

BAPTISM

The sacrament of Baptism admits a candidate to the Christian church and is closely associated with Confirmation and the Eucharist. Baptism is the beginning of a long process: the initiation into Christ and His Church which takes place as your child grows into maturity.

The four main denominations agree that baptism is in two parts:

- A** Baptism into the Church of Christ by the pouring of water in the name of the Trinity.
- B** Reception into the local worshipping community

All require that the child should be baptised before (in front of) its local congregation. Some Roman Catholic dioceses will require a period of instruction for the parents prior to the child's baptism.

Each of the four main denominations recognise the validity of each other's baptism. While this is to be wholeheartedly welcomed, many couples wish to have a shared ceremony to reflect their married life.

Among the SHARED options for mixed marriage couples may be the following:

- i)** In a Protestant Church with a Roman Catholic priest assisting.
- ii)** In a Roman Catholic Church with a Protestant minister assisting.
- iii)** When the couple are both practising in their own denominations some may want the baptism to reflect their unity in the Primary Church, the home. Also the child's congregation is to be found not in either church but in both.

Thus the baptism sometimes takes place in the home before a properly invited congregation with both clergy taking an active part.

- iv)** Concelebrated Baptism – when both clergy together say the words and pour the water – is unfortunately no longer officially permitted in any of the main denominations.

NIMMA is always willing to offer advice and support.

A common Ecumenical Baptism Certificate 'Certificate of Christian Baptism' recognised by all the main denominations in the British Isles is available for couples from NIMMA or from:

APCK Bookshop
61 Donegal Street BELFAST BT1 2QH

or

Family Books Ltd;
The Spires, Church House, Fisherwick
Place BELFAST BT1 6DW

or

Irish Interchurch Meeting
Peace Education Resources Centre
48 Elmwood Ave BELFAST BT9 6AZ

Also available are: i) a pamphlet with suggested guidelines for baptism and marriage ceremonies and ii) a booklet entitled '*Ministering to Interchurch Couples*' from:

Irish Interchurch Meeting
Peace Education Resources Centre
48 Elmwood Ave BELFAST, BT9 6AZ

Schooling

To guarantee a place at a school of their choice parents often find that they need to make a decision about schooling within the first year of their child's life. This choice can mean that their child will be identified as Protestant or Roman Catholic.

Integrated schools provide a solution for some. They can offer an environment where diverse religious traditions and cultures are welcomed and fostered. In Integrated Schools Roman Catholic children can be prepared for First Communion and Confirmation.

It is also possible for parents in other circumstances to make arrangements for preparation of their children for First Communion and Confirmation.

For details of Integrated Schools Contact

NICIE

***Northern Ireland Council
for Integrated Education***

44 University Street, Belfast BT7 1HB
Tel (028) 9023 6200

***For further help or advice
please contact:***



**Northern Ireland
Mixed Marriage Association**
28 Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7FE
Tel: (028) 9023 5444
Fax: (028) 9043 4544

**email: nimma@nireland.com
www.nimma.org.uk**

The office is attended from 9.30 – 12.30pm Monday to Thursday and one evening per week. There is a 24 hour answerphone.

