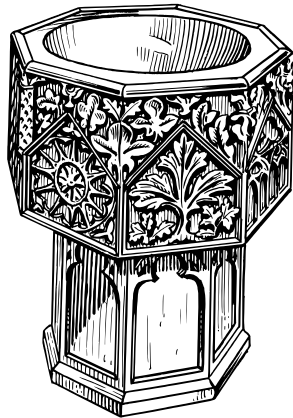


# A Parents' Guide to Baptism

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*Welcoming your child into the family of faith*



*A warm welcome from Rev'd Josh Jackson, Rector*

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5 CHURCHES BENEFICE  
Great Harrowden · Little Harrowden · Orlingbury · Pytchley · Isham  
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## We're so glad you're here

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Congratulations on the arrival of your child — what a wonderful and special time for your family. I am delighted that you are considering baptism, and I warmly welcome you on behalf of the 5 Churches Benefice, whatever your experience of church may be.

My name is Josh Jackson and I am the Rector here. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me directly if you have any questions at all — I would love to hear from you and to talk through what baptism might mean for your family.

This guide has been put together to help you understand what baptism is, what happens during the service, and what you and your family can expect as you take this meaningful step

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."*

**Matthew 28:19**

### What is Baptism?

## More than a naming ceremony

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Baptism is one of the most important sacraments of the Christian Church. Through water and the Holy Spirit, it marks a new beginning — a welcome into God's family and into the life of the Church.

In the Church of England, baptism is sometimes called a christening. While many people think of it as a naming ceremony or a family tradition, it is in fact much more than that. It is an act of faith — a public declaration that this child is loved by God and is welcomed into the community of believers.

Baptism does not make your child a Christian automatically — faith grows over a lifetime. But it is a beautiful and significant beginning, and it marks your child as belonging to God

### Your role as Parents

## A promise of love and faith

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During the baptism service, you will be asked to make promises on behalf of your child. These are not promises you need to feel perfect or fully confident about — they are an expression of your hope and intention to raise your child in an environment where faith can grow.

You will be asked to:

- Reject evil and turn to Christ
- Bring your child up within the life of the Church
- Help your child follow Christ in the years ahead

Don't worry if you feel uncertain many parents do. We are here to support you, and Rev'd Josh will talk through these promises with you before the service

## Choosing the right people

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Godparents play a special and lasting role in your child's life. In the Church of England, godparents make promises to support your child's faith journey and to pray for them regularly.

### How many godparents?

There is no set number, but the Church of England recommends at least three – traditionally two of the same sex as the child and one of the other. There is no maximum.

### Who can be a Godparent?

To be a godparent in the Church of England, a person should:

- Be baptised themselves
- Be at least 16 years old
- Not be one of the child's parents

A godparent does not need to be confirmed or to attend church regularly, though we encourage godparents to take their role seriously and to remain a faithful presence in your child's life

### Preparation

## Before the big day

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We ask all families to attend a short and friendly preparation meeting with Rev'd Josh or one of our team before the baptism. This is a relaxed and informal conversation (not a test!) where we can talk through the service, answer your questions, and get to know you a little.

We'll discuss the promises you'll make, the role of the godparents, and what life as a church family looks like. Many parents tell us they find this meeting really helpful and reassuring.

### The Service

## What happens on the day

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A baptism service lasts around 45 minutes to an hour. It can take place as part of a Sunday morning service – where your child is welcomed into the whole worshipping community – or as a private family service. Rev'd Josh will discuss which feels right for you.

### During the service:

- *The Decision* – parents and godparents are asked to turn from sin and trust in Christ
- *The Signing of the Cross* – the minister makes the sign of the cross on the child's forehead
- *The Baptism* – water is poured over the child's head three times, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- *The Giving of a Candle* – a lighted candle is given as a symbol of passing from darkness to light
- *Welcome* – the congregation welcomes your child into the family of the Church

You are welcome to take photographs and video during the service. Please speak to Rev'd Josh beforehand so we can let you know the best moments to do so

## Baptism and school admissions

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Many families in our area consider applying for a place at one of the local Church of England primary schools, and we are often asked whether baptism is relevant to the admissions process. The short answer is: yes, it can be.

We want to be clear: baptism is first and foremost a sacrament of the Church – a celebration of faith and a welcome into the family of God. We warmly encourage families to explore baptism for its own sake. That said, we understand that school admissions are a very real and practical concern for many parents, and we are happy to help

Important: Both local Church of England primary schools are academies within the Peterborough Diocese Education Trust (PDET), which is the admissions authority for both schools. Each school manages its own admissions arrangements through its Academy Governance Committee. Admissions policies can change from year to year – always check the school's current policy directly and contact the school if you are unsure.

### Local Church of England primary schools

#### Isham Church of England Primary School

Isham CE Primary is an academy within PDET. The school has been part of the parish of Isham since 1840 and maintains a strong Christian ethos. Families wishing to apply on faith grounds will need to complete a Supplementary Information Form (SIF A) in addition to the standard North Northamptonshire Council application. The completed form is returned to the school, which then contacts the minister to verify church allegiance using a separate form (SIF B). Baptism is one of the ways in which faith allegiance may be demonstrated.

Website: [ishamprimary.org.uk](http://ishamprimary.org.uk) ·

#### Pytchley Endowed Church of England Primary School

Pytchley Endowed CE Primary is also an academy within PDET. As with Isham, families applying on faith grounds should complete a Supplementary Information Form (SIF A) alongside their local authority application. The school then contacts the minister to verify attendance and church allegiance. Baptism, confirmation or membership of the electoral roll are among the ways faith allegiance can be evidenced. The school is also currently consulting on changes to its admissions arrangements from September 2027 – check the PDET website for the latest details.

Website: [pytchleyceprimary.org.uk](http://pytchleyceprimary.org.uk) ·

Because the minister is contacted directly to verify church allegiance as part of the admissions process, it is important to get in touch with us as early as possible – particularly if you have a school application deadline in mind. Rev'd Josh is happy to discuss this with you

## Things parents often ask us

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### **Is there a charge for baptism?**

No. Baptism in the Church of England is always free of charge.

### **Does my child need to be a certain age?**

There is no minimum age. Baptism can take place at any point in childhood, or in adulthood. Rev'd Josh is happy to discuss what is right for your family.

### **Do we need to attend church before the baptism?**

We warmly encourage you to come along to a service before the baptism, so that you can experience the community your child will be welcomed into. However, we do not make this a requirement.

### **Will a certificate of baptism be provided?**

Yes. We will issue an official certificate of baptism after the service. This is the document schools may ask for as evidence of baptism in faith-based admissions applications.

### **How soon can the baptism take place?**

This depends on our service schedule and the preparation meeting. Please get in touch as soon as possible – particularly if you have a school application deadline in mind – and we will do our best to accommodate you.

### **The school has asked Rev'd Josh to complete a form – what should I do?**

As part of the PDET admissions process, the school may send Rev'd Josh a Supplementary Information Form (SIF B) to verify your church allegiance. Rev'd Josh is familiar with this process and will complete it promptly. Please let us know when you submit your school application so we can expect the form.

### **Is baptism the same as confirmation?**

No. Baptism is the first sacrament, usually received in infancy. Confirmation is when a person affirms the promises made at their baptism for themselves, usually as a teenager or adult

## Next Steps

## We'd love to hear from you

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If you'd like to arrange a baptism, or simply want to find out more, please do get in touch. There is no pressure and no obligation – Rev'd Josh and the team are just delighted that you are considering this step

### **Enquire about baptism online**

Complete our child baptism enquiry form at: [5churches.com/?page\\_id=259](https://5churches.com/?page_id=259)

Or contact us directly:

Phone: 01933 522350

Email: [administrator@5churches.com](mailto:administrator@5churches.com)

Office hours: Monday 9am–11am · Wednesday 9am–12pm

