

## How do I know whether baptism or thanksgiving is right for my child?

Baptism is for families who want to make a commitment to the Christian faith. A Christian is a person who decides to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ and wants to become or continue as a member of the local church. The Christian faith is about a personal relationship with God, through Christ.

A service of thanksgiving is for families who want to thank God for the gift of a child but do not want to make a commitment to the Christian faith.

You or your child can always choose baptism at a later date when your child is able to understand more of what it means.

### The Decision

If you do not feel you are able to make promises you could not keep, but would value God's blessing on your child, we would be delighted to hold a service of thanksgiving.

If you are ready to commit yourself to bring your child up in the Christian faith, we would be delighted to baptise your child and welcome them into the church family.

The choice is yours.



## Baptism or Thanksgiving?



A guide to help parents make an informed choice about the right service for their child

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## What is a Baptism?

Baptism marks the beginning of a journey with God which continues for the rest of a child's life, the first step in response to God's love.

For the children, the parents and godparents baptism is a time to rejoice in what God has done for us in Christ. Promises and a declaration of the Christian faith are made. Members of the local church welcome the child into the family of the church and promise prayer and support for the future.

### F.A.Q's

#### **Why do we baptise with water?**

Water is used for washing and reminds us that belief in Christ makes us spiritually clean.

Water can be destructive and represents dying to our old life and beginning a new life with God.

Water is vital for life and reminds us that God offers us a spiritual life.

#### **What promises do I have to make?**

To stop rebelling against God

To say we are sorry for doing things against God's laws

To admit to belief in God and Christ.

## What is a Service of Thanksgiving?

A service of thanksgiving is for families who recognise that something has happened for which they wish to give thanks to God without committing themselves to the Christian faith. We thank God for the birth of the child and ask him for his help and blessing in the years to come.

### F.A.Q's

#### **Can my child still be married in a church?**

Yes - In England everyone has the legal right to be married in the parish church where they live.

#### **Can my child have a Christian funeral?**

Yes - This is not conditional on a person being baptised.

#### **Does thanksgiving make my child a Christian?**

No - Neither baptism nor thanksgiving makes a person a Christian, only belief in God and his Son Jesus Christ.

#### **Will my child still go to heaven if they die?**

The Church of England does not believe that a church service affects a child's destiny. Being certain of eternal life comes through belief and trust in Jesus Christ.

#### **Can we still have God Parents?**

Yes - They are called sponsors. They promise to give support to the parents and child and these promises can be personally written by each sponsor.