

## Information about having your baby baptised at Saint Clement's

- First of all, congratulations on the birth of your child! And we are so pleased you want to have your child baptised into the Catholic Church and thus pass on to your child the Catholic Faith that you yourself have inherited.
- We ask that you attend two sessions of preparation before your child is baptised. These sessions usually happen on a Monday in the Tivey Room at 8pm and are advertised well in advance in our parish newsletter. We have about three courses a year.
- After you have attended the baptism class, you can then book a date with Father Alexander or our catechist for your child to be baptised. Most baptisms take place on the first Saturday of the month at 1pm; they can also take place during Mass; other times can be negotiated.
- Every candidate (that means the baby about to be baptised) needs to have two godparents, one male and one female, though you are free to choose more. The godparents must be baptised themselves and at least one of them must be a practising Catholic.
- At the ceremony, the candidate is presented with a lighted candle, which the church provides, though you are free to bring your own baptismal candle if preferred. The candidate is also clothed with a white garment, which is usually a shawl. This must be white. Any white shawl will do, though some like to have special baptismal robes commissioned for the occasion, which is fine.
- Baptism is free, though people often ask if there are fees to pay. It is customary to make an offering to the priest, in accordance with your means, as much or as little as you like. Because people ask for guidance, Fr Alexander has been giving the following advice for the last twenty years: it should be a sum between £5 and £50, and a multiple of 5.
- It is a good idea to familiarise yourself with what happens at the ceremony. There is an online guide here: <https://bedfordcatholic.org/documents/2015/5/RiteOfBaptism.pdf>
- You may like to have a reading at the baptism. If so, ask one guest to be the reader for the Bidding Prayers, and one other to do the Scripture reading. There is no need for more than one reading from the Scriptures.

There is a full selection here: [BAPTISM OF CHILDREN \(cpcb.org.uk\)](http://cpcb.org.uk)

- You are encouraged to have your child 'welcomed' at Sunday Mass, if the child is to be baptised at a later date. You will of course need to book this with Fr Alexander or our catechist. A welcome consists of the first of two ceremonies – the signing with the Cross and the first anointing; the rest of the ceremonies then take place later at the baptism proper. Do consider this, as it is a nice way of showing your child to the community and for the Church to welcome its new member.
- Finally, do not worry! After having had a baby, the baptism is the easy bit. We hope it will be a relaxed and joyful occasion for you, your family and your friends.