

## **Baptism Information**

We receive this Child into the Congregation of Christ's flock ... (*Book of Common Prayer*, p. 528)

### ***Introduction***

Congratulations! As you rejoice at the coming of your child, may God our Father fill you with His love and give you grace to care wisely for him or her. That care will be expressed in many ways as you seek to give the child all he or she needs. Nothing you will ever give your child is as important as Holy Baptism.

Baptism is not the giving of a name, or a magic or social rite. Holy Baptism is our response to the Gospel of Christ. It is initiation into the Church, the family of God, and the only way we can come to share the victorious life of Jesus Christ. It begins a life-long, living relationship with Jesus, in service to His world and in union with His people.

### ***Time of the Service***

Because Baptism is the initiation into the family of God, it is administered only during public services on Sundays. (The exception is emergency Baptism in the event of serious illness.) Both parents should, of course, be there with the Godparents. Because baptism is only administered on certain occasions, the priest should be contacted well in advance to arrange the precise date. The Baptismal Information Form (available from the Office) should be completed and given to the Priest at least two weeks before the proposed date of baptism.

### ***Godparents (or Sponsors)***

Each candidate for baptism is to be sponsored by one or more persons, traditionally called godparents. Godparents must have been baptised themselves and be able and prepared to make – and keep – the promises, which they should first read. For this reason it is preferable that they also be Confirmed and Communicant members of the Church. You should choose persons who will assist and encourage you in giving your child a Christian upbringing. Parents may be sponsors for their children if qualified as above, and in any event will make the promises with any other sponsors.

### ***When Parents live in another Parish***

As far as possible, children should be baptised in the parish in which they live, with the intention of expressing their Christian life, with their parents, as members of the Church in that congregation. A sentimental return to the parish in which

one or both parents received baptism is inappropriate if there is to be no other relationship with that parish.

If, however, there is good reason for having a child who is not a resident of this parish baptised here, this may be done provided the parents first receive the written consent of the Rector of the Parish in which they live. This consent should be included with the completed Baptismal Information Form and given to the Rector.

Where parents are unmarried it is illegal to register the child in the father's name in the registration, unless a special form is completed and signed by both parents. Ask one of the clergy about this.

### ***Interview***

At some point before the baptism there will be a meeting of the parents and godparents with the priest. It is very important that the parents attend, with as many of the godparents as possible. The priest will contact you to arrange the time of this meeting.

### ***After Baptism***

Baptism should not be thought of as an event complete in itself. While it is unique and unrepeatable we should see it as the beginning of a life. In it we share "the new life" of the risen Jesus. His life must be allowed to express itself through the life of every baptised person, in the worship of God and in loving service to the world in the fellowship of His Church. This cannot be done unless there is active involvement by the family in the life of the wider family of God. Your example as parents will do much to encourage – or discourage – your child in giving expression to the life of Christ received in Baptism. Consider, therefore, what a great responsibility you undertake in bringing him or her to receive Holy Baptism. If you feel you have problems with this, by all means discuss it with the priest, preferably before you arrange the date for the baptism.

In addition to a full range of Christian Education for children, from nursery care to Confirmation preparation, the parish provides many opportunities for people of all ages to exercise their talents, and so witness to their faith in Church even as they learn and grow in that faith. The Church is eager to help you in this way, and you are encouraged to discuss this with the priest.

### ***After Emergency Baptism***

In the event of illness after birth, the child may be baptised in the hospital. When he or she recovers sufficiently, the child should be brought to Church and publicly received, at which time the baptismal promises will be made. The actual baptism will not be repeated, but the rest of the Service will be used.

## ***After Adoption***

If you are adopting your child, inquire whether he or she was baptised before coming to you. If so, the same procedure is followed as after emergency baptism; if not, baptism will be administered.

## ***Adult Baptism***

While we generally think of baptism as being for babies, all of the specific accounts of baptism in the New Testament are of adults. Adults who have not been baptised may receive that sacrament. They should contact the Priest who will arrange the necessary instruction. (Baptism is unrepeatable and is not required of persons coming to membership in the Anglican Church from any other denomination of the Church, unless they did not receive baptism with water, in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in that denomination.)