

## Some frequently asked questions

**Q. What's the difference between baptism and christening?**

A. None. They are different names for the same thing.

**Q. What if a teenager wants to be baptised?**

A. That's perfectly normal. Talk to us. With someone who is able to understand we would like to explain what being a Christian is all about.

**Q. How much does it cost?**

A. Absolutely nothing! Baptism is free because God's love for us is free. We can't buy it or earn it. Some parents like to make a donation to the church. That's up to you!

**Q. Who can be Godparents?**

A. Anyone so long as they have been baptised themselves. It would be a bit odd to sponsor someone into a way of life they haven't adopted themselves.

**Q. How many godparents can I have?**

A. There should be three or more of whom two should be the same sex as the child.

**Q. Who should come to the preparation evening?**

A. Certainly parents and godparents if that's possible. You don't need to bring your baby.

**Q. What should we give our child to mark the occasion?**

A. The best thing is a Bible. You decide on either a children's bible for use immediately or a modern translation which will be read in later years. Remember Bibles are for reading not just for keeping. We would recommend The Jesus Storybook Bible published by Zonderkids and also on DVD.

**Q. What should I do if I have a different question?**

A. Contact Brian Stoneman, Churchwarden.  
Email : stoneman5hp@btinternet.com

# Holy Trinity Church Swalwell

So you'd like your child baptised? We are delighted! Baptism is the entry to a way of life that is full of hope, joy and meaning. Baptism gives your child the best possible start by opening up to him or her the promises of God.

But baptism is also a serious and demanding step.

This leaflet is designed to help you understand what Baptism is all about. It also tells you how we go about helping parents and godparents prepare for baptism as well as what you can do after.



## Thinking about BAPTISM

## ***What is baptism?***

For Christians baptism is a visual aid of God's love. We know that God loves everyone whatever colour or class . He offers everyone, regardless of what they have done or not done, a new start, a new life and a new future. Baptism is the way Jesus gave us to welcome people back into this new life as members of God's family.

### ***Important symbols: there are three***

***The water:*** is a sign both of washing (we all need God's forgiveness) and of life (just as our bodies need water to drink, our spiritual lives need the refreshing love of God). Baptism is about accepting Jesus who died and rose again for us.

***The Cross:*** the minister will make the sign of the cross on your child's forehead—a reminder that it is through the cross of Jesus that all God's wonderful promises are made available to us.

***The candle:*** Jesus is the light of the world. He is all that is good. You will be given a candle as a sign of the light that has come into your child's life. It's up to you to help your child reject darkness and follow Jesus. Light the candle each year on your child's birthday and when she/he asks about the candle you can explain what happened on this important occasion.

### ***The First step***

Baptism is like the first step of a journey. We want your child to go on following Jesus. She/he will need your help. You can best give that help by following Jesus yourself. Then you'll be able to teach your child how to pray and how to know God.

### ***The Service***

In the service parents and godparents will be asked to stand and declare their own faith in God and their determination to turn from what is wrong so that they can follow Jesus.

## ***Practical Matters***

### ***Date, Time and Place***

The person who helps you fill in the baptism form will also arrange date, time and place.

***Baptism Date.....***

***At Holy Trinity Swalwell***

### ***Preparation***

You will be invited to attend a preparation session, perhaps with other parents who are having children baptised around the same time as you. We hope this meeting will be fun and that you'll enjoy thinking things through for your special day. We won't put you on the spot but you will have the opportunity to get to know the person who will be doing the Baptism service. The session will take place in the church where your child is being baptised and it will last about an hour.

Preparation Date ...

### ***Children and the Church***

At Swalwell we think that children are not just the church of tomorrow but are a vital part of the church of today.

We have something called **Messy Church** at 10.30am on the last Saturday of the month at Swalwell. It's a great way to introduce children to following Jesus and to other members of the church family.

We want to do everything possible to help you to keep the promises you make at your child's baptism.