

BAPTISM



THE FIRST STEP

CHRISTENING

The word 'christening' is sometimes used instead of baptism. This is an old English word, which means 'making a person a Christian'.

In the days before official government records were kept, a baby's Christian name was given at the baptism. Now, of course, babies are given their names officially when they are registered with the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

Your baby's name will be important to you and your family, and you have probably spent a great deal of time choosing it.

But of central importance at this service is that your child is welcomed into God's family, so for this reason, the word 'baptism' is preferred.

More information is available from the Cathedral, and resources, such as prayer books, baptism cards and Children's bibles are for sale in the Cathedral Shop.

SERVICE OF

THANKSGIVING

If you need more time to think about baptism, to get used to what happens in a church, or to think about your own relationship with God, you may like to consider a thanksgiving service.

Like baptism, this takes place after a Sunday service. We thank God for the birth of your child and we pray that God will bless you both.

It is a 'no strings' service. There are no promises to be made and no role for godparents, although we encourage you to bring your family and friends to share in the thanksgiving.

A thanksgiving service may be the appropriate choice for you now and may become a step towards

baptism, but it is in no way a substitute for baptism, nor does baptism automatically follow.

A NEW BABY

CONGRATULATIONS!

Being a parent is a great responsibility — sharing in the creation and care of a new life.

Guide your child wisely. It is said that children who are given plenty of love are less dependent and less aggressive than others.

Just as you care for the physical welfare of your children by feeding them, clothing them and looking after their health, so you have decided to look after their spiritual welfare by having them baptised., praying with them, reading Bible stories to them and taking them to church.

Your children rely chiefly on you for all they need to grow. That is why, in the service of baptism, sponsors (parents and godparents) promise to give their child the help and encouragement needed to grow in the Christian life.

As children learn by example, you might consider:

- attending church / Sunday School with them,
- praying with them, and
- reading Bible stories to them.

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The word 'baptise' comes from a Greek word which means 'to dip' in water or to have water poured or sprinkled on a person.

Water has many uses. It is cleansing, refreshing and life-giving. In baptism, it is a symbol of being made new, of receiving the new life of God, of being cleansed.

In the early Church, and in some churches today, when people were baptised they were plunged into the water. They were, so to speak, 'drowned' and then raised to begin a new life in Christ.

After the baptism, the sign of the cross will be made on the child's forehead to show that they are marked as Christ's own forever.

A lighted candle may then be given to them as a sign that they now belong to Christ, who is the light of the world.

Make your child's baptismal day a special day:

- Have a party.
- Share a special cake.
- Take photos.

Light the candle again on the anniversary of the

The Prayer Book reminds us that children are baptised in response to God's all-embracing love.

Parents and godparents (sponsors) who have responded to that love bring their children for baptism.

Sponsors are asked:

- to accept the responsibilities placed upon them in bringing the child for baptism,
- to answer on behalf of the child,
- to encourage the child in the life and faith of the Christian community by their prayers and example, their friendship and love.

Sponsors promise on behalf of the child

- to turn to Christ,
- to repent of their sins,
- to reject all that is false and unjust,
- to renounce evil.

They also declare their own faith in God and their intention to strive to live as a disciple of Christ, loving God with all their heart and their neighbours as themselves, as long as they live.

If you would like to discuss these issues or find out more of what they mean, please contact the Church Office on

9385 8393