



GUIDELINES

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM FOR CHILDREN

St. Augustine's Catholic Parish Coffs Harbour

Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit and the door which gives access to the other Sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from original sin and re-born as adopted sons and daughters of God. We become members of Christ, a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that we may declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called us out of darkness into His wonderful light. (1 Peter 2:9). Baptism is aptly called by the Church, the Sacrament of Regeneration through water and the word. (Catechism of the Catholic Church n.1213)

Baptism is traditionally celebrated in the residential parish of the infant or child. Parents living outside our parish who request baptism for their child are asked to, in the first instance, contact their local parish to complete Baptism Preparation instruction and seek a permission letter from their Parish Priest.

To ensure the child being Baptised into the Catholic church has the opportunity to learn and be brought up in the Catholic faith, we require that at least one parent and one Godparent is Catholic and have received the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion).

Baptism Preparation Class

It is a practice of the Catholic Church that instruction be given prior to receiving a Sacrament. In the case of Baptism of a child, it is both parents that have the responsibility to undertake the Baptism Preparation class. In our parish Baptism preparation classes are held twice a month at St. Augustine's Catholic Church, Coffs Harbour.

Documents required to book into Baptism

Families wishing to Baptise their child need to visit our Parish office, located at the Curran Centre, 12 Gordon Street, Coffs Harbour and submit the following documents:

- Baptism Request Form (*with both parents consent signature*)
- Baptism certificate of one parent
- Child's birth certificate
- Photo ID of both parents

Unfortunately, we are unable to receive these documents via email.

Upon receipt of these documents to the Parish office, families may book into their preferred date for the preparation class and baptism.

Parental Authority Consent for Baptism

It is a requirement in our Diocese that we receive consent from both parents (or legal guardian/s) of the child before we administer Sacraments to children under 18 years old. If there are any court orders relating to the child being Baptised, such as Sole Custody, that impedes this request please kindly provide the necessary details on the Baptism Request Form.

Godparent's Requirements

There must be at least one Catholic Godparent to assist the parents with the Catholic upbringing of the baptised child. The requirements for Godparents are:

1. Must be 16 years or over in age.
2. Be a member of the Catholic Church.
3. Have received the Sacrament of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion.

Parents and step-parents are not permitted to be the Godparent of their own child.

Baptismal Candle

It is the responsibility of the family to bring a candle for each child on the day of the Baptism. Baptismal candles can be purchased from the Parish office.

White garment

It is suggested that children are dressed in white for the Baptism, such as a white dress for girls and a white gown or shirt for boys.

Baptismal Offering

It is customary to make a donation to the Parish Priest on the occasion of your child's baptism. Baptism donations can be kindly handed in at the Parish office along with your paperwork.

Baptism times

Baptisms are held in our Parish on:

Sundays after the 9am Mass, St Augustine's Church, Coffs Harbour (*not available on 1st Sundays of the month*).

Baptisms are also held by request on:

Saturday after 8:30am Mass, St. Francis Xavier Church, Woolgoolga (*not available on 1st Saturdays of the month*).

Sunday during 11am Mass, St. Therese of Child Jesus Church, Coramba (*1st Sunday of month only*)

Children 16 years or older

If your child is 16 years or older and is requesting Baptism, they will need to join our RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) program, so they can deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and then receive all the Sacraments of Initiation together at the Easter Vigil. We encourage you to support them in this journey together, until they reach 18 years of age, by which time they can join RCIA by themselves. For further details please contact the Parish office.