



BAPTISM GUIDE

Thinking about Baptism?

Baptism can be administered at any time in a person's life. Adults, young people and babies may all be baptised.

In the following pages are some points for discussion and thought as you consider baptism, whether for yourself or your child.

WHY NOT?

Baptism is not to be seen as something that is "done" because it has always been "done" or because it has been a tradition.

Baptism is not "done" to give a child better health, or good luck. It is not a lucky charm to ward off life's ills.

Baptism should not be "done" of Grandmother or Grandfather or someone else other than you the parents are insisting that the child be "done."

WHY?

Christ commanded his disciples to be baptised.

As Christians we belong to a larger family than our own human family. When we belong to Christ we become children of God and belong to God's family.

Baptism is how God welcomes a child - your child - into the church.

Baptism is the first vital step for a lifetime of serving God.

As members of the church, parents and godparents promise to take on the responsibilities for the child - to bring him or her up as an active Christian within the community of the church.

THIS MEANS FOR PARENTS AND GODPARENTS.....

Believing fully the Christian faith into which the child is to be baptised.

Living honestly the Christian life.

Belonging actively to the Christian church.

To be asked to be a godparent is an honour but comes with responsibilities. Please do not ask someone to be a godparent who cannot commit to the above.

If you as parents cannot at this time commit to the above take time to consider whether baptism should take place at this point in time.

A service of thanksgiving for God's gift of a beautiful child can be considered.

HOW?

How do you carry out your responsibility?

Prayer.

You promise to pray for the child and this is something you should do every day.

Example.

You promise by your example, to be fully involved in the life and worship of the church. This means going together as a family on a regular basis to church.

Encouragement.

You promise to teach the child about Christ and so to encourage him or her to live by Christ's teaching. This may mean encouraging and sending your child to Sunday School.

Godparents make the same promises as parents therefore only people who can honestly make these promised should agree to be godparents.

GOD'S GIFT OF FAITH

When a child is baptised, you as parents and godparents make that response of faith.

The whole community of the church proclaims its faith.

We offer the hope that one day your child will make his/her own profession of faith in Jesus.

When an adult is baptised he/she is professing personal faith in Christ.

PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

- 1: All arrangements for baptisms should be made first with the clergy.
- 2: Baptism is a public celebration of the Christian family, and usually happens at the main Sunday service where possible.
- 3: All baptism is Christian baptism. All the main Christian churches recognise one another's baptism.
- 4: Before a date has been decided, a meeting will be arranged to explain the meaning of baptism, the responsibilities of the parents and godparents and to describe the service itself. Only after that will a date for baptism/thanksgiving be discussed.
- 5: It is usual for those requesting baptism to be regular attenders or to start attending at their local church. If this is not your 'regular church' you will be asked where do you normally attend.
- 6: The church requires the clergy to teach the people the meaning of baptism and the responsibilities of those who bring children to be baptised.
- 7: Flash photography or video cameras are not permitted during the ceremony. You can take any number of photos after the service.
- 8: After the service all details are entered into the Baptismal Register and the parents receive a Certificate of Baptism. Godparents receive a card to remind them of their responsibilities.
- 9: Parents may make a thank offering.
- 10: Young children are encouraged to come to church with their parents. There is a creche and for older children Sunday School.
- 11: In due course your child's name will be entered on the Baptismal Roll in the church.