

Preparing you for your Childs Baptism

Baptism is a significant milestone in your child's life and it is important for you and your child's godparents to understand the promises you will be making. To prepare you for this, we are holding three baptism preparation evenings. Each family preparing to enter into baptism, will be required to attend all three along with three family services covering a three-month period.

While we understand that you may need to bring your child to the preparation evenings, it is preferable if alternative arrangements can be made so you can dedicate your full attention to the evening.

Family Friendly Services

We hold family friendly services in the Church on the third Sunday of each month. The services will start with refreshments in our coffee lounge and include further space for activities for young children to feel included. We would love to see you at these services and encourage your Childs journey with their faith.

Contact

If you have any questions about Baptism or about the Christian faith in general, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Revd Mark Harrison

Tel: 0191 552 6988

Mob: 07975782891

Email: revmark.edurham@gmail.com

You can also find the Alpha Course online which aims to introduce the basics of Christian faith through a series of talks and discussions..

Holy Trinity Church

Murton



A guide to prepare you for your Childs' Water
Baptism into

 THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Why Holy Trinity Church for your Child's Baptism?

Thank you for considering Holy Trinity Church as the place to celebrate the beginning of your child's journey of faith.

We are a welcoming and friendly church and the congregation are always ready to invite new people to our services and events. For more information on the Church and service times visit our page on www.achurchnearyou.com.

We see you choosing our Church for your Child's Baptism as a huge privilege and responsibility.

- ✝ It is a **privilege** to be asked to share in the Christian nurture of you and your family.
- ✝ It is a **responsibility** because we want to provide to you, the parents and your child's godparents the opportunity to prepare for the promises which you will make at the Baptism.

Your Child's Baptism in the Church of England

Your child is precious to you and precious to God. At Baptism you promise to raise your child to know that God loves them and to help them to follow Jesus on a life long journey of faith.

Baptism is a sacrament, a visible sign of God's love for us all. In Baptism we thank God for His gift of life and publicly acknowledge his love.

Jesus himself was baptized as a sign of a new beginning. You can read the story at the start of Mark's gospel in the New Testament. Jesus told his followers to baptize others as a sign that they had turned away from their old life to engage fully into a new God filled life. These new followers of Jesus became members of the Church and by nurture they centered their lives on the love of God and the love of others.

A prayer for godparents

Lord God, I pray that you will guide and support me in my role as a Godparent. Give me wisdom and your love. Help me to be a good example of Christian living and keep me mindful of my precious godchild (child's name). AMEN

A prayer for your godchild

Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of (child's name) and for all the joy he/she brings. Be with (name) as they start their Christian journey and may they come to know our Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and friend. AMEN

✝ How do I guide my godchild into faith?

You will find many leads in your godchild's life which you can use to encourage Christian faith. Of course, bringing them to Church services and activities is one way. Sending a card on the anniversary of their baptism is another.

I have been asked to be a Godparent – what shall I gift?

The most important gift you can give as a godparent is your time, presence and prayers but if you want to mark the special occasion by giving a gift, here are some suggestions:

- ✝ **Bibles**- There are so many different editions of the Bible which are child friendly. It is worth asking the Parents if there is a version they prefer
- ✝ **Books** – There are some colourful illustrated Bible stories for children. Why not build a series up over the next few years?
- ✝ **Gifts about Baptism such as My Baptism Book** – Your Godchild might want to read this as they get older to understand what Baptism means
- ✝ **A silver or gold cross and chain** – this would be something to be worn by your godchild when they reach an age of responsibility

Becoming a godparent in the Church of England

Godparents are very important people! It means that your friends or relatives believe that you will be a good example for their child and that you will support them while growing into the Christian faith and way of life.

To become a Godparent, you must have been baptised yourself as either a child or an adult.

The Role of a Godparent

A godparent will be expected to encourage their godchild to take their journey of faith seriously, to be a support to the family unit and take the godchild to local Church services. This role will develop over time however it largely depends on your own commitment to your own journey with God.

What happens in the Baptism Service?

Before the baptism the Vicar will ask the Godparents to declare that they will do their best in this role. At the same time, they will be asked to be a lifelong support to their godchild by being an encouragement on the child's journey of faith. Then comes the Decision which centres on their own faith in Christ.

After the Baptism Service

The Church may give you a special card to remind you of your godchild's baptism and the promises made. Keep it somewhere you will see it so that you remember to pray for your godchild.

On the following page you will find some prayers for you and your godchild and some answers to questions you might have.

What Happens in the Baptism Service?

You and the Godparents will publicly make a promise to do your best to nurture your child in the Christian faith, as part of the wider Church family. In the service, the local Church members will welcome your child into the faith and promise to support, encourage and pray for them as well as for you as a family.

For the baptism itself, the Vicar asks you and the godparents to bring your child to the font. He then asks you to make some promises on behalf of the child, after which your child will be baptised and then welcomed into the Church of England. Don't worry about things going smoothly, the Vicar makes sure you know what you need to do throughout the service.

Making Promises

During the baptism service you and your child's godparents answer four questions on behalf of your child. You declare your Christian faith and promise to help your child to follow Jesus.

The Decision

The Vicar will address the parents and godparents with a number of questions that only they can answer in good faith:

- ✝ Do you turn away from sin? **I do.**
- ✝ Do you reject evil? **I do.**
- ✝ Do you turn to Christ as Saviour? **I do.**
- ✝ Do you trust in Jesus as Lord? **I do.**

Signing of the Cross

The Vicar 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. He then says:

*“Christ claims you for his own. Receive the sign of the Cross.
Do not be ashamed of Christ. You are his forever.”*

Prayer over the water

The Vicar prays over the water asking for God to breathe life into it so that the child receives a God given cleansing by his Holy Spirit.

Declaration of faith

Whenever we meet with God, we declare to one another the faith we profess. The Vicar asks the congregation to respond to several faith statements with the words

“I believe and trust in him”

The Baptism

The Vicar then speaks the child’s name and says:

“I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

May God who has received you by Baptism into his Church, pour upon you the riches of his grace, that within the company of Christ’s pilgrim people you may daily be renewed by his anointing spirit, and come at last the eternal home in heaven. Amen”

Commission

This is a short summary of all that has happened in the service and introduces a shared moment of prayer for the child and their family.

The Lord’s Prayer is said by all.

The Presentation of Baptism Candles and The Welcome

The last symbolic gift given to the parents for the child is the Baptism Candle. This will be lit using the Paschal Candle which is specially lit for the service. We hope that parents will be able to tell their children that when they were baptized the candle was lit to symbolize that Jesus is the light we rely on. He gives light to our steps and to our lives enabling us to shine as light in the world.

Frequently Asked Questions

✝ **Is a Baptism & Christening the same thing?**

Yes, a Baptism and Christening are the same. They both refer to the welcoming of someone into the Christian faith.

✝ **What age does my child have to be to be Baptized?**

Anyone of any age is welcome to be baptised, whether they are newborn, toddler or even adult, everyone is welcome. Although most parents prefer to have their child baptised in their early years, there is never a age limit for starting your journey with Christ.

✝ **Shouldn’t our children make their own decisions?**

One day they will, but in the meantime, you probably make decisions for your child every day. You don’t wait until they ask before you feed them! In the same way choosing to baptise your child shows you want them to have spiritual food as they grow up and to become part of the Christian family, the Church. Later they will be able to declare their faith for themselves at a Confirmation service.

✝ **What is the role of a Godparent?**

Godparents make the same promises as the parents which are to help raise your child in the Christian faith as part of a Church Family. It is an important and reasonable role. Please see the following pages for more information on Godparents and feel free to pass this onto your chosen friend or relative to help them understand the role.

✝ **How many Godparents should you have?**

Usually there are three Godparents but there can be more. They are meant to pray for the Child and encourage them to follow the Christian faith. No one under the age of 16 can be a Godparent.

✝ **What happens after Baptism**

Now your child is a member of the worldwide Christian community! Most local churches have services where children are welcome. Many run groups and activities specifically for them.