



ARRANGING BAPTISM  
at  
ST JOHN'S CATHEDRAL  
BRISBANE

## ***WELCOME***

Thank you for your enquiry about the baptism of your child. In this brochure we hope to explain a little of what baptism means.

We want you to know that you and your family are very welcome. The Good News of God's love belongs to everyone and not to just a few. We are pleased that this news is important to you - important enough for you to want to pass it on to your children.

The church community is here to support you. We know that God wants to bless you and your family life.

## ***God loves your children.***

Having children and bringing them up is a big responsibility. We spend a lot of time preparing for children. After their birth we work hard to care and provide for them, to keep them healthy, to show them love and to give them a good education and upbringing. We all want the best for our children, physically, emotionally, cognitively and socially.

Baptism is a way of also looking after our children spiritually. At a baptism service, parents are reminded that their child is God's precious gift and that God loves the child. After that the parents and godparents - and the church too - do everything they can to help the child deepen this special relationship with God.

## ***Why do you want your child baptised?***

Which of these is true for you?

- \* it seems right.
- \* it's what your friends have done.
- \* your family expect it.
- \* you want to acknowledge God's love and involve God in your child's life.

There is no one right reason. Choosing baptism for your child is choosing to care for them.

## ***What is Baptism?***

Baptism is a simple ceremony of washing in water. Christians have practiced baptism since the earliest times. All who are baptised are received into the family of the Christian church.

### ***What happens before Baptism?***

As part of the preparation for baptism into God's family here at St John's, we ask you to bring your child to the Sunday service at 9.30am on the first Sunday of the month in which the baptism is being held. During the service your child will be anointed with special oil (the Oil of Catechumens) and prayed for and welcomed by the community. Please invite your child's godparents to this service also. Following the service, at 11am, there will be a short (30 minute) session of preparation near the font for you and the families of others being baptised that month.

### ***When do Baptisms take place?***

All our Baptisms take place on Sunday mornings, either during the 7.30am or 9.30am service on the third Sunday of the month, or a separate service at 11.30am on the second Sunday of the month.

### ***What actually happens during the Baptism service?***

During the service the clergy team will show you what to do and when to do it. When it is time for the Baptism itself to take place, the parents and godparents, who are the sponsors of the child will be asked to stand.

### ***Symbols will be used.***

Four symbols will be used during the service.

Each of these help us to understand the meaning of baptism.

**Water** - There is a special prayer in which God is asked to bless the child through the waters of Baptism. Water is essential to life. Without it we die. In the same way, we cannot live without the life-giving love of God.

*'Baptism' comes from a word meaning to dip (in water) or to wash.*

*To be baptised is like having a bath to cleanse and revive us spiritually.*

**Oil** - Your child is anointed with holy oil, blessed by the Archbishop at a special service each year just before Easter. Oil is traditionally used in the important rituals of life (e.g. baptism, confirmation,

ordination, coronation). Anointing in the shape of a cross or chi(χ) is the 'christening' part of the service and shows that your child too has a unique calling in God's creation. *Anointing with oil signifies the presence and power of God the Holy Spirit in your child's life.*

**A candle** - The Parish will present your child with a baptismal candle which will be lit from the flame of the Easter candle. *The candle symbolises the light of Christ which shines even in the darkest corners of the world. Christians are called to show that light in their daily lives.*

### ***You will make promises***

A Baptism is a very important occasion. It involves serious promises and decisions. You promise to bring up your child in a Christian home and to model for your child what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

### **The parents and godparents will first be asked these 3 questions:**

Will you accept the responsibilities placed upon you in bringing this child for baptism?

*I will.*

Are you willing to answer on behalf of this child?

*I am.*

By your own prayers and example, by your friendship and love, will you

encourage this child in the life and faith of the Christian community?

*I will, with God's help.*

**You will also be asked to make a statement of faith—to declare your allegiance to Christ and your rejection of all that is evil.**

In order to answer the next questions honestly, you will need to think carefully about your life, your own need of God and your desire to follow Christ's way. You will need to accept your failures and to ask God for forgiveness and strength.

Do you turn to Christ?

*I turn to Christ.*

Do you repent of your sins?

*I repent of my sins.*

Do you reject selfish living, and all that is false and unjust?

*I reject them all.*

Do you renounce Satan and all evil?

*I renounce all that is evil.*

### ***What if I cannot make the promises?***

Some people may decide that they are unable or unwilling to make the promises, but still wish to give thanks for their child and to pray for God's blessing throughout the child's life. A Service of Thanksgiving may be more appropriate than a baptism in such circumstances. Speak to the clergy team if you would like more information about this service, or about ways to develop your own relationship with God.

### ***What is the significance or role of the Godparents?***

**Godparents** - Although parents take the major responsibility for the physical, mental and spiritual care and upbringing of children, they often appreciate the interest and help of special friends and relatives, including godparents.

**Choosing Godparents** - It is desirable that the Godparents are baptised and at least one confirmed. After all, godparents make the same promises as the parents at the baptism of the child. Most people choose two close friends or relatives, some have none, some have three, the maximum is four.

**Role of Godparents** - being asked to be a godparent is a compliment and a privilege but it is also a responsibility. Godparents are invited to accept the challenge of entering fully into the faith into which their

godchild is being baptised. They are being entrusted with a share in the upbringing of a child and have the special tasks of loving, encouraging and praying for the child, and, by word and example, helping the child grow into a mature Christian.

### ***How much does Baptism cost?***

There is no charge for baptism. However, if you wish to make a donation please place it in an envelope with the child's name on and put it in the offertory plate either during the service or at the end of service, or give it to a member of the clergy team.

### ***What happens after Baptism?***

We will keep in touch with you about special children's and family services and events, particularly at Christmas and Easter so your child comes to know the story of Christianity which they have been baptised into. Of course we are happy to see you at church whenever you can come. Our Church welcomes families at all our services and Sunday School operates during the 9.30 am Sunday service, in school term. You are important to us and will enrich our community.

### ***Preparation and Procedure for baptism:***

- \* 1st contact is normally made with a phone call or email from parents. Available times for baptism can be discussed.
  
- \* The Baptism Brochure and form is emailed or posted, and the form needs to come back to office at least a month prior to the baptism.
  
- \* Baptisms at the Cathedral can be held during our 7.30am or 9.30am services on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month, or at 11.30am on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month.
  
- \* Once a date is decided on, the parents and Godparents come to the baptism preparation which is held on the first Sunday of every month at the 9.30am service, for prayers and anointing, followed by preparation in the baptistry at 11am.

### *Some notes on the Baptistry*

The legs of the font are carved from fossiliferous limestone or Frosterley Marble, a stone quarried in Weardale, near Durham in England. Limestone sea beds, containing fossil corals, are the raw material of “Frosterley Marble”. The skeletons of marine creatures can easily be traced in the pillars of the font, a clear reminder of the glory and the beauty that exists in the God’s Creation. The pillars of Frosterley Marble support the font, where entry into the Christian faith is marked through the ritual of Baptism when water is used as the symbol of new life.

Above and looking down on the font is the Seffrin Crucifix, a memorial to Franklin J. Morgan, son of F.J.E. Morgan, Cathedral Warden, and nephew of Paul Morgan who as Midshipman was serving on the destroyer HMAS Voyager when it went down. The figure suggests triumph through suffering, and the metallic form of the figure hints at the disaster in which Franklin Morgan died. Its position over the font points to the possibility promised in baptism of new life beyond that suffering,. The crucifix and the legs of the font do more than simply support and focus our attention on the basin of the font. They are linked into the meaning and promises of baptism and together they enhance the symbolism and the mystery of the Sacrament.



**\*Please check with clergy in regards to photography. Professional photographers are asked to contact with clergy.**

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*Visit our website at [www.stjohnscathedral.com.au](http://www.stjohnscathedral.com.au)*

**We hope that your baby's baptism will be a wonderful and memorable occasion for you all.**

