

If you are planning to have your child baptized (christened) this leaflet contains information on what baptism is, and what happens at the service. To arrange a baptism please fill in the form on the back of this leaflet and give it to Fr Daniel. If you are an adult seeking to be baptized, then please have a chat with Fr Daniel rather than filling in this form.



## What is baptism?

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. We are acknowledging that we all need to turn away from selfishness and evil and to accept God's offer of a new start. Through baptism we are reborn in the Spirit, and begin a new life with Christ.

In baptism, you as parents are: thanking God for his gift of life, making a decision to start your child on the journey of faith and asking for the Church's support.

For your child, baptism marks the start of a journey of faith, which involves turning away from all that is evil, turning towards Christ and becoming a member of the local and worldwide Christian family.

## What happens during the service?

Your child's baptism will normally take place during the main Sunday Parish Eucharist (Mass/Holy Communion), which takes place at 11am. This is so that your child can be seen to be joining the family of the Church and be welcomed into membership. In

turn the Church will promise to support and pray for you and your child. Sometimes, but rarely, it is possible to have a smaller baptism service on a Sunday afternoon.

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.

Part of the baptism service takes place at the front of the church, but for the baptism itself, parents and godparents and the whole congregation gather around the font. (The font is a large basin on a pedestal, containing the water for baptism.)

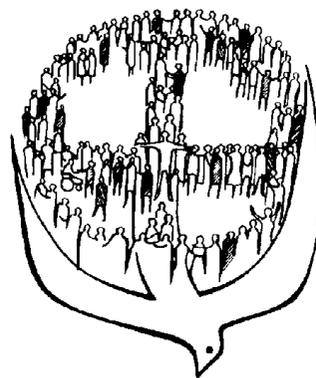
The priest will ask the parents and godparents to make declarations on behalf of the child.

## Making decisions and promises

When you bring your child for baptism, you will be asked to declare publicly on behalf of your child that you believe in God and that you will bring your child up to follow Jesus.

You will be asked to answer, on your child's behalf, that you have decided to turn away from everything which is evil or sinful and instead to turn towards Christ.

The declarations made by you and the child's godparents will be made in front of the church congregation; the local Christian community will promise to support you and pray for you and your child.



## Symbols and actions used during the service

A number of important symbols and actions 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. The priest says:

*Christ claims you for his own. Receive the sign of his cross. Do not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified.*

**Water:** The priest will pour water on your child's head. This is the moment of baptism itself. 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.

Water is a sign of life, but also a symbol of death. When we are baptized, it is as though our old life is buried in the waters (like drowning) and we are raised to new life with Christ.

**Anointing:** After baptism in water, the priest will anoint the child with oil. This is a sign of the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit. The priest says:

*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 to the inheritance of the saints in glory.*

**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

## Baptism Enquiry Form

Child's name	
Name/s of parent/s	
Your Address	
Home telephone number	
Mobile telephone number	
Email address	
Date of enquiry	
Any other information you would like us to know or think would be useful	

Once completed, please hand this form to Fr Daniel or drop it off at the Vicarage

they are to have you among them.

**Candles:** Jesus is the Light of the World. The Paschal Candle, a large candle blessed at Easter, is lit in church and 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.

It is up to you, the child's godparents and the church community to help your child reject the world of darkness and follow a way of life that reflects goodness and light and shares this light with others.

### The role of godparents

Godparents make the same promises on behalf of the child being baptised 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.

You should have no more than four godparents, normally two of the same sex as the child and one of the opposite sex. 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. Godparents must themselves be baptized Christians, over 16 years of age, and preferably should also be confirmed.

For more information and FAQs go to [www.churchofengland.org](http://www.churchofengland.org)

### St John the Evangelist

Brownswood Park

corner of Queen's Drive and Gloucester Drive

### I am SUNDAY EUCHARIST

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St John the Evangelist  
Brownswood Park



# BAPTISM

## Information Leaflet



A guide for parents  
seeking the baptism  
(christening)  
of a child

Please take away this leaflet

