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Mary Immaculate Church

4 Waverley Ave Ivanhoe

St. Bernadette's Church

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CELEBRATING YOUR CHILD'S BAPTISM INFORMATION SHEET & APPLICATION FORM 2026

What is Baptism?

Through the waters of Baptism we are

-  Spiritually reborn and adopted as a child of God
-  Incorporated into the Church, the Body of Christ
-  Welcomed into our local Parish family



Place of Baptism

The Baptism of your child should take place in your own local parish church, or the church where you regularly go to Mass. In this way you are connected to your local Catholic Community, and it celebrates the fact that your child, through Baptism, becomes a brother or sister to the local Catholic Parish Family.

Only for serious pastoral reasons are we able to baptise a child whose family does not live or worship in the parish and in such cases written permission must be given by your own parish priest.

Infant Baptism

Infant Baptism refers to children who have not yet reached the '*age of reason*'. That is children under 8 years of age or not yet in Grade 3 at school.

In the case of Infants the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Communion are postponed until they reach the '*age of reason*' and they have some understanding of the Catholic Faith and what it means to 'belong' to the Church.

Infants are only baptised on the understanding that their parents and Godparents will:

- + Ensure that their child is taught the Catholic Faith.
- + Bring their child to Mass regularly so that they experience being a part of the regular worshipping community and are nurtured within the Community of Faith.
- + Prepare and present their child for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and Communion at the appropriate age so that the Rite of Baptism, and their child's initiation into the Church, may be completed.

Children over 8 years of age or who are in Grade 3 or above are normally baptised in the same manner as adults. That is, they receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Communion at the same time at a special Mass normally celebrated only once a year. They will be prepared for these Sacraments of Initiation through a special catechetical program run in conjunction with the Sunday Mass.

Responsibilities?

You have asked to have your child baptised. As parents you are the first educators of faith and responsible for the ongoing religious education of your baptised child. Baptism in God's family has special responsibilities as does belonging to our human family.

If we freely choose Baptism then we also choose to accept those responsibilities!

In Baptism we promise to:

- + Reject sin and evil!
- + Practise the Christian Faith!
- + Worship regularly with your local parish church family!

During the Baptism Ceremony, if one of the parents cannot make the profession of faith (for example they are not baptised themselves or they are of a non-Christian faith) they still stand with their spouse during the profession of faith but keep silent as the renewal of baptismal promises are made by the baptised parent and the Godparent/s. However, both parents must give permission for the baptism to take place and are invited and welcome to participate as they feel able in conscience to do.

Baptismal Name

It is customary at Baptism to give your child a 'Baptismal' name to signify their new life in Christ. The time honoured tradition is that the baptismal name is the name of a Saint. The chosen Saint provides a model of what it means for your child to be a disciple of Christ and serves as a role model and patron for your child throughout their life. You can also pray for the intercession of your child's patron saint for their physical and spiritual wellbeing. Although we live in a secular culture this is a tradition well worth holding onto since a name is such an important way of giving a child a sense of identity. It not only gives your child a role model but also expresses a particular Christian way of life parents want to develop in their child.

Please consider choosing a Baptismal Saint's Name for your child seriously just as we take seriously the choice of customary family names. The Baptismal Name can be used as a second name. If you need some help check out <http://saints.sqpn.com> on the web. Under 'Groups and Lists' on the right hand side you will find lists by 'Alphabet', 'Confirmation Names' (includes Baptism Names), 'Calendar' (you can check which Saint shares your child's birthday or baptism day, and 'Patron Saints'. Many other sites are unreliable and list Saints not recognised by the Church. Please record your child's Saint's Name on the application form.

Dates and Times for 2026

Baptism is never a private ceremony as it celebrates our public incorporation into the Community of Faith - into the Church - the Body of Christ. Baptisms are normally celebrated once a month on Sundays at 11.30am according to the following timetable or may take place at other times at one of the weekend Masses. These dates may change due to other parish commitments and all dates must be confirmed by the parish office.

Sundays at 11.30am at Mary Immaculate Church:

January 18	February 15	March 15
April 19	May 17	June 21
July 19	August 16	September 20
October 18	November 15	December 20

During Sunday Mass at Mary Immaculate Church

If you would prefer to have your child's baptism celebrated during Mass please arrange a date with the Parish Priest

At St. Bernadette's Church

Dates by special arrangement with the Parish Priest

Godparent/s

- + One Godparent is required, two (but no more) are permitted.
- + Godparents must be "Catholics who have been Baptised and Confirmed and have received the Blessed Eucharist, and who lives the life of faith which befits the role to be undertaken." [Canon 874.3]
- + Godparents must be at least 16 years of age and cannot be the child's parent.
- + A baptised non-catholic who belongs to another Christian Church may act as a witness in addition to having one Catholic Godparent.
- + An unbaptised person cannot be a Godparent or witness because they must renew their own baptismal promises as a part of the baptism ceremony.

For Godparents:

Godparents have a very special role in your child's baptism and should be comfortable with the following intention:

"It is my intention, with God's help, to provide good example and encouragement to this child and accordingly I agree to act as a Godparent to him/her, and by God's help to encourage him/her to learn to worship God, to pray to God, to put his/her faith and trust in God and take his/her place in the ongoing life and regular worship of the Church."

Preparations Part 1:

- Consider choosing a 'Baptismal Saint's Name' for your child.
- Choose your child's Godparent with care - remember they must be a Baptised and Confirmed Catholic.
- Fill out and return the application form to the Parish Office two weeks before your preparation session.
- Before the Baptism regularly bring your child to Mass so that as a family you can better be a part of the parish family your child is about to join in Baptism.
- If your child is not a new-born child and is capable of real and active awareness of their surrounds it will assist them if they are brought to Mass regularly before the baptism so that they become comfortable with the church, its surrounds and being among strangers. Show your child the baptismal font and introduce them to the Parish Priest. This familiarity with their place of Baptism will help make their Baptism a joyful experience.

Preparations Part 2:

- The priest baptising your child may require a preliminary meeting to assist in your preparation for the baptism.
- You can purchase your child's Baptism Candle (\$10) and Baptism Stole (\$10) at the parish office.

On the day of the Baptism:

- Please be in your seats at the church at least 10 minutes service starts.
- Traditionally the child is dressed in a white garment. This may be a family baptismal robe, shirt or blouse.
- The clothing around your child's neck must be loose enough for it to be pulled down far enough to allow the priest to anoint the child's breast with the holy oil of catechumens.
- Your child must be bare headed – no bonnets, hats or ribbons etc. in their hair.
- Bring a white Baptismal Candle and a Baptismal Stole. The candle will be lit by the father of the child and the Godparent will place the stole on the child after the moment of baptism. Candles and stoles are available from the Parish Office.
- It is also customary to bring an offering to the church (envelopes are available).