

Your Child's Baptism



A short introduction to
Baptism in the Parish of
Charlbury with Shorthampton

We are delighted that you have chosen to have your child baptised! (Christened means the same thing).

This leaflet is to tell you something about baptism, and what you will have to do at the baptism service.

The parish of Charlbury with Shorthampton welcomes all who wish to be baptised into the Church of England.

There is no fee, although a collection is taken at the end of the service.

WHAT BAPTISM IS

Baptism is a 'sacrament': a visible sign of God's love.

In baptism, we are thanking God for his gift of life and publicly acknowledging his love.

It dates right back to the beginning of Christianity about 2,000 years ago, when Jesus himself was baptised in the river Jordan. When that happened Jesus was filled with a sense of God. It was as though he was filled with God's spirit.

That still happens today at baptism services.

In baptism, you as parents are:

- thanking God for His gift of life,
- deciding to start your child on the journey of faith
- asking for the Church's support.

For your child, baptism:

- marks the start of a journey of faith,
- involves turning away from self-centredness,
- turning towards Christ
- becoming a member of the local and worldwide Christian family.

MAKING PROMISES

When you bring your child for baptism, you will be promising to help the spirit of God grow and develop within your child by helping them make a relationship with God, through Jesus.

You are already doing that by loving your child. God is love, so as you love your child, and they feel secure in your love, you are already teaching about God!

You can do more if you wish, and there are ways you can join in the church's activities shown at the end of this leaflet. In addition to this, the Christian community of Charlbury with Shorthampton will promise to support you and to pray for you and your child.

WHAT GODPARENTS DO

Godparents make the same promises on behalf of the child being baptized as parents. Godparents promise to pray and support the child and to help the parents to bring up the child in the Christian faith. It is an important and responsible role.

Godparents can be family members or friends. However, it is important that you choose people who will take an interest in your child's spiritual welfare and who will pray for you and your child. You must have at least one male and one female godparent. They should be baptized themselves.

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE SERVICE

The priest will make sure you know where to sit and when you need to move. Some parts of the service will be for the whole congregation to join in, some will be for you and the godparents.

For the baptism itself, parents and godparents will be asked by the priest to gather either at the front of the church or around the font. A number of important symbols will be used during the service itself:

The Sign of the Cross: The priest will make the sign of the cross on your child's forehead. This is like an invisible badge to show that Christians are united with Christ and must not be ashamed to stand up for their faith in him.

Water: The priest will pour water on your child's head. Water is a sign of washing and cleansing. In baptism it is a sign of being washed free from sin and beginning a new life with God.

The Welcome: The church congregation will say some formal words of welcome to acknowledge that your child has joined the Church and to show how pleased they are to have you among them.

Candles: Jesus is called the light of the world. You will be given a lighted candle at the end of the service as a reminder of the light which has come into your child's life

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

After the baptism, St Mary's church might not have a very big role in your child's life. But we want you to know that our church has 'soft walls' – you can come and go as you please and will always be welcome. And we also want you to know that if we can ever help in any way, we will. Just get in touch.

There are lots of things in the parish for families and children to join in and celebrate the life of the church – you will find more information in the parish newsletters or in posters on your local church notice board. We will also try and let you know when there is anything happening you might find especially suitable.

We hope that the baptism service is full of meaning for you and that you enjoy this special sign of God's love for you and your child.

If you have any queries or questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch:

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