

THINKING ABOUT BAPTISM



We are glad to baptise people of all ages who wish to be Christians and so a member of the church.

Baptism is a very important step.

It needs careful thought and good preparation.

These notes will help you understand what baptism means and how we help parents and godparents prepare for it.



Why do you want your child baptised?

In our experience parents have many reasons.

Here are some:



To name the baby properly

This actually takes place when you register the baby's birth.

My mum says it's the right thing to do

It's only the right thing to do if you, the baby's parents, are sure about it. You must be clear what you are doing because your child depends on you to fulfil the promises you have made on his/her behalf.

To make sure your child will go to heaven

God loves your child regardless of whether they have been baptised or not. God doesn't judge children differently simply because they have been through a baptism ceremony.

To thank God for the birth of our baby

That's a great reason for a celebration. But there are many ways of doing this (e.g. a service of thanksgiving, which does not involve the promises that baptism does). Baptism has other meanings.

To give our baby a good start in life

Starting a journey is pointless if we don't continue towards our destination. Baptism is a good start, but it needs to be followed up by a faithful Christian upbringing. That's why the

faith and example of parents, grandparents and godparents are thought about in preparation meeting(s).

So what is baptism then?

Adults who become Christians accept God's gift in making them part of God's family and want to respond to God's love and care by learning to pray and worship with others. They learn to live as Christians, and discover what God wants them to be and to become.

Most adult Christian parents naturally bring their children for baptism into the family of the Church. As people who follow Christ they want their children to be taught the faith so that they have a good basis for making their own decision in due course.



In baptism, parents and godparents . . .

- * declare that they believe and trust in God;
- * recognise our human failure to be all God intends us to be and celebrate God's way of repairing the world;
- * turn away from ways of thinking and acting which are not right;
- * accept God's gift of forgiveness and new life, become a follower of Jesus, and
- * declare themselves willing to bring up their child within the family of the church by joining the life of that church.

SO WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

We would like to help you prepare for baptism

- * You are invited to come to a baptism preparation session. There you will be able to explore what baptism means for you and your child, and you can talk through the whole process. These are quite informal and friendly sessions; you are free to ask anything you like.
- * You are invited when possible to join in the 10.0 a.m. Sunday services as part of the church family.
- * The clergy will agree a date with you once you are sure you wish to go ahead with this important step. It may be during the Sunday Service or at a separate Sunday baptism service, typically at 11.30 a.m.

Please feel free to contact us at any point during your preparation. We hope and pray that you will find this a helpful and joyful time.

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