



The Church of England
Diocese of Ely

Baptism Toolkit

**Developing the baptism ministry
of your church**

*(For baptism ministry with families of those coming for a
baptism of a child under 12)*

“You are precious and
honoured in my sight,
and because I love you”

[Isaiah 43:4]

Promises... Symbols...
Celebration, thanksgiving
and welcome...

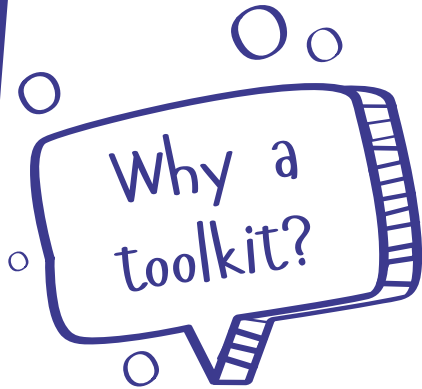
Baptism and Thanksgiving Services are occasions to celebrate the life of a child, to give thanks to God for them and for God's love and commitment to them.

Baptism is about being welcomed into God's family, locally and worldwide. It is also about beginning the journey of faith for a child. Parents, Godparents, family and friends all play their part on this amazing journey, as do all of us as members of God's family.



The Church of England's website on
Christenings highlights this view of baptism
being the first step of an amazing journey.

www.churchofenglandchristenings.org



To inspire you and help you think about your baptism ministry.

To equip you to provide helpful advice and information about baptism ministry & follow up ideas and resources.

1. This booklet is a tool about how to walk alongside baptism families (*families bringing a child under 12 for baptism*). It is particularly to encourage clergy to discuss with their PCC or a group about how baptism ministry can be encouraged and shaped in their context and to help develop a policy for baptism ministry.
2. It is about building relationships with families, both before and after a baptism and looking at how to join up the dots with the things already happening in the churches and local communities.
3. It's also about rethinking our own baptismal journey and life of faith. Who are those who have walked alongside us, supported and encouraged us, helped us learn about faith and God in our everyday life and circumstances? How can this help us think about others on their journey of faith?

Consider...

- **Has your church or PCC discussed your baptism ministry or policy?**
- **Have you thought about baptism ministry in terms of being a missional opportunity?**

[This booklet builds on research commissioned by the Archbishops' Council with families on the edge of church who had a child baptised recently.]

Baptism Ministry

Never before has there been a greater challenge to think about our welcome and the support we can provide to baptism families to help them journey in faith.

The challenge for the 'church' (all God's people) is to take seriously the promise we make at the very beginning of a baptism service:

'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.'

[Common Worship – Liturgy of Baptism]

Baptism is a ministry for the whole people of God!

In her book, *Life Events*, Sandra Millar (Head of Life Events for the Archbishop's Council of the Church of England), invites us to think about how we can best, "embody the unconditional, welcoming, loving kindness of God manifested in Jesus Christ."

Did you know?

One of the most surprising results from research carried out with baptism families is that baptism families were disappointed when the Church didn't stay in touch....!

It is entirely likely that your approach to baptism ministry will reveal how you view mission!

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1. An Overview - Sowing Seeds



‘Even in a culture where organised religion is of decreasing importance for many people, the one place they may still encounter the story of God and God’s people is when a significant ‘life event’ happens. This is the moment when they make that ‘passing contact’ that may become part of their faith story and their relationship with God and God’s people.’



Confidence, relationship and courage!

In a culture where most people have little or no contact with the Church, choosing to come for a baptism provides enormous opportunities for the church to share the good news of Christ.

Sandra Millar uses the analogy of the *Parable of the Sower* (Matthew 13:1-19) to help us reflect on the seeds we sow of God’s love in the world. In contrast to the principle of scarcity in economic terms, God’s economy is fundamentally different – His resources never run out.

Likewise, the good news of Jesus Christ can be told and retold again and again just as seeds are scattered. A baptism provides that golden opportunity to share this good news of Christ.

[Life Events: Mission and Ministry at Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals; Sandra Millar, Church House Publishing, 2018]

There were 97,000 Church of England baptisms and services of thanksgiving* for the gift of a child during 2018.

This means we have the opportunity for conversations and a chance to engage, encourage and welcome with God's love and hospitality at least six people (parents and godparents).

A baptism family will often bring 50-100 plus guests and this provides extraordinary opportunities to share the good news of Christ through our welcome and worship.

** For info on thanksgiving services see page 28*

Over **1,800**
baptisms of children
a week in the Church
of England



Approx.
135,000
guests a week
coming into our
churches

Each of those
136,800
people is on a
journey!



Concerns and challenges to baptism ministry

- Families treat baptism as a one-off event and are never seen again.
- Lack of full understanding and engagement by families coming for baptism which potentially devalues the sacrament and the understanding of baptism as crucial to the Christian faith and walk of life.
- The baptism service is sometimes considered to be heavily liturgical and not mission orientated.
- Baptism families lack confidence in how to nurture faith in their children.

How can we address these?

The heart of our ministry to baptism families should be based on three things:

- **Confidence**
- **Relationship**
- **Courage in being bold about sharing our stories**

‘When people come in through the doors and want to find out about baptism, we think, as a church, great – because a baptism is a beginning with Christ. That’s what it’s about, the building blocks of faith, and it’s about simple steps, about people finding out how they grow in God.’

Consider...

At His baptism, God confirms Jesus as His beloved child. At our baptism God does this for each one of us.

- **How does that make you feel?’**
- **What does this help us think about for others who come for baptism?**

Confidence - Be bold

We need to be bold and have the confidence to talk about God and the journey of our faith which begins with our baptism.

This journey of faith is life changing and transforming and is *Good News* worth sharing!

Relationships matter

The Life Events research showed that the way we build relationships has the biggest impact on baptism families as does the central importance of offering welcome and hospitality.

See more on this at www.churchsupporthub.org.

Courage - Take action

Similarly the research highlighted that consistent follow up is the real bridge mission to discipleship.

It takes courage to keep in touch – to keep inviting. (1 Corinthians 3:5-9) but using the analogy of the parable of the sower we never know what seeds will be sown!

You can read the wonderful story of how a baptism transformed the lives of a family who came for a christening but were not regular church goers by searching the Church of England Facebook page.

(or visit <https://www.facebook.com/notes/church-of-england/the-baptism-that-changed-our-life/10154998170413143/>)

Consider...

- **What would welcome and hospitality look like in your context?**
- **How could you show something of the invitation of God's love to all those who come for a baptism?**

The Church of England understands baptism as a sacrament -

‘marking the beginning of a journey with God which continues for the rest of our lives, the first step in response to God’s love.’

Expressing baptism in terms of a journey helps connect all of us as God’s people together and helps families understand that a baptism is an ongoing relationship and journey for life.



Consider...

Jesus said that He came to give us life in all its fullness and abundance. This is Jesus’ overflowing, life changing gift to us.

- How does baptism and our follow up with baptism families reflect something of this generosity and grace?
- How do we help families make connections from the baptism to journey in faith and discover a life time of belonging and believing?
- What might we do differently?

‘The church gets involved when a family makes a decision to mark the physical start of life’s journey by beginning a spiritual journey.’

It is about ‘new life, forgiveness, grace, overcoming darkness, and God’s unconditional love.’

[P. 19 & 20, Life Events: Mission and Ministry at baptisms, Weddings and Funerals; Sandra Millar, Church House Publishing, 2018]

Six core insights for churches to consider

The birth of a child into a family is one of life’s big events...

Six core insights from the Life Events research for churches to think about when responding to families and thinking about baptism ministry.

1. Using the right language
2. Parents have serious motivations for bringing a child for baptism
3. Godparents really matter
4. Building relationships is central
5. Symbols and words are significant
6. Follow up makes all the difference

[P. 29, Life Events: Mission and Ministry at baptisms, Weddings and Funerals; Sandra Millar, Church House Publishing, 2018]

CHRISTENINGS

1. Using the right language - What's in a name?

The Life Events research showed that families are 10 times more likely to use the word christening than baptism, so it makes sense to use language that is real and relevant when talking with families.

Using the word '*christening*' first and then introducing the word '*baptism*' to those unfamiliar with it is a more helpful use of language.

Acknowledging that '*During a christening a baby is baptised*' in the same way we talk about 'weddings and marriage', when during a wedding service a couple is married, helps us understand how we can use the language of 'christenings'.



2. Parents have a serious motivation for bringing a child for baptism...

Research highlighted that there are three main reasons why a family want to bring a child to be baptised:

- To have godparents
- To give a child a good start in life
- To help their child make good choices

Parents want to give their child the best and right choices in life... and want to connect in to what the church can offer in terms of helping their child do this.



www.churchofenglandchristenings.org

Celebrating is important to parents as is belonging to a community. The church can help provide both these elements in a baptism* and begin to show families that community and celebration are crucial parts of our faith journey with God.

To read more on this look at the Church of England website on christenings

**The opportunity to celebrate can also be highlighted with a thanksgiving service (see page 28)*

3. Godparents really matter!

Research highlighted how important godparents are to parents and the number one reason parents wanted their child to be baptised.

This ties into the desire to be part of community and the need to have key people who will help on the journey of life. Churches can show the importance of supporting and encouraging one another as we model being the body of Christ.

Welcoming and supporting godparents helps baptism families connect and look to others to support them on their faith journey.

One clear and positive way we can help show the importance of godparents is to take part in Godparent Sunday.

Godparent Sunday

This is an initiative from the Church of England and aims to encourage and affirm the relationships godparents have with their godchild, and in particular to pray and encourage their godchild on their faith journey.

For service ideas and All Age activities for Godparent Sunday see the Church Support Hub website.

www.churchsupporthub.org/godparents-sunday



4. Building relationships is central

First point of contact

From the first point of contact with a church, the relationship a family builds with the church is crucial, if we are to have authentic and good relations in the follow up with a baptism family afterwards.

Meeting someone other than the vicar!

If a family meet someone other than the vicar from the church, they are twice as likely to return to the church. We make a promise to uphold and support a child coming for baptism. Connecting with others in the family of God helps a baptism family understand that we are all on a baptismal journey.

Involving the whole congregation – the people of God

One of the difficulties with baptism services can be the *'them and us'* culture in churches, so finding ways of involving the whole congregation and helping everyone understand that they are the *people of God* helps build bridges and relationships.



Consider...

- How can we make our promise to support and uphold the child and family coming for baptism happen in reality?
- What might we do differently?

Inviting members of a church congregation to pray for a baptism family or child being baptised invites us into connection and relationship with that person. Where regular congregations are involved in prayer around the ministry of baptism then changes will happen... and barriers broken down!

[See Chapter 6 for ideas on how to do this]

5. Symbols and words are significant



The research highlighted that the symbolism in the baptism service is considered deeply 'significant' by the baptism families and where the theological significance of the symbols are clearly explained this helps families to engage in a deeper way with the whole service and reflect further on the sacrament of baptism.

In addition, it really made a difference to the family if the service was made personal and special.

Prayer is one of the best ways a regular congregation can support baptism families and build relationships.



“When families bring a child to baptism the service is significant not because of any intellectual grappling with words but because of the meaning found in the overall experience.”

[p. 58, Life Events; Mission and Ministry at Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals; Sandra Millar, Church House Publishing, 2018]

“I think the church’s responsibility once the child is baptised is to make sure it continues to offer welcome in God’s name. Because if there is one thing the church is about, the business of the church or the mission of the church if you like, is to offer hospitality, not just as that entry point for baptism, but throughout the child’s life, the life of the family, because what they are doing is having that beginning with Christ, taking the first step, and we need to be there so that we walk the mile with families.”

(Vicar, Birmingham).

6. Follow-up afterwards makes all the difference

Keep in touch!

Baptism is the start of a journey

Maintaining a relationship with the family after the baptism or thanksgiving is much more likely to happen if the follow up can be invitational, personal and focused.

[See Chapter 4 for ideas on how to do follow-up ministry]

Keep in touch! Nine out of every ten families said that they wanted the church to keep in touch!



Relationships and welcome are key to whether a family will return to a church following a baptism.

Consider...

- How might you reimagine following up with families after the baptism or thanksgiving service?
- In what ways can you keep in touch?

2. Before the Baptism



The first contact families have with a church needs to be experienced as positive and welcoming. The welcome they receive from the first phone call or email to the church will inform their opinion about 'the church' based on the response they receive.

Consider...

- **Who is the first point of contact for a family wanting a baptism (or thanksgiving) in your context?**
- **What might be the best way to have the first conversation?**

First Contact - Make it positive!

Often families ask for specific dates or specifications and it is important that we show patience and love as this may well be the first time a family has contacted a church.

They may be anxious or even expecting rejection. Whatever the church policy on baptism, the family need to have things clearly explained and treated as people whom God loves, made in His image.

It is worth having a key named person a family can make contact with and a leaflet explaining how the baptism works.

For many people not used to church buildings or services, coming into a church can feel 'culturally alien' and even stepping past the large church door can feel daunting and strange.

For more on this look at 'Stepping into the unknown' on the Church Support hub website; www.churchsupporthub.org/article/stepping-into-the-unknown/

The Church Support Hub website has some excellent further ideas: www.churchsupporthub.org/baptisms/explore-thinking/first-contact/

Baptism Policies

Canon Law

The Church of England has specific laws relating to baptism (B21-25) which can be found on the Church of England Website www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/canons-church-england/section-b

Every church should have a baptism policy. If you have or want to develop a baptism team it is worth having a baptism policy which sets out how you will work with families from the first contact, the preparation, what happens on the day at the service and the follow up after the baptism.

GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)

It is important to comply with the new GDPR regulations on keeping in touch with families.

Make sure that the baptism application forms include a tick box with appropriate wording about how you would like to keep in touch with a family and for what purposes (e.g. to invite to special events or services, a follow up baptism event, Godparent Sunday).

Emails can be sent if GDPR guidelines about storing data and information have been followed but there is also a second part of GDPR legislation called 'legitimate use' which means you may be able to do more than you imagine.

The church support hub website has a useful video explaining how to do this well.



[www.churchsupporthub.org/
article/life-events-ministry-and-
gdpr/
www.youtube.com
watch?v=ZyeskfWFdVo](http://www.churchsupporthub.org/article/life-events-ministry-and-gdpr/)

Consider...

- Has your church got a baptism policy on how it welcomes a family from the first contact?
- What baptism preparation and follow up with baptism families does your church do?

Questions you could discuss as a church or PCC

1. What might your church do differently to foster relationship with those who enquire about a christening?
2. How can you involve the whole congregation in supporting the mission and ministry through baptism?
3. How can your church develop confident expectations that they are able to reflect God's hospitality and share the story of Jesus with those whom they meet at a baptism?

One church commented that

'since reviewing our baptism policy we appointed a volunteer to send an email to our baptism families once a half term to invite people to special services and events that appeal to families. We now see more of our baptism families throughout the year.'



Things to help families understand what we offer and to make those first contacts

Leaflets

'Start an amazing journey' leaflet (available from www.churchprintheub.org) explaining what a christening is about. Perfect for dropping off at local venues in your community (see places to connect with below).

The leaflet 'First Steps on an amazing journey' designed by Church Print Hub (www.churchprintheub.org) is brilliant to give to a family on an initial visit or during a first conversation, as it highlights some of the things that a baptism preparation visit might discuss, details about the service and ideas for the journey afterwards. It also has a site for lighting a virtual candle for a child's baptism.

Places to connect with

- Parent and toddler/baby groups • Libraries
- Doctors' surgeries & Dentist • Nurseries
- Baby healthcare drop-in clinics

Websites

www.churchofenglandchristenings.org/
www.churchprintheub.org
www.churchofenglandchristenings.org/light-candle-2/

Consider...

- **Where are the places in your community you can connect with families?**

Ideas for making contact with families before a baptism

Patterns of how births are marked and celebrated have changed over the last few decades including the popular growth of baby showers.

Many churches are recognising the importance of support and contact with families during pregnancy in helping build long-term relationships with families and the missional opportunities this provides.

So why not think about connecting with pregnant mums by hosting a 'baby shower' or a pudding and pampering party?

Other ideas...

Check out the Church Support Hub website for ideas and suggestions www.churchsupporthub.org/



Baby Shower

Baptism preparation...

The importance of good preparation

Many families are unfamiliar with church and its practices. Families worry about what will happen on the day.

Good preparation...

- Meet parents at their point of understanding and help them discover more of God's love for them.
- Allow for the family to ask any questions about what baptism means, including the importance of the symbols of the cross, water and light (the candle).
- Introduce the idea that baptism is not just an event but a journey for life.
- Include godparents as part of the preparation where possible.



Baptism preparation resources

Good baptism preparation materials and ideas can be found on the church support hub website.

www.churchsupporthub.org/baptisms/explore-thinking/baptism-prep

- **Getting Ready for baptism** A practical course preparing children for baptism. www.brffonline.org
- **We welcome you. Baptism Preparation with Families.** Book & DVD. www.chpublishing.co.uk
- **Making the most of your child's baptism** A gift book that unpacks the Church of England's baptism service and explains its meaning and symbolism for parents. www.spckpublishing.co.uk
- **First Steps** DVD from CPAS: Using the theme of journeys, First Steps outlines the significance of baptism for the child while sketching the basics of Christian faith for parents. www.cpas.org.uk
- **My baptism book** A child's guide to baptism by Diana Murrie suitable for a child aged 2-5. www.chpublishing.co.uk
- **Timothy Bear and the baptism box**
Stories and simple activities for baptism families. www.brffonline.org
- **Liverpool Diocese** have written some excellent baptism preparation materials including a baptism preparation basket. www.unlock-urban.org.uk
- **Lichfield Diocese Baptism resources.**
www.lichfield.anglican.org/christenings
- **Solarium cards** Exploring spiritual conversations about God through pictures.
- **Table talk** – a game of conversations and questions which are great for discussion starters and help open up issues of life, faith and spirituality. www.table-talk.org
- **The Diocese of Blackburn** has produced an excellent booklet with resources for baptism preparation: www.blackburn.anglican.org/

Starting Rite...

A five week spiritual nurture course for parents and babies under one.

This five week course for parents and babies (under 1) written by Jenny Paddison (Church House Publishing, 2015) explores the innate capacity for spirituality with which we are born. Through multi-sensory activities and play, the course looks at the wonder and greatness of God's love.

It provides a fantastic missional opportunity and practical resource to connect with young families in a community, where relationships can be built and where real issues of life and faith can be discussed in a safe and welcoming environment. **Starting Rite** also works brilliantly as part of baptism preparation or to offer as a follow up course following a baptism.

The Diocese of Ely has invested in six equipment hubs for **Starting Rite** where you can borrow the equipment and resources needed to run a course, with a Facebook group to get further support, advice, tips and the downloads to accompany the course. Join the group or find out more information, check out Ely Diocese website or **Starting Rite** on Facebook.

www.facebook.com/groups/1384694038340460

www.chpublishing.co.uk



Thanksgiving services... A different journey

For parents who want to mark the significance of a birth and acknowledge the sense of wonder and awe at the arrival of a child but are not ready to make the vows and promises of faith in a baptism, a thanksgiving service [*Service of Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child, Common Worship*] allows for a positive affirming choice to be made.

This service provides a wonderful opportunity for a church to welcome and build relationships with a family, as families choose to come and say thank you to God as part of a church service. It also offers the chance to speak God's love and care for each of us and can be a great stepping stone before a baptism. Some churches offer thanksgiving services to families as a precursor to a baptism. It's a great way to introduce a family to a congregation and allow for discussion on the difference between a baptism and thanksgiving.

There is also an attractive leaflet about thanksgivings on www.churchprinthub.org



www.churchprinthub.org



3. On the Day...



Firstly – Welcome!

Welcome is perhaps the key thing that we can do as part of our baptism ministry to families. If someone feels welcome, they will feel included and more likely to want to maintain contact after the baptism.

Canon Law requires a baptism to take place in the main act of worship. Practically this can be difficult for some churches or families for different reasons.

Inviting the regular congregation to baptism services at other times helps not only extend the welcome but allows the families to meet and see the 'people of God'.

There are many creative ways of showing welcome and love during the service. Some excellent ideas can be found on the church support hub website:

www.churchsupporthub.org/baptisms/ideas

Ideas to make families welcome...

...can be found on the church support hub.

www.churchsupporthub.org/

www.churchsupporthub.org/baptisms/explore-thinking/

The Diocese of Bristol has also produced a great sheet on how to welcome families

www.bristol.anglican.org/



Some practical suggestions

- Have some welcomers at the church gate to help those who might find coming into the church building difficult or ask a church family to act as stewards or sidespeople at the baptism service to welcome other families.
- Another simple idea is to have a church family come and help give the candle at the end of the service and pray for the child being baptised, parents and godparents.
- Involve children in filling the font with water.
- Have a baptism colour in book or a sheet to explain what the baptism is about (the symbols).

Baptism doves

Help the congregation connect and pray for those coming for a baptism.

www.churchsupporthub.org/idea/baptism-doves/



“After reviewing our welcome at baptisms, we now give everyone a card telling them what to expect during the service and useful information like where to find the loos.”

The baptism service-structure

The baptism preparation should have talked the family through the shape and structure of the service.

Ally Barrett's book *Making the most of your child's baptism* is an excellent way of showing the family the structure and flow of the service and helps explain the symbols and liturgy of each part of the service.

www.spckpublishing.co.uk/making-the-most-of-your-child-s-baptism

Symbols

Explaining the symbols as you go through the service, doing them with warmth and creativity in a family friendly yet significant way can help all those present to understand more of the service and meaning of baptism.



The liturgy

Print out baptism service cards which lay out the liturgy, shape and structure of the service and show clearly the parts of the service which the family will join in.

The Church of England has also produced more accessible and understandable alternative texts for baptism services. *Additional baptism Texts in Accessible Language – Common Worship*.

www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/christian-initiation/christian

Prayers in the service

Involving the whole congregation in praying for the child being baptised helps engage everyone in the service and sows the seeds of baptism being understood as an ongoing journey. One simple and effective idea of helping all those attending the baptism to pray is to give out luggage labels which everyone can then write a prayer for the child being baptised (or something they would hope for) which can then be given to the family afterwards as a lovely gift and keepsake.



For further ideas on prayers during a baptism service:

www.churchsupporthub.org/idea/baby-socks-encourage-congregation-to-pray/

www.churchsupporthub.org/idea/footprint-book-of-prayers/

Ideas of things to give to a baptism family

These are a few ideas which could be given to a family at a baptism or as part of a follow up visit.

- **Baptism bears**

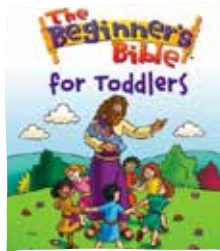
www.churchsupporthub.org/idea/baptism-bears/

- **A baptism box**

www.churchsupporthub.org/idea/baptism-box/

- **Bible or First Prayer book**

There are so many excellent toddler and children's bibles available which could make a wonderful gift to be read and treasured.



One church in the Diocese of Ely decided to invest in a baptism gift box for every baptism with the Mothers' Union making small stuffed toys for them. It helped everyone to feel more connected with baptism families and the children would often bring the knitted toys to church with them.

Some ideas for talks

www.churchsupporthub.org has some sample talks which look at baptism and the journey of baptism for life in creative ways. Here are a few!

1. A million pound cheque!

www.churchsupporthub.org/idea/baptism-sermon-idea-using-a-million-pound-cheque

2. Using jelly babies to speak about the family of God

www.churchsupporthub.org/idea/using-jelly-babies-to-speak-about-different-roles-in-the-family-of-god

3. The Baptingle – a variation of a Christingle!

www.churchsupporthub.org/idea/introducing-the-baptingle

4. The idea of a journey

www.churchsupporthub.org/idea/using-a-rucksack-and-footprints-to-help-speak-of-the-journey-of-faith



4. Follow Up - The Amazing Journey



It's an amazing journey

Consider...

- What are the opportunities and how can we maximise them?
- We often put more work into our baptism preparation than we do with our follow up. What might it look like if we shifted the weight a little?

'The quality of our offering for children and families can reflect the reality of our expectations about their participation in the amazing journey of faith.'

Consider...

- What are you offering for families if they do come back to church?
- How will you welcome them again?
- What particular or special services could you invite your baptism or thanksgiving families to? How can you make your invitations more focused?
- What does your children's space say about your welcome to families?

The importance of invitation!

Jesus offers us the invitation to join the feast, to come to the table and share bread and wine...

The research showed that intentional, personalised invites which are repeated work best. Some lovely ideas of how you can invite families back are on the church support hub website.

www.churchsupporthub.org/godparents-sunday-pray-and-invite



Keeping in touch!

Following up with families in the weeks, months and years following a baptism service can have a really positive impact on a church's growth. (Don't forget to comply with GDPR.) Some churches use databases such as Church Suite www.churchsuite.com/ or the excellent Life Events Diary provided free by the Church of England for Church of England churches in partnership with www.iknowchurch.co.uk to manage their data and information.

Consider...

- How will you keep in touch with your baptism families?
- What two practical things could you do to keep in touch?
- Who from your congregation could be involved in keeping in touch with baptism or thanksgiving families?

Church services 'follow up' ideas

Church Support Hub has suggestions for occasions to follow up, such as invites to special services for festivals –Harvest, Easter, Mothering Sunday or Godparent Sunday.

How about hosting a 'post baptism' group or organising an annual teddy bear picnic for baptism families, or why not think about doing a **Starting Rite** course for baptism parents with young babies.

Godparent Sunday

www.churchsupporthub.org/godparents-sunday

Festivals

Christmas, Harvest, Easter, Remembrance Sunday, Mothering Sunday

www.churchsupporthub.org/baptisms/occasions-for-follow-up

www.churchsupporthub.org/idea/follow-advent-star-back-church





Toddler Groups

Consider...

- How can you connect your baptism families with your toddler group?
- How can your toddler group be a way of introducing a christening for child or a family?

Parenting Groups

Parenting courses can be wonderful ways to connect with families and walk alongside them on their journey of parenting, helping them to think about and make wise choices.

The following organisations do some fantastic parenting courses:

The parenting children course

www.themarriagecourses.org/try-parenting/the-parenting-children-course

Care for the family

www.careforthefamily.org.uk/courses/parenting-courses-time-out

The Good Book Co – Putting parenting to bed

www.thegoodbook.co.uk/outreach/putting-parenting-to-bed

Kids Matter

www.kidsmatter.org.uk/



5. What Next?



Some ideas to get the conversation going...

- Why not circulate at your PCC copies of the Life Events book or the pamphlet *Mission and Ministry at Life Events: Questions and Ideas for Parishes* (produced by the Church of England 2017) then schedule a conversation around developing baptism.
- Invite Debbie Hill: Development Officer, Children and Families (See contact details p.52) to come and speak to your next PCC or children's ministry team meeting.
- Have a conversation with two or three people who have a heart for families who might consider forming a baptism team or doing the Baptism ALM course (Ely Diocese).



How do we
embed good practice?

Six key things for baptism ministry!

1. Pray – All of the congregation can pray for those being baptised.
2. Publicise – Let families know they can bring a child for baptism or a thanksgiving service.
3. Inform – Give families clear and appropriate information about what it means to have their child baptised.
4. Celebrate – As churches we can celebrate a baptism through the preparation, the welcome on the day and the follow up.
5. Involve – The congregation and family of God can be involved on the day, (e.g. welcoming at the door, handing out a prayer bookmark), or praying before, on the day and afterwards for a family. Afterwards with visits, taking a gift, a card and prayers from the church.
6. Invite – send specific invitations to Sunday worship or seasonal celebrations with details of your services, toddler groups, activities for families.

Top ten things to do!

1. Use the language of christening – it's a celebration for both family and church community!
2. Talk with parents about their faith journey, their experiences and other life events they have marked in a church.
3. Share the wonder and worries of parenting and learn to translate these into spiritual thinking.
4. Review your approach to baptism preparation.
5. Invite families to church before and after the service to meet with the family of God.
6. Big up godparents – contact them, name them and thank them. Honour them in the service and maybe plan a Godparent Sunday – to celebrate the journey of baptism.
7. Use names in prayer.
8. Involve everyone at the service in praying for the child – use creative ideas.
9. Send personal invitations to specific church activities and events.
10. Involve the whole people of God in praying and blessing baptism families.

But.... Don't worry if you can't do it all at once...

Consider...

- What is the ONE change you could start with to make a difference for each person on their amazing journey?

Consider...

- When and how has your church discussed baptism policy?
- If there are concerns and challenges for your church – how could you respond?



6. Useful Resources



Websites

- www.churchofenglandchristenings.org
- www.churchsupporthub.org
- www.churchprinthub.org
- www.pastoralservicesdiary.org
- www.Spiritualchild.co.uk
- www.blackburn.anglican.org/
- www.lichfield.anglican.org/REACH_Baptism/
- www.mothersunion.org/faith-and-families
- Scramblers Network
www.facebook.com/groups/132505820236068/
- www.1277.org.uk/
- The baptism book project *Diocese of Worcester*
- www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/mission-and-ministry/calling-young-disciples/baptism-books

Faith at home resources

Books (a few ideas...)

- **Using Christian contemplative practice with children:** Sonia Mainstone-Cotton. Jessica Kingsley Publishers (2019)
- **The Prayer Experiment Notebook:** Revd Dr Miranda Threlfall-Holmes & Revd Mina Munns. SPCK (2018)
- **All Together:** The Family Devotional. Steve & Bekah Legg CWR (2017)
- **Amazing Me:** The Little Worship Company devotional
- **Faithful Families:** creating Sacred Moments at Home: Traci Smith Chalice Press.com (2017)

Websites for faith at home resources

- **Great resources for ideas to hear children's voices** www.learn-to-listen.org.uk
- www.faith5.org
- www.faithinhomes.co.uk
- **practising families** www.practicingfamilies.com
- **Traci Smith (faithful families)** www.traci-smith.com
- **Kate Milosovic** www.missionmummy.com
- **Premier: Youth & Children work – Faith at home** - www.youthandchildrens.work/Faith-at-Home
- **Our family Godventure** - www.godventure.co.uk
- Key research paper **Faith in our Families** from Care for the Family
- **The wonder of Easter; An Easter Journey for the whole family Ed Drew** - www.thegoodbook.co.uk/the-wonder-of-easter
- **Love languages quiz** www.careforthefamily.org.uk/family-life/parent-support/everyday-parenting/support-for-all-parents/this-holiday-discover
- **Parenting for faith** www.parentingforfaith.org
- **Kitchen table project** www.kitchentable.org.uk
- **Raising Faith 6 session course** www.careforthefamily.org.uk/shop/faith-resources/raising-faith-sessions
- **Going for Growth/Faith in the home** www.going4growth.com/growth_in_faith_and_worship/faith-in-the-home
- www.pinterest.co.uk/revmaryhawes/faith-in-the-home





The Church of England Diocese of Ely

If you would like any support in growing your baptism ministry or advice on how to follow up with baptism families, please do contact:

Debbie Hill Development Officer: Children and Families

Email: debbie.hill@elydiocese.org

Phone: 01353 652711 or 07837 699016



Why not sign up to receive regular emails on working with children and families on the Ely Diocese website?



www.elydiocese.org/about/news-jobs-and-events/signup-to-our-newsletters