



North Manchester Mission Unit Baptism Information Pack and Application Form

We really are delighted that you are thinking of being baptised yourself or (more likely) bringing your child for baptism. For the purposes of this information pack we are going to assume the baptism is of a child. We hope that you will find the information helpful and we have laid it out in a question and answer format based on the usual questions we are asked.

Q What is the difference between christening and baptism?

A As far as what you are looking for on this website, the two words refer to the exactly the same ceremony. The church prefers to use the word baptism as christening does not describe the ceremony well but there is no difference. For simplicity the word baptism will be used in this document.

Q What is baptism?

A Baptism is a ceremony that goes back 2,000 years to the beginnings of Christianity, of rinsing with water, as a one-off event. In church tradition it involves the sprinkling of a child's head with water from the font - the ancient stone basin located near the back of the church. The parents and godparents, on behalf of the child, make promises that they will encourage the child in their own journey of faith. As we baptise, we welcome your child into God's church.

During the service all kinds of images and symbolism will tell the Christian story: -

- the cross which reminds us of Jesus' death for us will be traced on the child's forehead
- 'going under' the water reminds us of God's cleansing love and that one day we all die and yet be raised up in Jesus
- a lighted candle will be given reminding us that Christians are meant to be a light in all of the world's dark places.

"Baptism is about beginning, believing and belonging"

Q How did the tradition of baptising babies start?

A In the early years of Christianity, when adults came to Christian faith, and so were baptised, they naturally wanted to share the ceremony with their children as well, as a seal of God's love; a sign of belonging to the wider Christian family. So the tradition of baptising newborn babies soon became established.

Q How do I book a baptism?

A We like to see our families before we book any dates in the diary, and the best way is either to drop into a Sunday service at your chosen church or give us a call. We will then invite you to a session of preparation (in person or online) and we will discuss possible dates and other arrangements with you then. If there is a reason why you would like us to baptise your child as a matter of urgency, then do call us on 0161 264 9982.



Q When do baptisms usually take place?

A Sometimes baptisms may be part of a normal Sunday service (at either 9.30am or 11.30am depending on which church you choose) but, depending on the type of service going on, this may last over an hour. If you have lots of children likely to attend the service, or have lots of guests not used to church services, then we may be best considering an afternoon service which will be much shorter and just be tailored for you, your guests and any other baptism family booking for your date. These will be at 2pm in your chosen church.

Q Can the service take place in any church?

Parents may bring their child for baptism in their own parish church where they live. Baptism is also possible in a parish church where there are other significant family links but, as a courtesy, the vicar of the home parish should be informed in advance.

Q How much does a baptism cost?

A Baptism in The Church of England is free as the service celebrates the free gift of God's love! However, in order to enable the church to meet its practical running costs we are always happy to receive donations but that's entirely up to you!

Q What about godparents?

There is a tradition of a having two godfathers and one godmother for a boy, and two godmothers and one godfather for a girl. It is just a tradition and we will not hold you to it. Three is the normal number for godparents but we are happy to stretch that to four.

The role of godparent is a spiritual role of promising to pray for the child, and take an interest in its spiritual development. Strictly speaking, the parents and godparents should themselves have been baptised and preferably confirmed, but we understand this may not always be the case. Please speak to us if you are concerned about this.

Q Can an older child or adult be baptised?

A Absolutely! Yes! In this case the person being baptised makes the promises and recites the vows personally. We may also ask them to attend a short course of preparation but we are always delighted to baptise older children and adults.

Q Can we choose some hymns and songs?

Sometimes, yes, there is a section on the form for you to tell us some of your favourite hymns and songs and where possible we will try to include at least one of them.

Q Next Steps?

A Many families bring a child for baptism and that's it for the time being and that's OK. We are here every week and, hopefully, we are worth sticking around for a while! If your baptism takes place in the afternoon, we will invite you back to a Sunday morning service where we will present your child with a gift and allow the congregation to welcome you properly!