

Baptism...

...A sign of God's love for us

...Initiation into the life of the church

...Being made one with Jesus Christ

...Responding with a new way of life in the power of the Holy Spirit

Jesus said,

"I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit."

John's Gospel

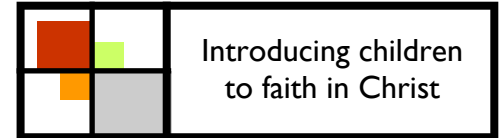


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What about Baptism for my child?

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THINKING ABOUT BAPTISM

St. Michael's holds family life in great esteem. We believe it is important to give every child the opportunity to experience the love of God.



New life is precious....

A key question is how best to help your child from an early age.

The Anglican Church has two services for introducing new born and very young children into the Christian Church.

1. The Service of Thanksgiving & Blessing
This service is suitable for any family that want to give thanks to God for their child and includes a naming ceremony and prayers of blessing for the child.
2. The Service of Baptism for Infants
This service is for those families who regularly attend a church and where at least one parent professes the Christian faith according to the creeds of the church. This service presumes that the child will be brought up in regular fellowship in a local church, and will be brought before the Bishop at an appropriate age to profess their faith in the service of Confirmation.

To help families decide the best course of action the minister will make a time to visit and discuss these different approaches and what may be best for you.

Some further sessions may be required where further information about the Christian faith can be explored.

WHAT'S BAPTISM ABOUT?

Baptism stands for Forgiveness

According to the teaching of the New Testament baptism is a symbolic washing with water— it signifies a spiritual cleansing by God. None of us is perfect. We all need God's forgiveness. Even at the very beginning of life we are in need of God to bridge the gap between human sinfulness and holy love. The Bible tells us that :

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.
Titus 3:4-7

The waters of baptism point to the cleansing of our hearts by God.

Baptism stands for New Birth

John's Gospel, chapter 3, records Jesus' words: "You must be born again". Through Jesus' death for us on the cross at Calvary 2000 years ago, God provided for a new start for all who are baptised and have faith. The usual practice of baptism is full immersion under water— rising up out of the water symbolizing a new start.



Water symbolizes cleansing and life

There is a need to die to self, and rise to a new, spiritual life. This comes about by the work of God's Spirit in our lives. At St. Michael's , water from a font is used to symbolise new life that is poured into us by faith. Godparents are appointed to help nurture the new spiritual growth.

What is required of parents?

- At least one parent must be a professing Christian who attends church regularly
- Parents and Godparents should seek to introduce the child to the Christian faith in the years to come through
 - Regular church attendance
 - Relevant children's books, tapes, etc.
 - Praying for and with the child
 - Helping them to get involved at church as they grow
- To involve the child in instruction for Confirmation when they are of an appropriate age to make their own profession of repentance, and faith in Jesus Christ in the church.

What's Next?

The minister will talk with you about further sessions to discuss the meaning of baptism and whether a service of Thanksgiving & Blessing or a service of Baptism should be your next step. Baptism can always be sought at a later date when thoughtful preparation has taken place for this important decision in the life of your family.

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