TIPS

- As a mark of respect we do not eat or chew anything during the service.
- Make sure mobile phones or other communications devices are switched off.
- Please do not take photographs during the service. If you arrive early enough you can take them before and are welcome to take them afterwards.
- During the period before the service begins other members of the Congregation may be engaged in silent prayer so please try to keep noise to a minimum out of respect for them.
- Feel free to greet the priest after the Service if he is standing outside the church. It is always appropriate to call him, "Father," even if you don't know his first or last name. Just say thank you and that you are visiting. If he talks to you for a while, don't feel pressure to join or do anything, just know that he is doing his job trying to make you feel welcome.
- If you are interested in becoming Catholic, contact the parish priest and they will usually be able to connect you with people in the parish that will help you find the path more easily.

Catholic Churches of
St Mary's Brownedge
Our Lady of Lourdes & St Gerard Majella
Lostock Hall, Preston

What to expect at the Baptism

A Guide for Parents and Visitors to a Baptism in a Catholic Church

1. The service usually contains these things:

   - A reading from a passage of the Bible which is normally read by a member of the family and the Gospel read by the Priest.
   - The Responsorial Psalm, again normally read by a member of the family.
   - Bidding prayers of intercession, again normally read by a member of the family.
   - A Homily (Sermon)

2. Plan to arrive at the Church at least 15 minutes before the appointed time. This gives you time to meet members of the family before the Service and to take your place in the church at least 5 minutes before the start. You will feel so much more comfortable if you can park (or better yet, walk) and get in the Church early. Walk in through the main doors, and if you see people picking up a hymnal or leaflet, do the same. (Wheelchair access via a ramp can be found at the rear door)

3. You may see genuflecting (bending on the right knee), or bowing if their knees are bad, in the direction of the altar (the table up front). If you are not Catholic, do not feel awkward about not doing this but please do respect the church in some certain ways which you feel appropriate. Catholics believe God is literally present in the Eucharist, which is kept in the tabernacle, which is often placed behind the altar. Genuflecting is simply a sign of deep respect for God and the Eucharist.

4. Feel free to sit anywhere in the pews but consider sitting closer to the front with the family so that you can see what is going on, and also toward one of the sides of the aisles. If you have young children you may want to sit towards the side of the church and have a pushchair with you. This also allows you to get to toilets with minimum disruption. (Toilets with baby changing facilities are at the back of the church near where you entered the building)

5. Once the Service starts, breathe, sit back, and enjoy. This is not a stressful process. All are welcome to kneel, stand, sit, or bow when the congregation does so, but do not feel pressure to do any of these. It is recommended, however, to stand when the congregation stands and sit when they are either sitting or kneeling.

6. The Baptism Service starts with the Priest welcoming the child to be baptised and making the sign of the Cross on the child's forehead with his thumb, he then asked the parents and Godparents to do the same.

7. Following the readings and Homily mentioned earlier the Service continues with the Prayer of Exorcism and the Priest then anoints the child with the Oil of Catechumens on the breast to strengthen him or her with the power of Christ.

8. This is then followed by Prayers of Invocation to the Holy Spirit and the Blessing of the Water to be used in the baptism.

9. Immediately before the baptism itself everyone is invited to join in with the Renunciation of Sin and the Profession of Faith.

10. At the Baptism itself the Parents and Godparents are asked to stand round the back of the font. Please make sure that you hold the head of the child on your left arm and the child's head should be facing the people.

11. After the Baptism the parents and Godparents return to their places and the child is anointed once more, this time with the oil of Sacred Chrism (the next time this will be used is at the child's Confirmation). This anointing is on the forehead again.

12. The Priest will then hold up the White Christening Gown (Please make sure that the parents bring the White Christian Gown for their child) and say a short prayer after which he will hand it to the Godmother to wrap around the child.

13. The final part of the Baptism is the **Lighting of a Baptismal Candle**. This is lit from the Easter Candle. The Priest explains its meaning with a short prayer and then hands it to the Father or Mother who then passes it to the Godparents and return it finally to the Father or Mother.

14. The service concludes with the Lord's Prayer and special Blessings for the Mother and Father and to all the people who are present (When a Priest blesses you a Catholic responds by making the sign of the Cross and replying Amen.)

15. Appreciate the beauty of the church. After the Service, feel free to take some photographs or take a few minutes to look at any of the beautiful statues in the Church. These statues and icons are "not" idols. No Catholic prays directly to these wooden statues or images, but the statues help a Catholic focus their prayers to God or help them ask a saint for intercessory prayer to God.

16. Feel free to take a bulletin to read later, and feel welcome to greet the priest as you leave. Most priests are very friendly and glad to shake hands and talk.