



Downpatrick Parish



Diocese of Down and Connor

BAPTISM PREPARATION PROGRAMME

Congratulations and Thanks



Congratulations on the arrival of your new baby! Our parish community joins you in thanking God for the gift of new life. The birth of your child is a very special joy for you and the Church is glad to share this joy with you.

Every parent wants the best for their child. The birth of your baby causes you to pause and reflect on what you hope for this new life entrusted to you. For Catholics this hope is expressed in Baptism and the invitation it offers your child to share in the life and Spirit of God. As parents, you are the first and most important teachers of your child's faith and spirituality. You nourish God's gift of faith in your child and make it come alive for them by living and sharing your faith with them. Your child will be carried to the Baptismal font by your faith.

Preparing for Your Child's Baptism

We have introduced a new programme for the celebration of Baptism in Downpatrick parish. We are currently in a pilot phase of it. Our hope is that this programme will enhance both the preparation and celebration of your child's Baptism and their welcome into the Christian community.

Your preparation has already begun, by the fact that you are considering bringing your child forward for Baptism. The programme we invite you to take part in spans a period of 6 weeks in advance of the Baptism and a life time beyond that.

Our preparation with you begins when you call the parish office (02844612084) to arrange a meeting. Mary is there to guide you in the necessary steps. We will offer you a position in one of our scheduled baptismal ceremonies at a date and time that is available and suits your needs.

Mary will require your contact details and she will give you an information pack containing the date you have chosen but also two other dates, those of the preparation meeting and a date when you are invited to come to Sunday Mass so that the parish community can pray for you and your child before their baptism. You will need to return a registration form, contained in the pack, to secure the date and in doing so you confirm you are available to take part in the different elements of the preparation programme.

The following is an outline of the programme steps:

Preparation Meeting

The preparation meeting takes place on the 3rd Thursday of each month in Patrick's Place, St Patrick's Church, Downpatrick. Patrick's Place is situated at the top end of the car park, below the extension to the church.

The preparation for your child's Baptism will take place about 1 month before the Baptism. For example, if your child's Baptism ceremony is in June then you will take part in the meeting on the 3rd Thursday of May.

The meeting is for all parents who will have a child baptised in the same month. You, therefore, will meet with other parents there. Please note that the Godparents of your child are encouraged to attend this meeting.

You will have received a document, in the information pack, '*Questions for Baptismal Preparation Meeting*'. We encourage you to take time to discuss and consider these questions in advance of the meeting.

The meeting will follow the following general format:

Over tea and coffee you will have the chance to meet with the group of parents who are scheduled for the same Baptism ceremony as you.

You will watch a video presentation on the Sacrament of Baptism. At three or four points you will be invited to be part of a discussion based around the questions provided to you in the information pack.

There will be an opportunity for Q & A.

The evening will finish with a reminder about the invitation to Sunday Mass letter that you will receive in your Baptismal pack when you come to register for your child's baptism.

Invitation to Sunday Mass before your child's Baptism

The Parish community, to which your child will belong would like to pray for you and your child as you prepare for your child's baptism.

You are therefore invited to attend Midday Sunday Mass on the last Sunday of the Month in which you do your course.

You will be welcomed to this Mass and the Parish Community will pray for you and your child at the Prayers of the Faithful during the celebration of the Mass.

Your family and the Sponsors/Godparents of your child are very welcome to join the parish community at this Mass.

Baptism Dates

Baptism ceremonies take place on most Sundays of the year at 1:30pm in St Patrick's Church.

After The Baptism Ceremony...

As your child grows it is important to pray with them, share some bible stories (maybe purchase a Children's Bible), visit the Church to light a candle for someone who is sick, attend Mass...etc.

We pray God's Blessing upon you as together with your child you continue your life journey growing in faith....

Registration of Baptism

The parish records the Baptism of your child in the Baptismal Register of the parish. This record includes the full names of the child, parents and godparents, the child's date of birth, the date of the baptism and the name of the officiating priest or deacon. A Baptism Remembrance will be given to you by the priest after the Baptismal ceremony.

Important Dates for 2019/2020

BAPTISM EVENING COURSE <i>3rd Thursday of the Month at 7.30 in Patrick's Place</i>	SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM <i>Sundays at 13.30</i>
16 th May 2019	June 2019
20 th June 2019	July 2019
18 th July 2019	August 2019
15 th August 2019	September 2019
19 th September 2019	October 2019
17 th October 2019	November 2019
21 st November 2019	December 2019
19 th December 2019	January 2020
16 th January 2020	February 2020
20 th February 2020	March 2020
19 th March 2020	April 2020
16 th April 2020	May 2020

You are therefore invited to attend 12 Noon Sunday Mass on the last Sunday of the Month in which you attend your preparation session.



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THE ROLE OF SPONSORS/GODPARENTS



In the early Church sponsors were appointed for all converts to Christianity. They would confirm that the person putting him/herself forward for Baptism was genuine and then would stand beside them and help them to grow in their Christian life. When infant Baptism became the usual practice in the second century it was felt that babies too needed adults to stand beside them and support them as they grew in their faith.

There is no legal role for Sponsors/Godparents but the Church expects them to stand with the parents in supporting the child. When the child is given the gift of new life in Baptism the Sponsors/Godparents undertake to help them to strive for maturity in faith, love and charity. In the service they will be asked, *'Are you ready to help the parents of this child in their duty as Christian parents?'* By answering positively they are pledging to be a friend in faith to the child, who can be called on in times of doubt, confusion and questioning. That is why, along with the parents, they will be asked to profess their own faith during the Baptism service and they will be called upon to reject all that is false and contrary to the Kingdom of God. This they must do in their own name and on behalf of the child.

What the Church teaches about the role of Sponsors/Godparents



- ❖ In so far as possible, a person being baptised is to be assigned a sponsor. In the case of infant Baptism, the sponsor's role is together with the parents to present the child for Baptism, to help it live a Christian life befitting the baptised and faithfully to fulfil the duties inherent in Baptism.
- ❖ One sponsor, male or female is sufficient, but there may be two, one of each sex.

To be admitted to undertake the office of sponsor, a person must:

- 1) Be appointed by the candidate for Baptism, or by the parents or whoever stands in their place, or failing these, by the parish priest/priest.
- 2) To be appointed the person, must be suitable for this role and have the intention of fulfilling it.
- 3) Be not less than sixteen years of age, unless a different age has been stipulated by the diocesan bishop, or unless the parish priest/priest considers that there is a just reason for an exception to be made.
- 4) Be a Catholic, who has been confirmed and has received the blessed Eucharist, and who lives a life of faith which befits the role to be undertaken.
- 5) Not labour under a canonical penalty, whether imposed or declared.
- 6) Not be either the father or mother of the baptised.

*Note: a baptised person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community may be admitted only in company with a Catholic sponsor, and then simply as a witness to the Baptism. **The Code of Canon Law (872-874)***



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REQUEST FOR BAPTISM

Congratulations on the birth of your child. The long months of waiting are now over and you can rejoice in the gift of a new life –Your child. It is a time of hope and a time to look to the future for your child and for yourselves.

Your child's faith begins with Baptism, but you will need to encourage that faith as your child approaches First Confession (P3), First Holy Communion (P4) and Confirmation (P7). If your child is to receive all these Sacraments, it is essential that you make sure they receive a good religious formation at home and at school, and when your child reaches an appropriate age bring them regularly to the church.

During the Baptism Ceremony, the Priest will ask you if you accept these responsibilities:

"You have asked to have your child baptised. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training him/her in the practice of faith. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?"

Neglecting the training of your child in the practice of faith could undermine the spiritual value of the sacrament.

Baptism is about faith in Jesus and a commitment to Christian values as handed on by the Church. Baptism will involve communicating Christian faith and values to your child, as a parent. The best way to help your child is to examine your own life and beliefs now. That is why the priest will ask you to renew your Baptismal Promises during the Ceremony..."*Do you believe*"...

Arrangements for your Child's Baptism should be made in person at the Parish Office, Parochial House, 54 St. Patrick's Avenue, Downpatrick. The Priest on duty is available Monday & Tuesday Evening 6.15pm – 7.15pm. You can also book your child's Baptism with the Parish Secretary, Mon – Thurs 9.15am – 3pm.

Check List: To avoid disappointment or misunderstandings, check things with the Priest before you make arrangements or ask others to be involved. Complete this form and take it, with the birth certificate if applicable, when booking the Baptism. If there are any questions in relation to the Baptism, please discuss them with the Priest or Parish Secretary prior to booking.

1. A minimum of **6 weeks notice** is required for ALL Baptisms
2. If you live in another parish or are travelling from abroad to have your child baptised, you need written permission from the Priest of the Parish where you live. Ideally, the child should be baptised in the parish where you live and attend Mass.
3. If a couple are not legally married, the child can only be registered with the father's surname if it has been registered on the Birth Certificate. If this applies to you, please bring a copy of the Long Birth Certificate when booking the Baptism



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Baptism Request

Please complete the information below:

Child's Name

Date of Birth

Father's Name

Mother's Name

Home Address

Church & Date of Marriage

Sponsors

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Mobile/Tel: No.

Sponsors:

1. One sponsor, male or female, is sufficient; but there may be two, one male and one female (canon 873)
2. To undertake the role of sponsor, a person must be:
 - (a) Not less than 16 years of age (canon 874.1)
 - (b) be a Catholic , who has been confirmed and has received the blessed Eucharist, and who lives a life of faith, which befits the role to be undertaken (canon 874.2)
3. A baptised person who belongs to a Christian ecclesial community may be admitted only in company with a Catholic sponsor and then simply as a Christian Witness to the Baptism (canon 874)
4. Non – baptised people cannot be admitted as a Christian Witness





Diocese of Down and Connor

Parish Of Downpatrick

Baptism (“the child”)
Consent For

Baptism is a celebration where the Parish initiates a new member who will join with it in faith, in prayer, and who will share in its mission of spreading the Lord’s way in our world. We like to celebrate and introduce those recently baptised into the Parish community which will provide friendship and support as a second family. As a form of introduction we put the names of those recently baptised in the Church Bulletin and Social Media. For this we would like your consent.

If you would prefer that the name of the child should not be placed in the Bulletin/Facebook/Website/Parish App please indicate below.

I **do not** want the name of the child to be published in the Parish Bulletin/Facebook/Website/Parish App

If you would like the name of the child to be published in the Parish Bulletin/Facebook/Website/Parish App please complete the consent form below.

Name

Relationship to the Child

Address
.....

By signing this form I grant consent to the Diocese of Down and Connor to publish the child’s name in the Parish Bulletin.

Signed: **Dated:**

You can find out more about how we use your data from our “Privacy Notice” which is available from the Diocesan website or from the Parish Office.

You can withdraw or change your consent at any time by contacting the Parish Priest. Please note that all processing of your personal data will cease once you have withdrawn consent, other than where this is required by law, but this will not affect any personal data that has already been processed prior to this point.

