

Baptism is about **celebration, thanksgiving** and **welcome**.

For more information about baptisms in the Church of England, please go to: <http://www.churchofengland.org/> and click on the tab marked "Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals" and follow the links

BAPTISM

This leaflet aims to explain briefly what baptism means and symbolises.

Baptism is

- a celebration of the person, young or old, being baptised;
- a thanksgiving for their life and for all that God gives them and us;
- a welcome into the family of the Church, both worldwide and locally.

Through baptism we join a vast family spanning time and space. We commit ourselves to follow Christ and worship God within that family.



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Baptism is about symbols.



The water of baptism is

- a symbol of our new birth into life with Christ;
- a visible sign of God's love pouring down upon the person being baptised;
- a visible sign of God's forgiveness, renewing them and transforming the mistakes they have made (or will make) into something new and creative – like water gradually smoothing jagged stones.

Baptism is God's promise that no matter what happens to us in life, no matter what we do in life, he will love us with a love that will never let us go.



Baptism is about promises.

God promises:

- to hold the child or adult being baptised in his love and care;
- to pour his love upon them constantly;
- to give them his forgiveness and healing whenever they seek it.

All the people gathered at the baptism promise:

- to help the person being baptised to grow within the Christian faith;
- to pray for them and to walk beside them on their Christian journey.

If the person being baptised is a child, their parents and godparents promise on behalf of the child:

- to turn from the darkness towards the light of Christ.
- to turn from sin and selfishness.
- to turn away from evil and live a life shaped by the Christian faith.

Baptism is about symbols.

The lighted candle is

- a reminder that Jesus is the Light of the World who passed through the darkness of death to the light of resurrection;
- a reminder that God's light continues to shine, even when the darkness feels overwhelming;
- a reminder that God's love and light shine out of the person being baptised among their families and friends, and into the world.



The sign of the cross made with the oil of baptism is

- a symbol that the person being baptized belongs to God;
- a symbol that they live and grow as followers of Christ;
- a symbol of the Holy Spirit guiding and strengthening them day by day.