



# BAPTISM

## INFANT BAPTISM

In the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches children are baptised at a **font**, with specially blessed water. A small bowl of water may be used rather than a traditional font. The parents and godparents stand around the font, with the child and a priest or minister conducts the service.

The parents and **godparents** agree to their roles. Then the priest explains **what baptism is about**. Parents and godparents make a **declaration** of their own faith. *They answer for themselves and the child.*

“Do you turn to Christ?”  
“Do you repent of your sins?”  
“Do you renounce evil?”

Next the priest **blesses the water** and he reminds the congregation of the importance of stories about water and baptism in the Bible

Parents and godparents make **promises**.  
“Do you believe and trust in God the Father?”  
“Do you believe and trust in God the Son?”  
“Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit?”  
*These same questions will be put to the baptised person when he or she comes to **confirmation**.*

The parents then name the child and water **is poured** over the child’s head.  
“Name... I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”  
Then the priest makes the **sign of the cross** on the baby’s head – “the sign of Christ”

A lighted **candle** is given to the parents or godparents. This symbolizes Christ, who is the light of the world. The newly baptised person is a child of light and must shine as a light in the world. The congregation then **welcomes** the baby.

The service ends with prayers and a blessing.

## BELIEVERS BAPTISM

Some Protestant Churches only baptise those who have become “believers”. They offer a service of thanksgiving or dedication for new-born babies, but those who come for baptism have to be old enough to state their own acceptance of the Christian religion.

Believers’ baptism is common in the smaller denominations and in the **Baptist Churches**.

The New Testament commands people to “believe and be baptised”. So the person coming for baptism must first give a **testimony**.

Prayers and singing may follow, and then the **Pastor** or Minister, often accompanied by someone else, will take the person to be baptised into a **baptistery** (a small tank of water sunk into the church floor) or into the local river. Then the person is completely immersed. (**total immersion**). This symbolises being drowned to one’s old life or buried in the waters of baptism. Baptism is therefore a sign of rebirth and some Christians speak about this as being “**Born again**”.



## BAPTISED IN THE SPIRIT

In **Charismatic** Churches a person is said to be “baptised in the Spirit” when he or she starts to display the signs (like the speaking in tongues) which are taken to be the Holy Spirit at work. This is the moment when the believer feels that God is active in a very personal way.