



*A guide to
Baptism (Christening)*

St Peter's, Kinver & St Mary's, Enville

2023

Introduction

Congratulations on your upcoming Baptism (Christening) service! We're delighted that you have chosen to have your child baptised in one of our churches and look forward to supporting you in the lead up to the service and beyond.

This booklet contains lots of information to help you think together about the meaning behind the service and the promises that you will make on behalf of your child, we hope that you find it useful.

The team at St Peter's Kinver and St Mary's Enville are here to help you and are happy to answer any questions you may have so please don't hesitate to get in touch.

In the meantime we will be praying for you as you prepare for your big day, and hope that you feel surrounded by God's love as you and your child grow in love for each other.

With every blessing,

Rev'd Rich and the team at St Peter's Kinver & St Mary's Enville.

Contact Details

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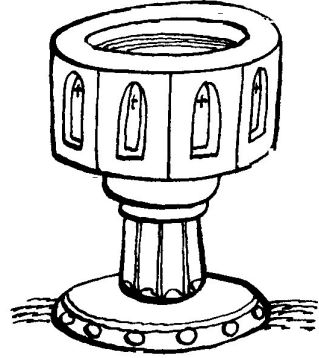
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Baptism or Christening?

You may notice that in this booklet and in conversations we use the words 'Baptism' and 'Christening' to talk about the service. This is because they mean the same thing!

'Baptism' is the official name for the service, but 'Christening' is the term most often used when a child is being baptised.

The words can be used interchangeably, but one way to think about it that you might find helpful is that at the 'Christening' service we will 'Baptise' your child.

What is a Christening?

Your child is precious to you and precious to God. You want the very best for them, and so does God. You want them to make right choices in life, for themselves and for others.

A christening is just the beginning of this and so much more. Over the years to come, it's a journey you'll share together with your child by:

- ↳ Being there for your child to talk to about the bigger questions of life – questions about hope, faith and love.
- ↳ Praying for your child through the ups and downs of their life and faith journey.
- ↳ Showing them practically how to make good choices in life.
- ↳ Helping them to learn more about their Christian faith, through their church and in other ways.

So it's a commitment to start as you mean to go on.

During a christening service your child will be baptized with water. It's the start of an amazing journey of faith for your child and a special day for all your friends and family.

How much does it cost?

There is no fee for a christening - God's love is free and so is this service! We will have a collection plate out at the service and if you feel able to make a donation then that would be lovely, but please don't feel any pressure to do so.

What about Godparents?

Choosing the right people as godparents for your child is a big decision. Here are some key things which might help you decide:

- ↪ Because of the very special role godparents have in supporting your child's faith journey, they must be baptized themselves.
- ↪ Godparents will be people who'll be in touch with your family for many years to come. They may be relatives or friends.
- ↪ They'll be people who you know you can trust and who'll be there for your child to talk about the bigger questions in life; questions about faith, hope and love.
- ↪ They should feel ready to make some big promises about faith for your child in church.
- ↪ Usually a child will have two or three godparents, one or two of the same gender and one of the opposite gender. You may wish to have more godparents and that is possible, but if you are thinking of having more than four please speak to Rev'd Rich before asking them.
- ↪ There's no minimum age for godparents, but they must be mature enough to understand the responsibilities they're taking on.

Are Godparents also legal guardians?

Despite the common misconception, Godparents are not the people who will care for the child should anything happen to the parents. Arrangements for this would normally be made by a Will.

Preparing for the service

Baptism Preparation Session

☞ Before the christening service you may be invited to a Baptism Preparation Session. This is often in Church but sometimes can be at your home (especially for christenings at St Mary's). This is a chance for the parents and Godparents to come together and think about what baptism means, the promises you will make, and the practicalities of the service.

Length of service

☞ A Sunday afternoon baptism service is usually approximately 25 minutes long. If you have the baptism in a Sunday morning Communion service then the service is around an hour long.

Photography

☞ We do ask that you and your family/friends don't take photos during the service. You are welcome to take photos at the end of the service by the font or at the front of Church if you would like to. If you are thinking about having a professional photographer please discuss this with Rev'd Rich before booking them as it is not always possible to accommodate this.

Party

☞ It's great to have a party after the christening service as you celebrate this special moment with your child. We do have an excellent, well equipped Church hall right in the centre of Kinver which is a perfect venue for a family celebration! If you would like to know more about this please contact our booking secretary, Hilary Gapper, on 01384 395047.

How many people can we invite?

For christening services you can invite up to **100** guests. Please be aware that at St Peter's the service may occasionally be shared with another family. If your christening is in a main morning service then you are welcome to invite up to **50** guests.

After the service

The party may be over, the balloons may have come down and the outfit might be packed away, but the amazing journey of faith continues! Here are some ways you can continue to support your child:

Praying with your child

One of the promises you will make in the service is to pray for and with your child. You might find this easy, or you might find it a bit more tricky. Here are some simple ideas which might help:

- ☞ Teaspoon (tsp) Prayers: “Thankyou, Sorry, Please”. Take it in turns to say something that you are thankful for, something that you are sorry about, and something you want to ask for. End with a big “Amen!”
- ☞ Mealtime grace: take a moment before a meal to say something that you are thankful for. You might want to use the same prayer each time (there are lots online), or make it up as you go.
- ☞ Bedtime Blessing: use this ancient blessing as they go to sleep— “May God bless you and keep you, may God’s face shine on you and be gracious to you, may God look kindly on you and give you peace, Amen.”

Reading the Bible

- ☞ Reading Bible stories to your child is a great way of helping keep the promises that parents and Godparents have made. There are lots of good children’s Bibles for different ages, Rev’d Rich would be happy to recommend one to you if you’d like.

Bringing them to Church

- ☞ We have lots of child-friendly services through the year, including Messy Church in Kinver, Outdoor Church in Enville, and special services like Christmas, Mothering Sunday and Harvest as well as our weekly services. Do keep an eye out for more details, or let us know if you’d like us to keep in touch about what’s going on.

The Baptism Service

The next few pages contain a shortened version of the christening service, including the promises that you will be making and some of the symbols which help us to understand the meaning and purpose of Baptism.



Welcome

The service begins with a welcome and a prayer

Bible Reading

We hear a story from the Bible read and we think together about what it means

The Promises

Those to be baptised are introduced to the congregation and promises are made on their behalf:

Jesus said, "Let the children come to me and do not stop them."
We thank God for *N [and N]* who have come to be baptized today. Christ loves them and welcomes them into his Church.
So I ask you all:

Will you support these children
as they begin their journey of faith?

All: With the help of God, we will.

Parents and godparents, you speak for these children today.
God knows them by name and they are his.

Will you pray for them, and help them to follow Christ?

Parents & **With the help of God, we will.**
Godparents

We all wander far from God and
lose our way. Christ comes to
find us and welcomes us home.
In baptism we respond to his call.
Therefore I ask:

Do you turn away from sin?

Parents & **I do.**
Godparents

Do you reject evil?

Parents & **I do.**
Godparents

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

Parents & **I do.**
Godparents

Do you trust him as Lord?

Parents & **I do.**
Godparents

What does it mean?

These promises help us to think about what it means to follow Jesus.

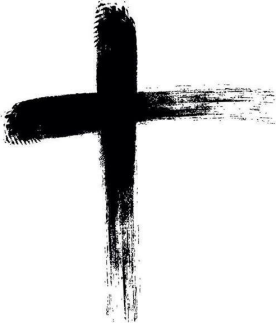
They acknowledge that there is bad in the world, and that we all make mistakes.

You are committing, for yourself and on behalf of your child, to try and turn away from those things and follow Jesus' example as the way to live well in the world.

The first symbol of baptism: Oil

Christ claims you for his own.
Receive the sign of his cross.
Do not be ashamed of Christ.
You are his for ever.

**All: Stand bravely with him
against all the powers of evil,
and remain faithful to Christ
to the end of your life.**



What does it mean?

We make the sign of the cross using olive oil. This is sometimes called anointing. This act has always been a very special sign—we anoint kings and queens with oil at their coronation.

We do it here to show how each child is special and unique, with their own particular gifts that they will discover through their lives. Making the sign of the cross with oil is the first symbol of baptism.

Prayer over the water

We gather around the font, and the minister says a prayer over the water asking God to make it holy (special).

Affirmation of faith

We remind ourselves of what Christians believe.

The second symbol of baptism: Water

[Name], I baptize you
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

There is one Lord, one faith,
one baptism. By one Spirit we
were all baptized into one body.

**All: We welcome you into the
fellowship of faith; we are
children of the same heavenly
Father; we welcome you!**



What does it mean?

This is the heart of the service and the most important symbol of baptism. We pour water over the child's head three times in the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit—often known as the Holy Trinity.

The word baptism comes from a Greek word meaning “to dip”. Just as we used ordinary, but the best, olive oil, so now we use pure, clear water, pouring it so that it bubbles up with life.

After baptising the child we all welcome them into God's family—often with a round of applause to celebrate!

Prayers

After the baptism, we return to our seats and the minister will pray for each child, their family, and the world in which they will live and grow up, finishing with the Lord's Prayer which Jesus taught to his friends.

The third symbol of baptism: Light

God has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and given us a place with the saints in light.

[Name], you have received the light of Christ; walk in this light all the days of your life.

All: Shine as a light in the world to the glory of God the Father.



What does it mean?

The final symbol of baptism is light—and the giving of a candle. By this we are saying three things.

We remind ourselves that Jesus Christ is the light of the world, his healing light shines in the dark places of our world, and of our hearts.

We also recognise that life is a journey, sometimes through dark and difficult places. The light of Christ, held for us by our family and our friends, can help us walk difficult paths.

And finally the candle is a reminder that all Christians are called to be the light of Christ for other people.

The End!

The service finishes with a final response then you are welcome to stay and take photographs before heading off to whatever the rest of your day holds.



