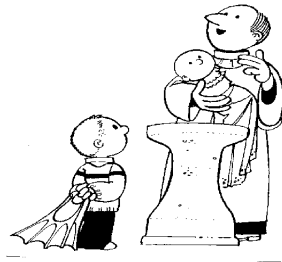


What normally happens from here?

- Step 1 Normally following a request for baptism the Minister or a member of the Congregation will arrange to visit you to extend the welcome of the local church, give you some information about baptism, and invite you to come to worship and meet the rest of the Christian Community.
- Step 2 Most Congregation will have a form of preparation for baptism which provides an opportunity to talk about the meaning of baptism and discuss the content of the baptismal service.
- Step 3 If, after a time of preparation, we agree that baptism for your child is the appropriate action at this time, the request for baptism goes to the local Congregation's Council.
- Step 4. **Our Baptismal Sundays for 2006** are:
February 19th
April 15th - *Easter Day*
June 4th - *Pentecost Sunday*
August 6th
October 29th

Baptism would normally take place on one of these days as part of the regular Sunday Service of Worship. We look forward to sharing this journey of discovery and growth as you explore the meaning of baptism and trust that it will be a time of great significance and joy

If for the present, you choose not to seek baptism, then you may wish to share instead in a Service of Thanksgiving for the birth of your child. Of course, even if baptism is felt to be inappropriate, the life and worship of the church is always open to all, and a warm welcome awaits you.



The scallop shell, often used to scoop and pour the baptismal water, is also a traditional symbol of Christian pilgrimage. As baptism marks certain point on our journey of faith, the shell reminds us that this journey is never complete.

Uniting Church in Australia
Highfield Road Uniting



Baptism



We are pleased that you have enquired about baptism for your child. Baptism is an event of importance and celebration both for the individual Christian and for the whole church.

Parents who present children for baptism discover that their participation has a profound effect on their own spiritual lives. This leaflet has been written to help parents think about what baptism means for your child.

What is Baptism ?

Christian baptism is a sacrament, which means it is a way of conveying God's love for humanity in Jesus Christ, to us. In response to this love, from the earliest days of the Church people have been baptized. Baptism is a sign and seal of God's love; it is a sacrament of **belonging**. In baptism we are joined to Jesus Christ and made part of the family of God, the Church. Through baptism we are called to follow Jesus Christ and reflect his love and concern for others.

When we baptize a person we are marking a process of growth in God that we hope and pray will continue for the rest of their lives. Baptism is not just an event, it leads us into a new way of life, into a living and dynamic relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

As with any relationship there are obligations and responsibilities:

For the Parent(s), who declare their own Christian faith, and promise to do you promise to live the Christian faith, and to teach that faith to your child?

For the congregation, who promise to share this responsibility for the care and spiritual growth of the child.

What then do Christians believe?

- 1. Creation.** We believe God created us and this world and called us into a relationship of mutual love and service; caring for the earth, seeking justice and peace, and building bonds of friendship and care.
- 2. New relationship.** Humankind has spoiled the creation, our relationship with God, and with one another. Jesus Christ, God's Son, through his life and death, has restored that true relationship with God for us.
- 3. Spirit.** God wants to give us the Holy Spirit to nurture our trust in God and equip us to live as members of God's family.
- 4. Community.** Christians are part of both a local and world-wide gathering of people called 'The Church'. The Church is that great stream of women, men, and children who seek to follow Jesus Christ in the way they live.



Therefore, being a Christian is far more than being a *good neighbour*. It is a relationship with God, through Jesus Christ, living in the Church and worked out in the world.

If baptism is separated from these things, then it makes no sense at all. That's why we say;

Baptism is **not** a name-giving ceremony;

nor a religious 'insurance policy' to keep a child from harm or difficulty;

nor is it something to get the child off to a good start.

Baptism is not a ticket to heaven.

Baptism is being welcomed by God and the Church and entering into a special relationship with both.

Baptism is about celebrating God's love and concern for your child.

Baptism is about placing your child within the loving care and nurture of the *People* of God.

Children, baptized or not, are welcome to come and share in the life of the church. God loves us whether we are baptized or not.

In baptism we are publicly marked by that love, sealed by this great promise of God on which we can rely, and are forever reminded of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.

If you have not been baptized, here is the opportunity for you to explore the Christian faith, to share in the life of our congregation, and the growing faith of your child. None of us stands still, we are growing all the time in our understanding of so many issues? When was the last time you thought seriously about God, and were encouraged to raise your questions and doubts? In conversation with the Minister, you may like to take the opportunity of renewing your own faith.

Contact: Rev Peter Gador-Whyte
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