

Infant Baptism

at Lisburn
Cathedral

CONGRATULATIONS!

We are delighted to share with you in the happiness of the birth of your child.

As parents, you will want the very best for your baby, and we are here to help you find that - in the deepest sense.

Baptism is such an important step that it is vital to think through the issues carefully.

This leaflet is our attempt to give you good, clear information on what Christian baptism is all about. Please read it carefully so that we can talk about it together. May God bless you deeply in your family life together.

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

When parents ask for baptism for their child, they are taking a very important step. Baptism is a symbol or signpost pointing to the really important things that God wants to do in our lives such as forgiveness, new birth & eternal

BAPTISM MEANS...

1. That we need God's forgiveness

Water is used to symbolise washing. Just as we need water to remove dirt from our bodies, so we need inner, spiritual cleansing.

This washing, or forgiveness of our sins, is offered to us by God through the death of His Son Jesus. The apostle Peter tells us that this is possible because Jesus "bore our sins" on the cross. We are called to admit our need of forgiveness & receive it from Jesus!

2. That we need new birth

Water is also used as a symbol in the New Testament (Romans 6:4) to suggest someone dying from an old way of life & then being raised to a new life.

Baptism symbolises the end of a self-centred life - in which God is rejected - the beginning of a new life with God at the centre. This shows our need of being 'born again' - Jesus says unless a person is born again he/she cannot enter the Kingdom of God... We are born again when we ask Jesus to forgive us & come into our lives.



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WHAT DOES BAPTISM DO FOR MY CHILD?

Obviously, the ceremony alone cannot make the crucial difference in our lives.

When explaining baptism, we like the image of a cheque. A cheque is just a piece of paper that promises a certain amount of money - the cash is only yours when you claim it. Then the promise becomes 'hard cash'.

Baptism is a solemn promise from God, who never breaks his promises. But we need to claim His promises for ourselves - or it's like the cheque that goes void because it's never being cashed.

When we turn to God, asking for forgiveness & inviting Jesus into our lives, we are claiming for ourselves promises made on our behalf at baptism.

So, at baptism, God is making solemn promises of forgiveness & new birth to your child - we pray that later in life he/she will cash the cheque and claim the promises for himself/herself.

REQUIREMENTS ON PARENTS & GODPARENTS

1.in the service...

As babies can't commit their own lives to Christ, we pray in faith that they will do so later. However, you cannot help your child to make that commitment, if you have not yet claimed that new life for yourself.

Therefore, in this service, parents must affirm their allegiance to Christ & are asked questions such as:

- Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?
- Do you then renounce the Devil and all his works?
- Will you obey & serve Christ?

How would you answer these questions?

2.in the years ahead...

At baptism a child is welcomed into the family of the Church. Family life requires commitment by parents, and membership of the Church family is no different in that it also requires a commitment to...

- be regular in Sunday worship as a family
- encourage your child to pray & read the Bible.

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Therefore in the Service parents are asked:

- Will you bring up this Child as a Christian, within the church?
- Will you help him/her to be regular in public worship and in private prayer, by your teaching, by your example & by your prayers for him/her?
- Will you encourage him/her to come in due course to Confirmation & Holy Communion?

These are promises you will make to God, before your friends and family.



SO WHAT NEXT?

If you have read this leaflet and discussed it together as parents, and you feel ready to bring your child for baptism, and make these significant promises for them. then we would love to talk to you about planning a date for your child to be baptised.

If you have read the leaflet but still have some questions or aren't sure if you're ready to make these promises just yet, we would be delighted to talk to you and discuss other ways we could mark the birth of your child as a Church family.

In either case, please get in touch with the clergy

A PRAYER FOR PARENTS

God our Father,
in giving us our child you have shown us your love.
Help us to be trustworthy parents.
Make us patient and understanding,
that our child will always be sure of our love and come to know the grace & love
which you have shown us in Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord,
Amen.