



## Welcoming a Child into the Family of the Church

### *(Thanksgivings and Baptisms/Christenings)*

We at CoGS are delighted that you wish us to help you to mark the birth of your child. We offer two types of service, both very special but each with a different emphasis and different responsibilities for you to undertake. Both types of service take place in church; either within our normal service at 10:00am on a Sunday morning or at our 'Messy Church' on a Sunday afternoon at 3:00pm. The clergy are very happy to talk with you and help you decide which service best suits your needs, but here's a short outline of what is involved in both.

#### **Thanksgiving and Dedication Ceremony**

This service gives the opportunity for parents and friends to gather to thank God for the gift of a child and to pray for family life. Prayers are said, the child's given name is announced and he/she is anointed with oil and receives God's blessing. The child is given a New Testament and a certificate as a memento of the service. Godparents are not required but you may wish to ask two or three close friends to act as 'sponsors' to support your child as he or she grows up; they will take a special part in the service.

One of the clergy will visit your home to discuss and plan the service with you but no special training is required of parents and they make no promises about church attendance; we would, however, be pleased to see you on Sunday mornings or at Messy Church. Having got to know us a little better, you may wish to investigate baptism (Christening) for your child at a later date.

#### **Service of Baptism (or Christening)**

Baptism or Christening is the service at which people are welcomed as members of the Church. Infant baptisms are undertaken on the understanding that children are brought up within the family of the Church and attend regularly. This is a serious commitment and parents and godparents make promises at the service to pray for their children and to come with them to Sunday worship, they are also required to make a public profession of their own Christian faith. At the service usually water is sprinkled on the child's head (we also have a sunken baptistery for full immersion baptisms if preferred), prayers are said for them and they are given a candle and a certificate as a memento of the occasion.

You will need to nominate godparents (who must be baptised themselves). The role of a godparent is to help your son or daughter grow in the Christian faith and know Jesus for him/herself. In preparation one of the clergy will visit your home to discuss and plan the service with you and then you will need to attend a short course to help you prepare for the responsibilities and promises you will undertake. We hope that this will enable you to explore your own faith in Jesus Christ and make the most of this very special occasion,

We hope that this sheet has been useful in helping you to think about how you would like to celebrate God's gift of parenthood. You will find a warm welcome at CoGS with lots going on for children and young people. Do ring Antonia Harrison in the Parish Office (02392 256814) or Revd Janette Smith (07708730832) for more information.

Please note that an 'enquiry' only becomes a 'confirmed booking' when one of the clergy has visited you and has completed the required forms with you. Please do not send out invitations or make firm plans until this has happened. If you wish to proceed with an enquiry please get in touch with one of the clergy as soon as possible to arrange a home visit.

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