



Dear Parent(s),

*We, the Catholic Community of St Paul's,
congratulate you on the birth of your child.*

Already you have experienced many moments in the life of your child: the conception, the anticipation and anxiety as the child grows in the womb and his/her birth. Birth is an ending and a new beginning. Part of this new beginning is your choice to baptise your child.

As parents you have the privilege and responsibility of looking after the natural life of your child. You also have the privilege and responsibility of looking after their spiritual life – their life of faith. As you have now chosen to have your child baptised, we affirm and acknowledge your readiness to accept this responsibility.

Since many parents are not very familiar with the baptism liturgy, we have a session on the second Wednesday of the month at 7pm in the Parish Meeting Room to walk you through the ceremony on the day and help you to prepare for this amazing day in your child's life and journey of faith.

A reminder about a few practical details regarding the baptism of your child:

- Baptisms are generally held on the first and third Sunday's of the month after the 10am Mass, at 11:30am. You may also decide to celebrate a baptism during the 10am Mass on any other Sunday. Dates are published on our Parish calendar, available on our website.
- We invite you and your family and friends to attend the 10am Mass on the day of the baptism. When you are sending out invitations to family and friends, please encourage them to arrive at the Church in plenty of time for the start of the baptism liturgy at 11:30am.
- One of the primary symbols of baptism is the candle. Most families choose to provide their own candle. However, if you want the parish to provide one for you (at an additional charge), please inform the baptism team prior to the ceremony beginning. The candle can be as simple as a plain white candle which you may decorate with stickers, paint, ink, beads or ribbons. Decorated baptismal candles may be purchased from the Benedictine Abbey, Jamberoo. An order form is included in this pack. Please allow around four weeks to process the order. Candles may also be purchased from our Parish Religious Goods store (located in the Church foyer) or from the Catholic Supplies Shop at the Xavier Centre in Crown Street, Wollongong.
- Your child should be dressed in clothing that is *mainly* white. Although traditional, you do not have to dress your child in a baptismal gown: a simple white jumpsuit is sufficient; older girls could be in a white or light cream dress and boys in a white shirt.

office@stpaulsparish.org.au • stpaulsparish.org.au • (02) 4256 2038

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- More information about our church including its location and directions will be found on our website: www.stpaulsparish.org.au
- Your child requires at least one Godparent or Sponsor, who must be a fully-initiated Catholic over the age of sixteen years. This means they have received the sacraments of baptism, holy communion and confirmation. Additional Godparents or Sponsors may also be chosen. If you wish to have a non-Catholic sponsor, this is also okay (but technically they are called a Christian witness, but no distinction will be made during the ceremony.)
- A brochure called '*The Sacrament of Baptism: A General Guide*' is also included with this letter. A version is also on the parish website. You may like to read this brochure in the days leading up to the ceremony, or to share it with your godparents or other family members. It offers an easy-to-read reflection on baptism, and is another way to become more acquainted with this wonderful sacrament of new life that we call 'Baptism'.
- It is customary for families presenting children for the sacrament of baptism to give a donation to the priest (according to your capacity to give, but \$50 is suggested). This offering can be placed in the enclosed envelope and placed in the donation box near the baptismal font or given to the priest following the ceremony. Other guests may also be invited to make a donation.
- Photos are permitted during the whole ceremony, but we ask you to choose a single photographer.
- Your child's Baptismal Certificate will, of course, include the names of both parents. You will note on your certificate that, as is traditional, the mother's maiden name will be printed – this is not a mistake.

The parish community of St Paul's looks forward to celebrating this important sacramental moment with you and your family. If you wish to have your child baptised at our parish, please book the date for your baptism and book into the Baptism Preparation Meeting by calling the Parish Office. If you have any further questions about the baptism ceremony please contact Mary Jennings during Parish Office hours (Tue 1pm – 3.30pm; Wed – Fri, 8.30am to 3.30pm) on **02 4256 2038**.

May God bless you and all those you love, with his grace and peace,



Fr Richard Healey
Parish Priest

So, in brief:

- Baptisms are held at 11:30am on the first and third Sunday's at St Paul's
- Baptisms are held on other Sunday's during the 10am Mass
- You need to call the Parish Office to select a date for the baptism
- You need to attend a Baptism Preparation Meeting
- One Godparent must be a confirmed Catholic over the age of 16
- Your child should be dressed in something that is mainly white
- You should bring a candle with you to the ceremony

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