

## Pastoral Introduction

Baptism marks the beginning of a journey with God which continues for the rest of our lives, the first step in response to God's love. For all involved, particularly the candidates but also parents, godparents and sponsors, it is a joyful moment when we rejoice in what God has done for us in Christ, making serious promises and declaring the faith. The wider community of the local church and friends welcome the new Christian, promising support and prayer for the future. Hearing and doing these things provides an opportunity to remember our own baptism and reflect on the progress made on that journey, which is now to be shared with this new member of the Church.

The service paints many vivid pictures of what happens on the Christian way. There is the sign of the cross, the badge of faith in the Christian journey, which reminds us of Christ's death for us. Our 'drowning' in the water of baptism, where we believe we die to sin and are raised to new life, unites us to Christ's dying and rising, a picture that can be brought home vividly by the way the baptism is administered. Water is also a sign of new life, as we are born again by water and the Spirit, as Jesus was at his baptism. And as a sign of that new life, there may be a lighted candle, a picture of the light of Christ conquering the darkness of evil. Everyone who is baptized walks in that light for the rest of their lives. As you pray for the candidates, picture them with yourself and the whole Church throughout the ages, journeying into the fullness of God's love.

*Jesus said,  
'I came that they may have life,  
and have it abundantly.'  
John 10.10*

# BAPTISM OF CHILDREN

## Brief Form

### *Preparation*

*Some may find the brief words of explanation at the end of this book useful. (page 16)*

### **The Greeting**

*The minister says*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with you all

*All* **and also with you.**

*Words of welcome or introduction may be said.*

### **Introduction**

*The minister may use these or other words*

Our Lord Jesus Christ has told us  
that to enter the kingdom of heaven  
we must be born again of water and the Spirit,  
and has given us baptism as the sign and seal of this new birth.  
Here we are washed by the Holy Spirit and made clean.  
Here we are clothed with Christ,  
dying to sin that we may live his risen life.  
As children of God, we have a new dignity  
and God calls us to fullness of life.

## The Collect

*The minister says this or some other opening prayer.*

Heavenly Father,  
by the power of your Holy Spirit  
you give to your faithful people new life  
in the water of baptism.  
Guide and strengthen us by the same Spirit,  
that we who are born again may serve you  
in faith and love,  
and grow into the full stature of your Son, Jesus Christ,  
who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit  
now and for ever.

*All* **Amen.**

## *The Liturgy of the Word*

*A Bible reading from the Gospels is introduced.*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to *N*.

*All* **Glory to you, O Lord.**

*At the end*

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

*All* **Praise to you, O Christ.**

*The Commission may be read (page 15)  
or a brief sermon may explain the  
Gospel and the Sacrament of Baptism.*

## The Commission

We have brought these *children* to baptism knowing that Jesus died and rose again for *them* and trusting in the promise that God hears and answers prayer. We have prayed that in Jesus Christ *they* will know the forgiveness of *their* sins and the new life of the Spirit.

As *they* grow up, *they* will need the help and encouragement of the Christian community, so that *they* may learn to know God in public worship and private prayer, follow Jesus Christ in the life of faith, serve *their* neighbour after the example of Christ, and in due course come to confirmation.

As part of the Church of Christ, we all have a duty to support *them* by prayer, example and teaching. As *their* parents and godparents, you have the prime responsibility for guiding and helping *them* in their early years. This is a demanding task for which you will need the help and grace of God. Therefore let us now pray for grace in guiding *these children* in the way of faith.

### Mark 1:14-20

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea - for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

### John 3:1-8

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.'

## *The Liturgy of Baptism*

### Presentation of the Candidates

*The minister addresses the whole congregation*

Faith is the gift of God to his people.  
In baptism the Lord is adding to our number  
those whom he is calling.

People of God,  
will you welcome *these children/candidates*  
and uphold *them* in *their* new life in Christ?

*All*

**With the help of God, we will.**

*The minister then says to the parents and godparents*

Parents and godparents,  
the Church receives *these children* with joy.  
Today we are trusting God for *their* growth in faith.  
Will you pray for *them*,  
draw *them* by your example into the community of faith  
and walk with *them* in the way of Christ?  
**With the help of God, we will.**

In baptism *these children* begin their journey in faith.  
You speak for *them* today.  
Will you care for *them*,  
and help *them* to take *their* place  
within the life and worship of Christ's Church?  
**With the help of God, we will.**

## The Decision

*A large candle may be lit.  
The minister addresses the candidates directly,  
or through their parents, godparents and sponsors*

In baptism, God calls us  
out of darkness into his marvellous light.  
To follow Christ means dying to sin  
and rising to new life with him.

Therefore I ask:

Do you turn to Christ?  
**I turn to Christ.**

Do you repent of your sins?  
**I repent of my sins.**

Do you renounce evil?  
**I renounce evil.**

## Appendix

### Some Suitable Gospel Readings

#### Matthew 16:24-27

Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? 'For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done.'

#### Matthew 28:16-20

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

## Giving of a Lighted Candle

*The minister or another person may give each of the newly baptized a lighted candle.*

*These may be lit from the candle used at the Decision.  
When all the newly baptized have received a candle, the minister says*

God has delivered us from the dominion of darkness  
and has given us a place with the saints in light.  
You have received the light of Christ;  
walk in this light all the days of your life.

*All* **Shine as a light in the world  
to the glory of God the Father.**

## The Dismissal

Go in the light and peace of Christ.  
**Thanks be to God.**

*All*

*Or from Easter Day to Pentecost*

Go in the light and peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia  
**Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia**

*All*

## Signing with the Cross

*The minister makes the sign of the cross  
on the forehead of each candidate, saying*

Christ claims you for his own.  
Receive the sign of his cross.

*The minister may invite parents, godparents and sponsors  
to sign the candidates with the cross.*

*When all the candidates have been signed, the minister says*

Do not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified.  
*All* **Fight valiantly as a disciple of Christ  
against sin, the world and the devil,  
and remain faithful to Christ to the end of your life.**

May almighty God deliver you from the powers of darkness,  
restore in you the image of his glory,  
and lead you in the light and obedience of Christ.

*All*

**Amen.**

## Prayer over the Water

*The ministers and candidates gather at the baptismal font.  
A canticle, psalm, hymn or litany may be used*

*The minister stands before the water of baptism and says*

*All* Praise God who made heaven and earth,  
**who keeps his promise for ever.**

*All* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give thanks and praise.**

Father, we give you thanks and praise  
for your gift of water in creation;  
for your Spirit, sweeping over the waters,  
bringing light and life;  
for your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,  
baptized in the river Jordan.  
We bless you for your new creation,  
brought to birth by water and the Spirit,  
and for your grace bestowed upon us your children,  
washing away our sins.  
May your holy and life-giving Spirit  
move upon these waters.  
Restore through them the beauty of your creation,  
and bring those who are baptized  
to new birth in the family of your Church.  
Drown sin in the waters of judgement,  
anoint your children with power from on high,  
and make them one with Christ  
in the freedom of your kingdom.  
For all might, majesty, dominion and power are yours,  
now and for ever.

*All* **Amen.**

## *The Sending Out*

### Final Collect

Eternal God, our beginning and our end,  
preserve in your people the new life of baptism;  
as Christ receives us on earth,  
so may he guide us through the trials of this world  
and enfold us in the joy of heaven,  
where you live and reign,  
one God for ever and ever.

*All* **Amen.**

### The Blessing

*The minister may use this or another suitable blessing.*

The God of all grace,  
who called you to his eternal glory in Christ Jesus,  
establish, strengthen and settle you in the faith;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be upon you and remain with you always.

*All* **Amen.**

## The Welcome and Peace

There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism:  
*N and N*, by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.

*All* **We welcome you into the fellowship of faith;  
we are children of the same heavenly Father;  
we welcome you.**

*The congregation may greet the newly baptized.*

*The minister introduces the Peace  
in these or other suitable words*

We are all one in Christ Jesus.  
We belong to him through faith,  
heirs of the promise of the Spirit of peace.  
The peace of the Lord be always with you  
**and also with you.**

*All*

*A minister may say*

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

*All may exchange a sign of peace.*

## Profession of Faith

*The minister addresses the congregation*

Let us affirm,  
together with these who are being baptized,  
our common faith in Jesus Christ.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,  
source of all being and life,  
the one for whom we exist?

*All* **I believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,  
who took our human nature,  
died for us and rose again?

*All* **I believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,  
who gives life to the people of God  
and makes Christ known in the world?

*All* **I believe and trust in him.**

This is the faith of the Church.

*All* **This is our faith.  
We believe and trust in one God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

## Baptism

*The minister or another minister dips each candidate in water, or pours water on them, saying*

N, I baptize you  
in the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.

*All* **Amen.**

*If the newly baptized are clothed with a white robe, a hymn or song may be used, and then a minister may say*

You have been clothed with Christ.  
As many as are baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

*The minister says*

May God, who has received you by baptism into his Church,  
pour upon you the riches of his grace,  
that within the company of Christ's pilgrim people  
you may daily be renewed by his anointing Spirit,  
and come to the inheritance of the saints in glory.

*All* **Amen.**

*The minister and those who have been baptized may return from the font.*

## The Prayers

Faithful and loving God,  
bless those who care for *these children*  
and grant *them* your gifts of love, wisdom and faith.  
Pour upon *them* your healing and reconciling love,  
and protect *their* home from all evil.  
Fill *them* with the light of your presence  
and establish *them* in the joy of your kingdom,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

God of grace and life,  
in your love you have given us  
a place among your people;  
keep us faithful to our baptism,  
and prepare us for that glorious day  
when the whole creation will be made perfect  
in your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Let us pray with confidence  
as our Saviour has taught us

*All* **Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**