



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of Lichfield

**St. Mark's - Basford**



## Introduction

We are delighted that you have approached us for a Christening service during which your child can be baptised. This document describes the normal procedure adopted by us and may also answer some of your questions. As we want you, your wider family and friends to get the most from the Christening service, we hope that you will commit to the basic preparation we will offer as you and your child embark on an important journey of faith.

## The Meaning of Christenings

Children are precious to you and precious to God. You want the very best for them, and so does God. You want them to make right choices in life, for themselves and for others. A Christening is just the beginning of this and so much more.

Over the years to come, it's a journey you'll share together with your child by:

- **Being there for your child** - to talk to about the bigger questions of life.
- **Praying for your child** - through the ups and downs of their faith journey.
- **Showing them practically** - how to make those good choices in life.
- **Helping them to learn more about their faith** - through their church and in other ways.

At a Christening service, parents are thanking God for his gift of life, stating that they have decided to start their child on the journey of faith and are asking for the Church's support. The baptism, within the Christening service, marks the start of a journey of faith, which involves turning away from the darkness of self-centredness, turning towards Christ and becoming a member of both the local and worldwide Christian family. The Church of England views baptism as a '*sacrament*', in other words, a visible sign of the reality of God's love; it is the ancient and prescribed way for Christians to acknowledge the need to consciously turn away from all wrongdoing and to make a new start with God.

## The Service

A Christening is an important family occasion and whoever leads the service will endeavor to make everyone feel relaxed and comfortable. The attendance by parents and godparents at a previous Christening service and Christening Preparation event will help equip them to get the most from their own child's' Christening.

At Basford, Christenings take place within Family Worship services held at 10.15 am on the third Sunday of each month. The service will include singing. A Bible reading and short talk will be given before the act of baptism itself.

**Your Christening service is booked for:**

Sunday, \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ am / pm

During the baptism, a number of important symbols are used:

- **Oil** - the priest will make the sign of the cross on the child's forehead using specially blessed oil. The oil is an external sign of the Holy Spirit's inner work. As the oil is applied, 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 the child's head. Water is a sign of washing and cleansing. When a person is baptised their old life is buried in the waters and they are raised to new life with Christ. After baptism has taken place, 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.'*
- **Light** - Jesus is known as the Light of the world. A large candle is lit and parents will be given a small candle lit from it as a reminder of the light which has come into the child's life. The candle acts as a reminder that parents, godparents and the whole church community have roles in helping the child reject the world of darkness and follow a way of life that reflects goodness and love symbolised by the light.

## Choosing Godparents

Choosing the right people as godparents for your child is a big decision. Here are some key things which might help you decide:

- Godparents will be **people who'll be in touch with your family for many years** to come. They may be relatives or friends of the family.
- They'll be **people who you know you can trust** and who'll be there for your child to talk about the bigger questions in life; questions about faith, hope and love.
- They should feel **ready to make some big promises about faith for your child in church**. The promises they will be asked to make are shown below.
- Every child should have **at least three godparents**, two of the same sex and at least one of the opposite sex to your child. You can have more than three godparents if you wish.
- **Parents may be godparents for their own children**, providing they have at least one other godparent.
- Because of the very special role they have in supporting your child's faith journey, **godparents must be baptized themselves** and be at least 16 years of age.

Parents and godparents will be asked to declare on behalf of the child that they believe in God and that they will bring up their child in ways that honour the teachings of Jesus. The gathered Christian community will also promise to support parents and godparents as well as to pray for the child. The declaration that parents and godparents will be asked to make are by way of a series of questions with responses...

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|---|---|
| Q) <i>Do you reject evil?</i>                 | A) <b>I reject evil.</b>                      |
| Q) <i>And all its many forms?</i>             | A) <b>And all its many forms.</b>             |
| Q) <i>And all its empty promises?</i>         | A) <b>And all its empty promises.</b>         |
| Q) <i>Do you turn to Christ?</i>              | A) <b>I turn to Christ.</b>                   |
| Q) <i>And put your trust in him?</i>          | A) <b>And put my trust in him.</b>            |
| Q) <i>And promise to follow him for ever?</i> | A) <b>And promise to follow him for ever.</b> |

## The Process

The process leading to a Christening service is as follows:

1. Parents enquiring about a Christening are directed to the church website where the policy can be read and/or downloaded.
2. Parents wishing to proceed in line with this procedure are invited to come to church (both mum and dad) so that they can meet the clergy and complete an application form. This meeting also allows for agreement of a date on which the parents and the godparents will attend a Christening Preparation Evening.
3. Parents, godparents (and their child, if possible) attend the Baptism Preparation Evening. It is important that both parents attend this evening. If this is not feasible then special arrangements can be made to cope. These evenings are held at **St. Mark's, Basford** and last about an hour.

**Your Preparation Evening will be on Monday, \_\_\_\_\_ at 7.00pm**

4. Parents bring their child to the scheduled Christening service.
5. Churches don't make charges for baptisms, however, if you wish to make a donation, please consider using the Gift Aid scheme if you are a UK tax Payer. By using the special envelope provided, your gift is worth 25% more to us as the Government will give us the tax you have already paid on the gifted amount. We will take a collection at some point during the Christening service and the envelope can simply be put on the plate. Thank you!



At both the service and the preparation evening there are likely to be other families present that are also embarking on the same faith journey.

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## Some useful Information

**Church Websites:** [www.stmarksbasford.co.uk](http://www.stmarksbasford.co.uk)

**Clergy:** Fr Tommy Merry

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