

**A BAPTISM OR THANKSGIVING SERVICE
FOR YOUR CHILD**



KEYNSHAM PARISH

We are delighted you're thinking of a church service for your child. Your child is precious to you and precious to God and we hope you and your child will be truly blessed by your experience in Keynsham Parish.

The Contents of this Pack:

- frequently asked questions
- practical arrangements
- one Baptism booklet and one Thanksgiving Service booklet
- an application form
- a feedback form
- a gospel of *Luke* and a *You Matter* booklet

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the difference between a Christening and a Baptism?

None, they are two different names for the same service.

What is the difference between a Baptism and Thanksgiving service?

The Baptism Service is the traditional service in which the child has water poured over their head. In the service the parents and godparents promise to bring the child up in the Christian faith.

The Thanksgiving service is a newer service designed to mark a moment of celebration for the new member of the family. It does not convey the same commitment to the Christian faith.

In what way are the Baptism and Thanksgiving services different?

The Baptism service is about the child beginning as a Christian believer. The service contains symbols and promises. **The symbols:** the main one is the water poured over the child's head symbolising washing, dying and new life. The sign of the cross, reminds us of Christ's death on the cross which is the means by which our sins are forgiven and we can find new life. A candle is given to the child to remind him (or her) that he (or she) has received the light of Jesus Christ in an often dark world. **The promises:** that the parents and godparents make are to bring the child up in the Christian faith, and are of great importance.

The Thanksgiving Service is an opportunity to express deep gratitude to God, but does not imply any on-going allegiance to the Christian faith. It usually includes the gift of a Bible, and prayers for God's blessing on the child and his or her family. It is not the same as a Baptism service and the child could still be baptised later.

Who chooses which service my child will have?

You will be completely free to make the choice.

What promises do the parents and Godparents have to make at a Baptism Service?

You will find these on pages four, five and six of the Baptism Booklet in this pack.

Shouldn't our children make their own decisions?

One day they will, but in the meantime you will be making decisions for them everyday. You don't wait till they can ask before you feed them, and in the same way choosing to bring them up in the Christian faith ensures they receive spiritual food and direction before they realise such things are important. Later when they are older they will be free to decide for themselves about the Christian faith, and choose to receive the bread and wine of Holy Communion and be confirmed.

What is a sacrament?

A sacrament is a word to describe a special moment in which God blesses someone. At the moment of baptism, the outward visible sign of the water is matched by an inward invisible grace (or blessing) in which God touches the person receiving the baptism and gives him or her new spiritual life.

How many Godparents (Baptism Service) or Supporting Friends (Thanksgiving Service) can we have?

You can have as many Godparents or Supporting Friends as you like. Traditionally parents have chosen two of the same sex as the child and one of the opposite sex, but you don't have to stick to this. Please however choose people who will pray for your child and care for them and take seriously the promises they will make to God.

What time and place are most Baptisms held in the Parish of Keynsham?

At 12.30pm on the first Sunday of the month in St John's Church at a separate service for baptisms. If you would like your child to be baptised in a main Sunday service we would expect you to attend Sunday worship on a few occasions beforehand. Please ask for details.

What time and place are most Thanksgiving Services held in the Parish of Keynsham?

At 1pm on a Sunday which fits with your plans, and the church and clergy's commitments. The service would be in St John's Church. If you would like your Thanksgiving service to be in a main Sunday service we would expect you to attend Sunday worship on a few occasions beforehand. Please ask for details.

Does a service for my child cost anything?

There is no charge for a Baptism or Thanksgiving Service. It is completely free. However we do operate a friendly and caring after sales service! Do keep in touch by coming to Church when you can.

How might I find out more about the Christian faith?

Many people find that having a child has a spiritual impact, and you might be someone who has found this and has questions about God and the Christian faith. A good way to find out more is to join our Alpha Course which usually runs for ten evenings each year from January onwards. The discussions provide an interesting and enjoyable way to ask questions and are highly recommended.

Who should I contact if I have any questions?

The first place to make contact is the Keynsham Parish Office. The Office Manager who oversees the administration of baptism and thanksgiving services can be contacted by email:

Office@keynshamparish.org.uk or by telephone: 0117 9863354 or by post at: The Parish Office, 1, The Park, Keynsham, Bristol BS31 2BL or you can call into the Parish Office which is open 9.30am to 12.30pm every Monday to Friday, (excluding Bank Holidays).

Are there any recommended web addresses?

The Keynsham Parish web address is: keynshamparish.org.uk

The Church of England: <http://www.churchofengland.org/weddings-baptisms-funerals/>

A great source of Children's Bibles: <http://www.lionhudson.com/>

The Baptism Cube: <http://www.chpublishing.co.uk/>

THE SERVICE ITSELF - PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS

BEFORE:

1. Once you have booked a date with us at the preparation session or in the days that follow the booking is definite. Please make sure you check you have the correct date and time.
2. We prefer you to return your completed application form as soon as you can, but you must have returned it by a week before the service date.
3. You are welcome to make contact with the Parish Office in the week before the service if you wish to confirm any details. If you have booked a date with us we will be planning to welcome you on the day whether or not you make contact in the week before.

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IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE SERVICE:

1. Please try to arrive in good time, about ten minutes before the start of the service.
2. Your child may be one of a number of babies or children being baptised or having a service of thanksgiving that morning.
3. Where you sit within the church doesn't matter, because you and your child and godparents will be called to gather around the font or at the front of the church at the relevant moment. Most families and friend tend to sit together in one section of the church.
4. Whilst we do not say there is no photography during the service, we do ask you to limit flash photography to prevent the service being disrupted. The officiating minister will be happy to be photographed with the family around the font after the service if you would like. With prior arrangements a video is allowed, (please ask for details).

DURING THE SERVICE:

1. The priest conducting the service will make sure things run smoothly. Just follow his or her instructions.
2. Usually the service includes two hymns or songs. There will be the opportunity to sing your favourite hymn (as long as it's well known), if you let us know what it is in the days before the service.

AFTER:

1. Once your child has been baptised they are part of the worldwide Christian Community. Most local churches have services where children (whether baptised or not) are welcome. Keynsham Parish has services which cater for children (e.g. the 11.15am on a Sunday at St John's).
2. There is also the Mums and Toddler Group which meets in St John's Church Hall on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 10am.