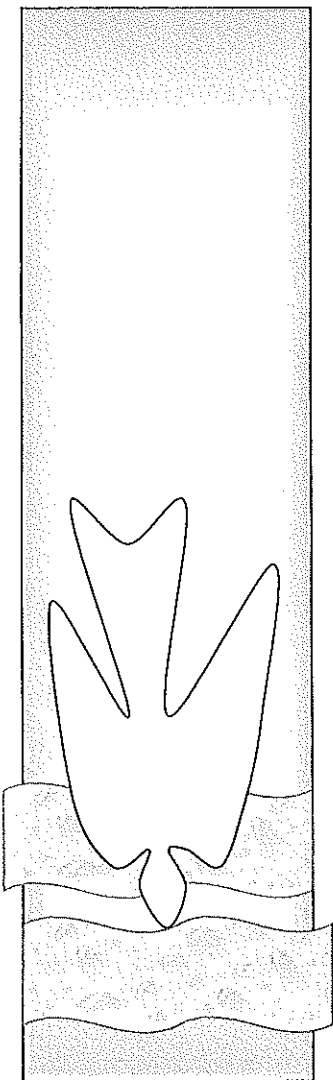
Our Catholic community here at Our Lady of Dolours is keenly aware of the joys and struggles parents face in today's world, and wishes to offer you support and encouragement.

## The Gift of Baptism

Your desire for baptism is part of the journey you make with your child in the great unfolding of life.

At baptism your child is enveloped in God's love. He/she is brought to Jesus Christ in a very intimate way and becomes a member of Christ's family, the Church.

By seeking baptism for your child you promise to teach your child to avoid evil and to love God and neighbour. You promise to raise your child in the Catholic way of life. You also pray for the grace to be good parents, because as the baptism ceremony says, you are the "first teachers in the ways of faith".



## Booking the Baptism

You can book a baptism by phoning the parish office and asking for a baptism enrolment form to be sent out to you; downloading an enrolment form from the parish website or, alternatively you can pick up an enrolment form from the main foyer of the church. Return the completed form to the parish office as soon as possible. Our parish secretary will then contact you to confirm the time and arrangements.

It is customary to make a donation to the priest at the time of the baptism. As a guide, most people give between \$20-\$50+.

If you are not parishioners, it is important to inform your parish priest that you are having your child baptised at a different parish. You may like to do the baptism preparation in your own parish.

## A Practical Guide

At Our Lady of Dolours, Chatswood there are three steps in the celebration of infant baptism.

- An **information session** held on a Saturday at 4pm in the parish meeting rooms.
- A **presentation** of your child at one of the Sunday Masses where he/she is welcomed by the community.
- The **baptism** which is held every Sunday at 12noon, except the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month when it is held during the 9am Mass. You choose which option suits best.

A list of available dates for these three steps is attached to this leaflet. Select the dates which suit you and include them on the enrolment form.

## The Preparation (Information session)

Our **Baptism Team** will help you prepare for the baptism. In a relaxed, small group setting, they will talk with you and other parents who are also preparing for their child's baptism about the meaning of baptism and the practicalities of the ceremony. This meeting is held on a Saturday at 4pm. It takes about an hour. Ideally both parents come to this session. It is a welcoming environment for all: non-Catholic and Catholic, those involved in the Church, those not involved. Babies and children are also welcome.

## The Presentation

During one of the Masses on a Sunday prior to the baptism date your child is presented to the community. It is a very simple ceremony by which the whole congregation shows their support for you as you prepare for your child's baptism. We will explain this further at the information session.

## 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. That is why the church wants every baptism to be a community celebration, not a private one. Even when a baptism is booked for a time outside of Mass, it is not a private ceremony but open to other families who may wish to have their child baptised at this time.

A **baptism candle** is part of the ceremony. Parents or godparents or grandparents may like to provide an appropriately decorated candle. Alternatively the parish can provide a simple complimentary candle.

Clothing in a **white garment** is part of the ceremony to symbolise your child's new life in Christ. This is an appropriate moment to put on that special christening dress (perhaps a family heirloom). Alternatively, the child can come to the ceremony already dressed in white. The parish also provides a simple complimentary white garment.

**Details like these can be discussed at the information session.**

## Godparents

There are normally two godparents chosen. One godparent must be a fully initiated, practising Catholic over the age of 16. It is a tradition (though not a strict rule) that one of the names you give your child be a saint's name. The godparents stand beside the parents during the ceremony, and are called to take a special interest in their godchild's personal and spiritual development. If a godparent cannot be present at the ceremony, another person may represent him/her on the day.

## Some questions to think about

### God in our life

What has been my experience of God and Church:  
As a child?  
And now as an adult?

### God in our child's life

What are some of the ways that we would like our child to think about God?

### Dreams and hopes

What hopes do we have for our child on this occasion of baptism and looking forward to future years?

## Baptism Display

Please bring a photo of your child to the information session. It will be included on our baptism photo board in the church. (Photos of your child's baptism day are also warmly received.) In this way, parishioners can put a 'face' to the children they are praying for.

## Our Lady of Dolours Catholic Parish

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Parish Priest: Fr Paul Finucane  
Tel: 9410 9000

Further enquiries:  
Nicole Gorman  
Parish Secretary  
Phone: 9410 9020

## 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.

**Return enrolment form to parish office prior to the information session.**

**For your own reference, make a note of your chosen dates below.**

Preparation: .....

Presentation: .....

Baptism: .....