



Parish of Port Melbourne and Middle Park

Baptism

at
Saint Joseph's
Port Melbourne
&
Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Middle Park

Information for Parents and Godparents

Christian Initiation

Baptism is the beginning of a process of belonging to the Church. We know that children need time to grow and develop. The Catholic Church spaces the process of Christian Initiation over many years. The Church is also conscious that your child will one day need to 'own for themselves' what you do for them at Baptism.

Christian Initiation for children begins with the celebration of Baptism. Over the next eleven years your child will also celebrate First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation which completes initiation into the Catholic Church.

Baptism Celebration

At both Saint Joseph's Church, Port Melbourne and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, Middle Park, Baptism is celebrated on the first and third Sunday at 12.00pm at Saint Joseph's and on the second and fourth Sunday at 11.30am at Mount Carmel after the 10.30am Mass.

Godparents

Godparents represent the wider spiritual family of the child. As such, they are an ever-present sign of the Church's care for your child and its involvement in his or her spiritual and religious development. The primary role of a godparent is to help the child develop a living faith and to persevere in living this faith as he or she grows and develops.

Godparents should be constantly involved in the life of your child and, in particular, when your child celebrates the other sacraments of initiation: Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation. Godparents also help the parents so that your child will come to profess and live the Christian faith within our Catholic tradition. In order to do this, at least one of the Godparents must be a practising Catholic who witnesses to Christian faith in word and action in their daily lives. Baptised Christians of other faith traditions can be Christian witnesses at the Baptism ceremony.

The Symbols of Baptism

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The symbols, which you will provide, are the baptismal robe – which is separate from the clothing in which you choose to dress your child for this occasion – and the baptismal candle. You may choose to invite a godparent to be involved in the preparation of these symbols.

Water

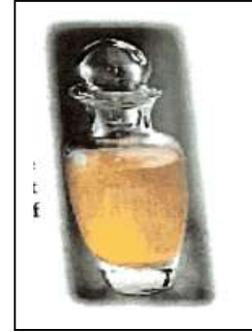
One by one, the children will be baptised at the Baptismal Font in the Church. Water is essential for life. Without it things die. It is necessary for growth and development. The water of Baptism is a symbol of God's own life poured out for us in Christ so that we can remain alive in God.

After Baptism, the priest will use the symbols of Oil, Clothing and Light to express your child's membership in the Body of Christ.

Oil

We use the Oil called Chrism (from the Greek word for Christ) to anoint your child. This oil is consecrated by the Archbishop each year and sent out to the parish Churches for Baptism.

Oil soothes and heals, nourishes and protects, penetrates and becomes part of us. The oil is a wonderful symbol of Christ who will be a source of healing, nourishment and protection for your child. Like the Oil, the spirit of Christ penetrates and becomes part of us.



Clothing

The white baptismal robe in which the child is clothed during the ceremony is a symbol that your child is now clothed in Christ. It is the face of Christ that he or she is now to present to the world - a face which speaks of love and compassion, peace and grace.

The baptismal robe can be embroidered or painted with a baptismal symbol, the child's baptismal name and date. It can be trimmed decoratively if you choose.



You can also purchase Baptismal Robes ready made from:

Sister Disciples of the Divine Master,
830 Riversdale Road
Camberwell East Vic 3124
Telephone: (03) 9888 4754 Fax: (03) 9836 0312

Light

Your child is presented with a special Baptism Candle which is lit from the Paschal (or Easter) Candle in the Church. The flame is a symbol of the flame of faith which will burn throughout your child's life.

The candle is entrusted to you and the Godparents. Its flame (the faith of your child) is to be nourished and kept burning until your child is old enough to keep the flame burning itself.

Baptismal candles may be purchased from:
Sister Disciples of the Divine Master
830 Riversdale Road
Camberwell East, Vic 3124
Telephone (03) 9888 4754 Fax (03) 9836 0312
OR



Catholic Central Bookshop
(next to St Francis' Church)
Lonsdale Street
Melbourne
Telephone (03) 9639 0844



Personalised baptismal candles may be purchased from:

Benedictine Candles
PO Box 307,
Yarra Glen, Vic 3775

Telephone enquiries or orders Mondays only
between 9.00am and 12 noon
or between 2.00 and 5.00pm
on (03) 9730 1284
email enquiries: bencandles@netspace.net.au
Order must be placed 4 weeks in advance.

Other examples of Baptism symbols



Celebrating the Sacrament of Baptism

Naming & Asking

After the Scripture readings and homily, the priest will invite the parents and godparents to stand in front of the altar. He will ask you what name you have given to your child. This is an important moment - the first public naming of your child.

Next, the priest will ask you what you are asking of the Church for your child. In your own words you ask for your child to be baptised.

Parents' Promise

The priest will then remind you that, in asking for Baptism for your child, you are accepting the responsibility of forming him or her in the Catholic faith. This is a serious promise on your behalf. It means that you will nurture the religious faith of your child and foster its development. You will be the first teachers of your child in the practise of love - love of God and love of neighbour.

Nurturing Faith in the Community

Part of nurturing your child's faith is the regular attendance at Sunday Mass so that you and your child can practise being members of the Church. The Church is the 'school' in which we learn to practise love by reflecting on and celebrating God's love for us, and by trying to image that love as a community.

It is at Mass that we are formed as the people of Christ through listening to the Scriptures, praying the prayers together, remembering what Jesus did for us through his life, death and resurrection and receiving the Body and Blood of Christ which sustains us on our journey.

Children cannot relate to what they do not experience. For example, no one would expect a child to learn about football by simply signing them up as a member of the local football club, and never letting them play the game. How can they ever learn about what it means to be a member of a community if they rarely or never experience it? How can they learn the full extent of our Catholic faith if they never have the opportunity to practise it?

As parents, you regularly take time and trouble to introduce your child to new experiences. You know that they need to repeat experiences in order to understand and value them. It is exactly the same with their faith and religious

development. They need regular, repeated experiences. They need to practise love and their membership in the Church.

Godparents' Promise

After you have said 'Yes' to this question, the priest will then ask the Godparents about their willingness to help you bring up this child in the Catholic faith. Therefore it is necessary that at least one Godparent is a practising Catholic.

Community's Promise

The priest will then ask the community if they are ready and willing to support you and your children.

Welcome to the family of Christ

Then the priest will welcome your child into the Church by marking the Sign of the Cross on your child's forehead. He will also invite you and the Godparents to do the same.

Welcome to our family

Finally, the priest will ask the community to express its welcome of your child and you will be presented with the certificate which records your child's Baptism.

Please return your completed Baptism booking form to:

The Carmelite Parish Office

274 Rouse Street

Port Melbourne Vic 3207

Tel: (03)9681 9600

Email parish@sj-mc.org.au