

baptism

(also known as CHRISTENING)

BAPTISM makes us a Christian.

'BAPTISM' comes from the Greek word 'baptisma' which means a dipping.

'CHRISTENING' come from what happens at the service - being made a Christian

HOW DID IT START?

Jesus was baptised in the River Jordan and it was here that he became fully aware of the presence with him of God the Father and the Holy Spirit – that he was the Son of God. It was the turning point of his life and the beginning of his special mission on earth. After his death and resurrection Jesus commanded his followers to go out and 'Baptise in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'. This has been done in the Christian Church throughout the world ever since.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Baptism is a SACRAMENT – an outward sign of God's love that changes us.

The Baptism service involves:

- Declaring your belief in God and accepting God's love and protection.
- Turning from sin and evil and promising to live a good Christian life.
- Sharing in the death and resurrection of Jesus in a symbolic way.
- Joining the family of the One Holy Catholic Church of Jesus Christ, of which the Church of England is a part.

WHY DO WE BAPTISE CHILDREN?

The Church has always baptised young children from Christian families because we don't earn God's love, it is a free gift. The parents and godparents make promises on the child's behalf and help them grow in faith until they can make their own choices.

THREE SYMBOLS ARE USED DURING THE SERVICE

WATER: Water is an important sign of life. Just as we cannot live without water to drink, so we cannot live eternally without the cleansing and renewing love of God. The water of baptism symbolises being washed clean from sin and imperfection by God.

Traditionally people are pushed under the water as a sign that we die to the old life of sin and rise to the new life in Christ. The water is in a FONT which symbolises both a tomb, from which we rise, and a womb, from which we are born again. The water in the font is blessed by the priest so that it is set apart for this holy purpose.

OIL: The Greek word 'Christ' means 'one who is anointed with oil as King and Messiah'. During the service the priest makes THE SIGN OF THE CROSS on the candidate's forehead in oil to show that they belong to Christ. This sign of protection is like a badge reminding us never to be ashamed to share our faith in Christ.

LIGHT: After the candidate has been baptised the priest gives them a small candle which has been lit from the PASCHAL CANDLE which was blessed at Easter as a sign of Christ's victory over death. The candle teaches us that in Baptism we share in Christ's victory and pass from darkness to light.

AT THE END OF THE SERVICE

The candidate receives a CERTIFICATE OF BAPTISM as proof that they have been Baptised. Each GODPARENT receives a card telling them of their duties.

THE PROMISES MADE AT BAPTISM:

The Priest says: Parents and godparents, the Church receives these children with joy. Today we are trusting God for their growth in faith. Will you pray for them, draw them by your example into the community of faith and walk with them in the way of Christ?

Parents and godparents: **With the help of God, we will.**

In baptism these children begin their journey in faith. You speak for them today. Will you care for them, and help them to take their place within the life and worship of Christ's Church?

Parents and godparents: **With the help of God, we will.**

Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?

Parents and godparents: **I reject them.**

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?

Parents and godparents: **I renounce them.**

Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?

Parents and godparents: **I repent of them.**

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

Parents and godparents: **I turn to Christ.**

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?

Parents and godparents: **I submit to Christ.**

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?

Parents and godparents: **I come to Christ.**

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