



What is Infant Baptism?

A Baptism of a new-born or young child is a wonderful opportunity for the extended family and friends to gather together and celebrate, giving thanks to God for this gift of life. But it is also a lot more than that: Baptism is a Sacrament, which means that when a child is baptised it is more than simply a good excuse for a party, it is also a spiritual act of worship.

The Apostle Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, says this in Acts Chapter 2: *"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call".... Those who accepted this message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.*" (Acts 2:38-41)

Baptism therefore, according to these verses, is a sign of three things:

- It is a sign of **Your Obedience.**
By undergoing this sacrament you are being humbly obedient to the Bible's command to be baptised and to baptise your children, and you are publically committing yourselves to raise your children in obedience to Christ the Lord.
- It is a sign of **God's Promise.**
The Bible says that Christians and their children are heirs of God's Kingdom and are able to receive all the promises and blessings given by God to his people, for example:

"And I will establish my covenant (my promise) between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you." (Genesis 17:7)

Crucially, the act of Baptism itself does *not* necessarily lead to God's blessing, salvation, forgiveness, and cleansing from sin – only a personal faith in Jesus Christ can offer that.

However, in baptism we look forward with anticipation to what God promises to do in the life of this new-born child; hoping and praying that one day God will call them to himself by granting them faith and that they will then take hold of these promises and blessings for themselves.

- It is a sign of **Church Membership.**
We baptise to celebrate that this child has been added to our family and to formally welcome the child into the fellowship of God's people, the Church.

The rest of the church will be present at the baptism service to rejoice with this new member of God's household and to promise to support the family in the Christian upbringing of the child through prayer and on-going fellowship.

What Happens at an Infant Baptism Service?

Below is a rough guide to how a Baptism Service in our church will look. Most elements of the service are flexible and open to suggestions and revisions. If the family wish to include something different or change certain parts of the service then please speak to the Minister in advance.

Introduction

The Minister will begin the baptism service by giving a short explanation of what baptism is and what the service is all about, along the lines of what is said above.

He will then introduce the child and their parents to the congregation and perhaps ask them to come to the front and say a few words about themselves and their faith, if they are willing to do so.

Promises

The Minister will then invite the parents to make a promise in the presence of God and the congregation, this is simply:

“Do you confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord of your life?

Do you promise to raise your child, with God’s help, in the Christian faith and in the fellowship of the local church, so that he/she may have the opportunity to know and accept the Lord Jesus as his/her Saviour?

Do you promise to pray for him/her, and to teach him/her to pray, and to set him/her a good example in your life?

The parents should respond by saying *“I do”* or *“we do”*. If there are Godparents present then they too will be asked to make similar a promise.

The minister will then address the congregation and ask: *“Do you as a congregation of God’s people, promise to play your part in the Christian upbringing of this child, and of all other children in our care, by proving nurture in the faith and fellowship in the Gospel?”* To which they will reply *“we do”*.

Prayer

Following the promises the church may wish to pray for the child, the family and Godparents.

Baptism

Then, taking the child from their parents for a short moment, the Minister will baptise the child by sprinkling a small amount of water on their head, as a symbol of the cleansing from sin which Christ offers to all those who have faith in him.

The child will then be returned to the parents, a certificate of baptism will be presented to them, and the service will continue with an encouraging sermon, further prayers and hymns of thanksgiving.

Frequently Asked Questions about Infant Baptism:

Do the Parents have to be members of the church to have their children baptised?

The nature of Baptism and the promises which are being made *do* require that the parents or guardians be Christian believers. Baptism, after all, is a declaration of the Christian faith and an affirmation of the intention to raise the child as an heir of God's promises in Christ. If you do not affirm the Christian faith then there would be no reason for you to desire to have your child baptised. However, you do not need to be a member of Cardiff Taff Vale Presbyterian Churches or the Presbyterian Church of Wales in order to have your child baptised with us: Anyone who believes in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour is welcome to have their child baptised in our church. If you are not a Christian believer and still wish to have a service in the church for your child then we would be delighted to organise a Thanksgiving Service for the birth of the child. Simply get in touch with the Minister for more information.

What about Godparents?

There is *no* requirement for a child to have Godparents but if you choose to have them then their primary role will be to provide assistance and encouragement to the child and family in their spiritual journey. Godparents, therefore, must be Christian believers, although not necessarily members of the Presbyterian Church. They will also need to be present with the family at the baptism service and ready to swear a confession their faith and a promise to help and pray for the child in the years to come.

Can we take photographs/video recordings during the service?

Of course! We want you to feel free to record this special occasion through taking photos, although in order to respect the sacredness of the moment we may request that all photos be taken during a specified time either before or after the service. Please note that due to licencing laws video recordings during the service itself can only be taken by licensed photographers/videographers.

Can someone be baptised more than once?

Ephesians 4:4-6 says that just as there is one Lord, one Faith and one Church, so there is also only one Baptism. As baptism is a sign of God's unchanging promises there is no need to be baptised more than once in a lifetime. However, in the Presbyterian Church of Wales people often choose to reaffirm the promises made in baptism when they are of an age to accept them personally. This is done through a Confirmation Service or through First Communion.

How much will it cost?

Baptism of a child is a joyful celebration for the church as well as the family, and therefore we do not charge for the service. But if the family wish to make a contribution to the work of the church or have a free-will offering taken during the service then the church would be happy to accept.

How can we arrange for our child to be baptised?

Contact the Minister or an Elder in the church and together a date can be set and the other arrangements can get underway. It is a requirement that any parents wishing to have their child baptised will meet with the Minister or an Elder at least once before the service is arranged to make certain that they understand the significance of the sacrament of Baptism.