

Central Telford Parish – Child Baptism

FAQs - Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Difference Between “Baptism” and “Christening”?

Absolutely nothing! The Bible talks about people being “baptised” into the Church, which the Bible also talks about as being the “body of Christ”. Down the centuries people have often called Baptism as “Being Christened” which means exactly the same thing – being part of the body of Christ, the Church. So there is no difference between the two, although we tend to use the word “baptism” more.

Why is Baptism So Important?

Baptism is a lifelong commitment to God and involves making promises in front of him and the Church which say that we will endeavour to live life the way he wants us to and play an active part in the life of the Church. As parents bringing their child for Baptism, you are making these promises on behalf of your child and you are therefore taking on the responsibility for encouraging them to do the same. These are serious promises and it is our desire that those who make them are fully aware of the implications of what they say before they commit themselves to saying them.

Why Can't We Book a Date Now?

We believe that the question of what is right for you and your child is an important one and that the decision as to whether Baptism is the right option for you should be considered before a date set for the Baptism – otherwise all of us are committed to doing something which we may decide is inappropriate in the circumstances. We therefore feel it is best to not book a date until you are fully equipped to choose the right path for you as a family.

We Don't Live In The Parish – What Should We Do?

If you don't live in the Parish of Central Telford, you may still be able to have your child Baptised if you attend the Church regularly. But we would ask that you let the Vicar of the Parish in which you live know that you are considering having your child Baptised in one of the Churches here.

What does “engaging with the life of the Church actually mean?”

The Church is not a building but a group of people who are actively seeking together to be followers of Jesus Christ. Just like any club or society, in order to understand more about what the aims of the group are, it is important to be an active part of what is happening. In the life of the Church, this is not simply coming along to Sunday services but discovering other parts of the life of the Church such as activities for your children, church meals and walks etc The promises made at Baptism are that the parents and godparents will commit themselves to encouraging the child to grow up within this community – so it seems only sensible to find out what the community of the Church is like before deciding about whether Baptism is right for you and your child.

I don't feel I want to come to the evenings, is there an alternative?

We hope that everyone who attends the Baptism Preparation Evenings will find them an enjoyable and thoughtful time when they can consider some important questions for both themselves and their child. However, we recognise that some may not feel that this is “for them” and we are very happy to be able to offer a Thanksgiving Service (see below) as an alternative to Baptism. Whilst we would like to visit you to talk about this with you, this does not commit you or require you to do anything more than to attend the service when the Thanksgiving takes place.

I'm A Single Parent – Does That Matter?

Being a parent can be tough and is made easier when the job is shared. We believe that sharing the responsibility for fulfilling the promises at Baptism is something that will be an important factor in the spiritual growth of the whole family. However, we recognise that sometimes, sadly, the parents are no longer together and the child is being brought up by one parent alone. It is certainly not a problem for the child to be brought for baptism in this situation.

Do Both Parents Need To Attend?

How Many Sessions Do We Need To Attend?

In order that the parents are fully informed about the promises involved, we would request that, where appropriate, both parents attend at least two of the three evenings, including the final evening. One parent should have attended all the evenings.

Godparents ... How Many Can We Have, What Age Should They Be and Do They Need To Attend The Course?

We only have room in our registers to acknowledge four Godparents in the service and so we limit the numbers accordingly and ask that they are at least 18 years old and are themselves Baptised. We would also encourage all Godparents to attend the evenings, as it will help them to understand their part in the spiritual development of the child. The Godparents should themselves be baptised into the Christian faith.

We already have had a Child baptised – do we still need to attend?

If you have had a child baptised in another parish, we would still ask you to attend the series of evening as an introduction to the understanding we have of Baptism in the Parishes. If, however, you have already attended a series of Baptism Preparation Evenings, then we would ask that you attend the final session as a "refresher".

What Other Options Are Available?

If, at the end of the Evenings, you feel that Baptism is not the way forward for you and your child, there is an alternative available which you might like to consider: A Thanksgiving Service for your child is something which happens at the start of a Sunday service (like Baptism) and is an opportunity to thank God for the gift of your child and to seek God's blessing on him/her. This simple service does not involve any promises or commitments being made and does not involve any of the "formal" aspects of Baptism, for example, the use of water.

When Would A Baptism Be Likely to Take Place?

Some possible dates for a Baptism Service would be discussed at the end of the final Preparation Evening. No guaranteed dates are able to be offered because the Baptism service requires a member of the ordained clergy to be present and staffing rotas vary from month to month. However, once the date has been agreed at the end of the final Evening, the date will be fixed for you to make all other appropriate arrangements.

What Do I Do Now?

We hope that you will share our desire to ensure that we offer the right service for you and your child and that the Baptism Preparation Evenings will be a valuable time for you and your family. If you would like to explore this with us, please fill in the attached form and get it back to the Parish Office

Anything Else?

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact the parish office. We will do our best to help with anything you may need to know.