

Congratulations

you have been asked
to be a godparent

ST CATHERINES

Worship · Evangelism · Compassion



Privilege

The life of every child is precious. It can develop in so many ways. You are being given the chance to influence it for good.

Your godchild's parents are showing that they trust you. Otherwise they wouldn't give you a part in bringing up their child.

Each family should be a circle of warmth and care; if you are not part of the child's immediate family you are being brought into that circle. If you are part of the family, you are being given a special place in relationship to your godchild.

Responsibility

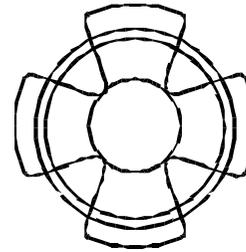
Christians believe that the most important thing for any child is to find God through Jesus Christ. Baptism is all about helping this to happen by welcoming the child into the family of God's world-wide church and declaring the great promises that God will re-create us through our Lord Jesus giving us the power of the Holy Spirit. It starts the child off in life focussed on worshipping God and living in his blessing. As a godparent, some of the responsibility for leading your godchild towards God is given to you.

Part of your responsibility is to make sure that your godchild grows up knowing the Christian faith. Godparents and the child's own parents are there to be an example of Christian life, to teach about how we follow God, and to encourage the child to make their own decision about coming to faith in Christ. Belonging to the life of a local church is the other way that the child can see what it means to love and follow God with our whole lives, but the example of godparents worshipping God, praying and living a life in obedience to Christ will have greatest impact on the child.

Challenge

In the service, together with the parents, you will make a public statement of Christian commitment and faith. Being a godparent is primarily an issue of Christian faith, not about being a good friend to the child's parents, so you **MUST**

- ♥ be a practising Christian believer
- ♥ have been baptized in the Christian faith yourself
- ♥ be completely happy about making promises in God's presence
- ♥ be willing to pray regularly for the child you sponsor and encourage him/her in the Christian faith.



What happens in the Baptism service?

The service will take place in St Catherine's Church (although it can be conducted anywhere if circumstances dictate) and it is usual for the baptism to be part of a Sunday service. During that service when the baptism takes place, the parents (with the child), the godparents and the Vicar will go to the font at the back of the church. During the baptism, the parents and godparents affirm their Christian faith:

- * 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**

They will also make these promises in the presence of the church congregation and in the presence of God. As sponsors for the child, they are making these promises on their behalf:

Do you believe in God the Father, the Creator of all?

I believe and trust in God the Father.

Do you believe in his Son Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world?

I believe and trust in God the Son.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life?

I believe and trust in the God the Holy Spirit.

Many people who are asked to be godparents find that they cannot wholeheartedly make these promises, and will therefore step down from being a godparent (although they will always 'be there' for the child). If this is true for you, please consider asking the parents to ask another person to be godparent instead of you.

The Baptism

The Vicar will remind us of the way that water is a Christian symbol of life, sustenance, healing and freedom, and then the Vicar will take the child in their arms, and three times pour water on the child's head saying,

....., I baptise you in the Name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

The child is then handed to one of the godparents and a lighted candle is given to one of the godparents as symbol of the promise that our Lord Jesus leads us out of the darkness of sin into the glorious light and freedom of new life.

The Vicar leads the child and parents up to the front of the church and then all go back to their seats. We will join together in praying for the child, the parents and godparents at a later stage in the service.

Is there anything else about the service?

You will be given a sheet with all the words of the service and asked to stand at the back of the church near the font where the child will be baptised. It is important that you say your vows loudly as they are a public declaration, and you may be asked to repeat them if they are said a little too quietly. There is no 'dress code' for the church service, feel free to dress as you wish.

How can I be a good godparent?

The promises that you have made together with the parents and other godparents are a kind of contract, in which you pledge to do your best for the child as he/she grows older. Baptism is just the start of a life-long commitment to nurture that child in the Christian faith and to be there for him/her in the future. You cannot help your godchild grow in Christian faith unless you yourself are growing in faith. Being a good godparent means discovering more of God's promises for you yourself and living in his blessing today. If you would like to think about this more, please feel free to contact the Vicar of the parish, or another Christian leader that you know.

May God bless you and your godchild as the day of the Baptism approaches and in all the days that lie ahead.

Information

Before the baptism can take place, the Vicar will need some information about each of the godparents (name, the church they attend, and their signature); this is required for parish records. The parents have that application form to be filled in and signed by each godparent. Please keep THIS leaflet for godparents for future use.

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