

## **Baptism Q&A Sheet**

1. What does the Church expect when someone is baptised?

As Christians, we are called to be a community of faith, where we can grow, support each other and give worship and praise to God. We are also called to serve those in need within our communities. Baptism is the first step to becoming a member of the worldwide Christian family and a member of the Church. The Sacrament of baptism assumes “a well-founded hope” that as child or adult they will practice the faith. This means:

- they know the story of Jesus
- they pray daily and understand the importance of prayer
- The home is one of Christian values
- They along with family become an active member of the Church

If you feel at this time you cannot make those commitments you may want to consider the service ‘Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child.’

2. When do you have baptism services?

Baptisms are held in the main Sunday Service known as The Eucharist (Holy Communion) For the times of our services please check the parish websites for St James the Great Chapelthorpe and St Peter’s Woolley.

Baptisms are usually not held in the seasons of Advent and Lent.

3. Is there a charge for a baptism?

The gift of baptism is a free gift from God so there is no cost. However, if you would like to give a donation for the maintenance of the church that would be greatly appreciated. Please ask the priest about how you can do this when you meet.

4. Do godparents have to be baptised before they can become a godparent?

Yes, they do. Under Canon Law (Church Law) it states that all godparents have to be baptised, no exceptions are permitted. The priest taking the baptism will ask each godparent at some point on their baptism preparation to see their Baptism Certificate so we can record this information. If a potential godparent isn’t baptised please read our Baptism Page on the website which gives information on what they need to do.

5. Does a godparent have to be at the service?

Yes, under Canon Law it states that they have to be present. However, we understand that this isn’t always possible. Officially they cannot be recorded or known as a godparent, though as a family you may consider them as another means of support to help your child live by Christian values and for them to be a good example for your child.

6. Is there a minimum and maximum number of godparent that we can have?

The maximum number is four and the minimum is three. The maximum of four is simply because on the official church register only four names can be added. The minimum of three is a little bit more complicated to explain and is related to the gender of your child. Two of your godparents have to be of the same gender as your child, the other godparent has to be of the opposite gender.

7. Do we really need to come to church as a family and also with our godparents?

The gift of baptism is one of the greatest gifts that is given by God through the Church. At a baptism those who are baptised are marked by a sign of the Cross. This stays with them throughout their lives and God recognises the individual as part of His Christian family. Coming to church is part of our Baptism Preparation, allowing you to be part of another Sacrament, The Eucharist. It will also give us the opportunity to get to know each other.

8. How many times do we need to come to church?

This isn't a tick box exercise for either you as a family, your godparents and/or even the clergy. Every baptism family is different, it really depends on the relationship and commitment you show to God, the frequency of attending services and the relationship with the congregations and clergy have blossomed.

9. What if we cannot get to church on a Sunday because of other commitments?

We totally understand the commitments that everyone has and the demands on family life. As for coming to church for a Sunday Service, you don't need attend every Sunday, come as and when you can. If you cannot attend any Sunday, there are also our midweek service that you can attend at St James' on a Wednesday at 10.30am.

If you cannot attend any of our services you may decide that a baptism at this time isn't right for you. If this is the case why not consider the service 'Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child.' This is a Christian service where family and friends come to celebrate the gift of a child in their lives. For this service there are no godparents and they are no promises before God.

10. I'm really nervous about coming to church, I don't know what to do in a service?

Firstly, you're not the first to think that and you won't be the last. You will definitely be made welcome, and if you want we can ask someone to sit near you, so they can talk you through the service. Alternatively you can just copy what others are doing. Also the clergy if they notice a new face or faces will talk everyone through the service. If truthful just be yourselves, it really doesn't matter if you sit when everyone else stands or you don't want to join in with the singing. The main thing is that you have taken a big step and you are before God in a holy temple.

11. I really don't know what to expect and what all the symbols mean in a baptism?

That is why we have the Baptism Preparation Class for you and your godparents. Along with other families and godparents we will go through the service so you know what to expect. At the end of the class (approx. one hour) you can then make an informed decision whether the time is right for you to have a baptism or not. At the end of the class, dates will then be agreed for the baptism. Our classes are usually held once a month on the second Tuesday at 6pm.

We hope that this sheet may have answered some of your questions. Don't worry if you have more, that is only to be expected. You can always ask those questions to clergy when you are in church or when you attend the Baptism Preparation Class.

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