

# CHRISTIAN INITIATION: ADDITIONAL TEXTS IN ACCESSIBLE LANGUAGE

## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

*From the Acting Secretary to the Liturgical Commission*

The alternative texts offered here for experimental use have been created in response to practical and pastoral difficulties encountered by clergy who regularly use the Order for Holy Baptism provided in *Common Worship* Initiation Services.

Most of the objections to the *Common Worship* Initiation texts in their present authorised form are that they are not accessible to those who are unused to attending church. Clergy frequently find themselves conducting baptisms for families who have little contact with the Church, and sometimes on occasions separate from the main Sunday morning act of worship. In some instances there are few people present who have any real understanding of the Church's language and symbolism. For the majority of those attending on such occasions, the existing provision can seem complex and inaccessible.

Some background might help unpack these dilemmas. The *Common Worship* provision started from the assumption that rite for adult baptism should be regarded as normative and the rite for the baptism of children as derived from that. (This was not the assumption of the Book of Common Prayer or the ASB, which started with infant baptism). It was further expected that Baptism, whether of children or adults, would take place in the context of the main Sunday service. The culture of expectation, however, has not changed as quickly as those who promoted these changes might have assumed or desired. There is still a widespread demand for 'christenings' whether 'stand-alone' or integrated into the main service. There is also a recognition among clergy that these offer an important pastoral opportunity which is not perhaps best met by the language and tone of certain parts of the service.

In 2011, the Liverpool Diocesan Synod brought a motion to the General Synod, asking for alternative provisions in 'accessible language'. The General Synod upheld this motion and requested the House of Bishops to refer it to the Liturgical Commission for response. The House of Bishops made it clear that it did not desire a wholesale rewriting of the *Common Worship* Holy Baptism service, and that attention should focus on the Decision, the Prayer over the Water, and the Commission. In addition, the Liturgical Commission was asked to review any other sections of the service which it felt needed revision. The Liturgical Commission was reminded that nothing in the material they produced should imply an alteration in the theology of baptism as expressed in the existing provision in *Common Worship*.

The drafting group has kept all these considerations in view in developing the texts contained in this document. Most of all, however, they have been concerned to express the primacy of God's welcoming grace, while retaining the solemnity of the promises to turn away from evil and towards Christ. The material therefore emphasises the love of God, the need to turn from destructive influences and behaviour and the cleansing and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. These themes are echoed throughout the alternative material.

## IN THIS BOOKLET:

	Page
Outline structure of Holy Baptism ( <i>Common Worship: Initiation Services</i> p60), highlighted to show where alternative texts have been provided.	3
A sequential list of the alternative texts with a parallel column showing the existing text in <i>Common Worship: Initiation Services (CWIS)</i>	5
A worked out order of service using the alternative texts	11
Draft guidance notes	18

## STRUCTURE OF THE RITE OF BAPTISM

Holy Baptism (CWIS p. 60)

*Structure*

### ¶ Preparation

The Greeting  
Thanksgiving Prayer for a Child

Introduction \*

*† + Presentation of the Candidates*

The Collect \*

### ¶ The Liturgy of the Word

Readings and Psalm

Gospel Reading

Sermon

### ¶ The Liturgy of Baptism

**† + Presentation of the Candidates**

**+ The Decision**

**+ Signing with the Cross**

**+ Prayer over the Water \***

Profession of Faith \*

Baptism

**+ Commission**

† Prayers of Intercession \*

The Welcome and Peace \*

*† Prayers of Intercession \**

## ¶ The Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Table

Taking of the Bread and Wine

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Breaking of the Bread

Giving of Communion

Prayer after Communion \*

## ¶ The Sending Out

The Blessing \*

Giving of a Lighted Candle

The Dismissal

*† indicates alternative position allowed and shown indented in italics*

*\* indicates alternative texts are provided in Common Worship: Initiation Services*

*+ indicates where new alternative texts are provided in this document for experimental use and shown in **bold***

*For Notes, see Common Worship: Initiation Services, pages 98–101.*

**COMPARATIVE TABLE OF TEXTS FROM COMMON WORSHIP INITIATION SERVICES  
AND THE ALTERNATIVES TO BE USE EXPERIMENTALLY**

COMMON WORSHIP INITIATION SERVICES	ALTERNATIVE TEXTS for use at the baptism of infants and children
<p><b>Presentation of the Candidates</b></p> <p><i>The candidates may be presented to the congregation. Where appropriate, they may be presented by their godparents or sponsors.</i></p> <p><i>The president asks those candidates for baptism who are able to answer for themselves</i></p> <p>Do you wish to be baptized? I do.</p> <p><i>Testimony by the candidate(s) may follow.</i></p> <p><i>The president addresses the whole congregation</i></p> <p>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 <i>these children/candidates</i> and uphold <i>them</i> in <i>their</i> new life in Christ? <b>All With the help of God, we will.</b></p> <p><i>At the baptism of children, the president then says to the parents and godparents</i></p> <p>Parents and godparents, the Church receives <i>these children</i> with joy. Today we are trusting God for <i>their</i> growth in faith. Will you pray for <i>them</i>, draw <i>them</i> by your example into the community of faith and walk with <i>them</i> in the way of Christ? <b>With the help of God, we will.</b></p>	<p><i>As in the left hand column until . . .</i></p> <p><i>The president addresses the whole congregation</i></p> <p>Today we thank God for these <i>children/candidates</i> who have come to be baptized. Christ welcomes <i>them</i> into his Church. Will you promise to support <i>them</i> as <i>they</i> begin <i>their</i> journey of faith? <b>All We will.</b></p> <p><i>In some circumstances the following might be preferred</i></p> <p>Jesus said, 'Let the children come to me and do not stop them'.</p> <p>So I ask you all:</p> <p>Will you help these children to become part of God's family? <b>All We will.</b></p> <p><i>At the baptism of children, the president then says to the parents and godparents</i></p> <p>Parents and godparents, you have brought <i>these children</i> to baptism and speak for <i>them</i> today. As we trust God for <i>their</i> growth in faith, will you promise to care for <i>them</i>, pray for <i>them</i>, and help <i>them</i> to follow Christ? <b>We will.</b></p>

In baptism *these children* begin *their* journey in faith.  
You speak for *them* today.  
Will you care for *them*,  
and help *them* to take *their* place  
within the life and worship of Christ's Church?  
**With the help of God, we will.**

### The Decision

*A large candle may be lit. The president addresses the candidates directly, or through their parents, godparents and sponsors*

In baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light.  
To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him.  
Therefore I ask:

Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?  
**I reject them.**

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?  
**I renounce them.**

Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?  
**I repent of them.**

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?  
**I turn to Christ.**

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?  
**I submit to Christ.**

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?  
**I come to Christ.**

*Where there are strong pastoral reasons, the alternative form of the Decision (CWIS, p. 168) may be used.*

### The Decision

*A large candle may be lit. The president addresses the candidates through their parents, godparents and sponsors*

In baptism God calls us to new life.  
We die with Christ to all that destroys,  
and rise to live with him for ever.

Therefore I ask:

Do you reject evil?  
**I reject evil.**

And all its many forms?  
**And all its many forms.**

And all its empty promises?  
**And all its empty promises.**

*The candidates, together with their parents, godparents and sponsors, may now turn to face the font, a cross, or the large candle.*

Do you turn to Christ?  
**I turn to Christ.**

And put your trust in him?  
**And put my trust in him.**

And promise to follow him for ever?  
**And promise to follow him for ever.**

## Signing with the Cross

*The president or another minister makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of each candidate, saying*

Christ claims you for his own.  
Receive the sign of his cross.

*The president may invite parents, godparents and sponsors to sign the candidates with the cross. When all the candidates have been signed,*

*the president says*

Do not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified.

**A// Fight valiantly as a disciple of Christ  
against sin, the world and the devil,  
and remain faithful to Christ to the end of your life.**

May almighty God deliver you from the powers of darkness,  
restore in you the image of his glory,  
and lead you in the light and obedience of Christ.  
**A// Amen.**

## Prayer over the Water

*The ministers and candidates gather at the baptismal font.*

*A canticle, psalm, hymn or litany may be used (see Common Worship: Christian Initiation, pages 169–176).*

*The president stands before the water of baptism and says (optional seasonal and responsive forms are provided on pages 150–165 and 177 of Common Worship: Christian Initiation)*

Praise God who made heaven and earth,  
**A// who keeps his promise for ever.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**A// It is right to give thanks and praise.**

We thank you, almighty God, for the gift of water to sustain, refresh and cleanse all life. Over water the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation. Through water you led the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. In water your Son Jesus received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah, the Christ, to lead us from the death of sin to newness of life.

## Signing with the Cross

*The president or another minister makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of each candidate, saying*

Christ claims you for his own.  
Receive the sign of the cross.

*The president may invite parents, godparents and sponsors to sign the candidates with the cross. When all the candidates have been signed,*

*the president says*

Do not be ashamed of Christ. You are his for ever.

**A// Stand bravely with him.**

**Oppose the power of evil,  
and remain his faithful disciple to the  
end of your life.**

May almighty God deliver you from the powers of darkness,  
restore in you the image of his glory,  
and lead you in the light and obedience of Christ.  
**A// Amen.**

## Prayer over the Water

*The ministers and candidates gather at the baptismal font. The president may pour water into the font. The president stands before the water of baptism and says*

**Either**

*Prayer 1*

We praise you, loving Father,  
for the gift of your Son Jesus.  
On him you poured your Spirit  
at his baptism in the River Jordan.  
He sent his followers  
to baptize all who turn to him.  
And so, Father, we ask you to bless this water,  
that those who are baptized in it  
may be cleansed in the water of life,  
filled with your Spirit  
and know themselves loved as your children,  
safe in Christ for ever.  
**A// Amen.**

**Or**

We thank you, Father, for the water of baptism. In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection. Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, in joyful obedience to your Son, we baptize into his fellowship those who come to him in faith.

Now sanctify this water that, by the power of your Holy Spirit, they may be cleansed from sin and born again. Renewed in your image, may they walk by the light of faith and continue for ever in the risen life of Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be all honour and glory, now and for ever.  
**A// Amen.**

### Profession of Faith

*The president addresses the congregation*

Brothers and sisters, I ask you to profess together with *these candidates* the faith of the Church.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father?  
**A// I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ?  
**A// I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit?  
**A// I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.  
Amen.**

*Where there are strong pastoral reasons the alternative Profession of Faith (CWIS, p.178) may be used.*

### Prayer 2

Loving Father,  
we thank you for your servant Moses who led your people through the waters of the Red Sea to freedom in the Promised Land.  
We thank you for your Son Jesus, who has rescued us from the deep waters of sin and shown us the way of salvation.  
Now send your Spirit upon this water, that those who are washed in it may share Christ's death and resurrection, and find true freedom as your children, risen with Christ for ever.  
**A// Amen.**

### Profession of Faith

*The president says*

Let us affirm,  
together with *these* who are being baptized, our common faith in Jesus Christ.

Do you believe in God the Father,  
source of all being and life,  
the one for whom we exist?  
**A// I believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,  
who took our human nature,  
died for us and rose again?  
**A// I believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,  
who gives life to the people of God  
and makes Christ known in the world?  
**A// I believe and trust in him.**

This the faith of the Church.  
**A// This is our faith.  
We believe and trust in one God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

*[this is the alternative form found in CWIS, p.178]*



## The Commission

### Either

*Where the newly baptized are unable to answer for themselves, a minister addresses the congregation, parents and godparents, using these or similar words*

We have brought *these children* to baptism knowing that Jesus died and rose again for *them* and trusting in the promise that God hears and answers prayer. We have prayed that in Jesus Christ *they* will know the forgiveness of *their* sins and the new life of the Spirit. As *they* grow up, *they* will need the help and encouragement of the Christian community, so that *they* may learn to know God in public worship and private prayer, follow Jesus Christ in the life of faith, serve *their* neighbour after the example of Christ, and in due course come to confirmation.

As part of the Church of Christ, we all have a duty to support *them* by prayer, example and teaching. As *their* parents and godparents, you have the prime responsibility for guiding and helping *them* in *their* early years. This is a demanding task for which you will need the help and grace of God. Therefore let us now pray for grace in guiding *these children* in the way of faith.

*One or more of the following prayers may be used*

Faithful and loving God, bless those who care for *these children* and grant them your gifts of love, wisdom and faith. Pour upon them your healing and reconciling love, and protect their home from all evil. Fill them with the light of your presence and establish them in the joy of your kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All Amen.*

God of grace and life,  
in your love you have given us  
a place among your people;  
keep us faithful to our baptism,  
and prepare us for that glorious day  
when the whole creation will be made perfect  
in your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.

*All Amen.*

*These words may be added*

*N and N,*  
today God has touched you with his love  
and given you a place among his people.  
God promises to be with you  
in joy and in sorrow,  
to be your guide in life,

## The Commission

*Two suggested patterns are provided. The first is for use when very young children are baptized. The second is for use with children old enough to understand.*

### Either

*This Commission should be addressed to the parents, godparents and congregation. It must include*

- *The welcome of the church*
- *The importance of Christian fellowship*
- *The responsibilities of parents and godparents*
- *A challenge to grow in Christian faith and practice*
- *A call to pray*

*These words may be adapted to suit particular circumstances and situations*

1. Parents and godparents, it has been good to welcome you to (*name of church*) for the baptism of *N and N*. Today we have started *them* on *their* Christian journey.
2. Baptism joins us to Christ and to his whole Church, in earth and in heaven. Here, we shall do all that we can to ensure that there is a welcoming place for you. We will play our part in helping you guide *these children* along the way of faith.
3. Bringing up a child as a Christian has its challenges. *They* will need to learn the story of Christ's birth, death and resurrection, the pattern of his loving life, and the teaching that he gave. We pray that *these children* will come closer to God as *they* grow in faith, and make *their* baptismal promises for *themselves* when *they* come to confirmation.
4. Being a Christian means going to church, and more. Christians are called to stand up for truth and justice, and show compassion to those in need. They are to be faithful and loving. The example that you give by prayer and the life that you lead will profoundly affect *N and N* in the whole of *their* future lives. Remember to ask for God's help, and pray for *them* often, as we pray for you.

Therefore let us now pray for grace in guiding *these children* in the way of faith.

and to bring you safely to heaven.  
In baptism God invites you on a life-long journey.  
Together with all God's people  
you must explore the way of Jesus  
and grow in friendship with God,  
in love for his people,  
and in serving others.  
With us you will listen to the word of God  
and receive the gifts of God.

**Or**

*Here or at the beginning of the Sending Out, a minister may say to the newly baptized who are able to answer for themselves*

Those who are baptized are called to worship and serve God.

Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

**With the help of God, I will.**

Will you persevere in resisting evil,  
and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

**With the help of God, I will.**

Will you proclaim by word and example  
the good news of God in Christ?

**With the help of God, I will.**

Will you seek and serve Christ in all people,  
loving your neighbour as yourself?

**With the help of God, I will.**

Will you acknowledge Christ's authority over human society, by prayer for the world and its leaders, by defending the weak, and by seeking peace and justice?

**With the help of God, I will.**

May Christ dwell in your heart(s) through faith,  
that you may be rooted and grounded in love  
and bring forth the fruit of the Spirit.

**Amen.**

Faithful and loving God,  
bless those who care for *these children*  
and grant them your gifts of love, wisdom and faith.  
Pour upon them your healing and reconciling love, and  
protect their home from all evil.  
Fill them with the light of your presence and establish  
them in the joy of your kingdom,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**All Amen.**

*Other prayers and intercessions may follow.*

**Or**

*The Commission is addressed to the candidate(s). It must include*

- *The welcome of the church*
- *The importance of Christian fellowship*
- *The responsibilities of parents and godparents*
- *A challenge to grow in Christian faith and practice*
- *A call to pray*

*These words may be adapted to suit particular circumstances and situations*

1. *N and N*, it has been good to welcome you to (name of church) for your baptism. There will always be a place for you here. Your baptism has joined you to Christ and to his whole Church, not just in this parish, but in every part of the world, in the past and in the future, in earth and in heaven.
2. Your baptism is a once in a lifetime event, but you are still at the beginning of God's work in you. That will take the whole of your life to complete. There will be moments when the journey ahead is a delight and there will be times when it is hard, but you will never be alone. There will be many milestones on your journey: confirmation will be one of them.
3. Remember that in Jesus heaven has touched our world. Belonging to him will change your whole life. Through worship, prayer and caring for others you will grow more and more like Jesus. Stand up for fairness, truth and kindness.
4. God's love is for you and for everyone. Share with other people the good news of his love.
5. In a moment we will pray for you, that you will live faithfully in the light of Christ through all that lies ahead. Always remember to pray, yourself, to your heavenly Father.

*Other prayers and intercessions may follow.*

## Holy Baptism: A Sample Service

*The following is intended to show, in the right-hand column, how a selection of the additional texts might be incorporated into the existing baptism service to form a simple “stand alone” rite for the baptism of infants or children. In the left-hand column, the commentary in roman type is an example of material that might be printed in a service booklet to make the service easier to follow. The commentary in italic type is guidance for the minister.*

<p>The minister greets everyone present in the name of God, and they reply.</p> <p>The minister briefly explains the reasons for baptism.</p> <p>The minister leads our prayer that through the Holy Spirit God will help us all to serve him in faith and love.</p>	<p><b>¶ Preparation</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>The Greeting</b></p> <p><i>The president says</i></p> <p>The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all <i>All and also with you.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Introduction</b></p> <p><i>The president may use these or other words.</i></p> <p>Our Lord Jesus Christ has told us that to enter the kingdom of heaven we must be born again of water and the Spirit, and has given us baptism as the sign and seal of this new birth. Here we are washed by the Holy Spirit and made clean. Here we are clothed with Christ, dying to sin that we may live his risen life. As children of God, we have a new dignity and God calls us to fullness of life.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>The Collect</b></p> <p><i>The president says</i></p> <p>Let us pray.</p> <p><i>A short period of silence is kept.</i></p> <p>Heavenly Father, by the power of your Holy Spirit you give your faithful people new life in the water of baptism. Guide and strengthen us by the same Spirit, that we who are born again may serve you in faith and love, and grow into the full stature of your Son, Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit now and for ever. <i>All Amen.</i></p>
--	---

<p>A short reading from one of the four gospels.</p> <p>The minister explains how the reading relates to baptism.</p> <p>Those who are to be baptized may be presented by their godparents.</p> <p>The minister asks everyone present if they will welcome those being baptized and support them in their Christian life.</p> <p>The minister then asks the parents and godparents to promise to help those being baptized to live the Christian life.</p>	<p><b>¶ The Liturgy of the Word</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Gospel Reading</b></p> <p><i>When the Gospel is announced the reader says</i></p> <p>Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to <i>N</i>.  <b>All Glory to you, O Lord.</b></p> <p><i>At the end</i></p> <p>This is the Gospel of the Lord.  <b>All Praise to you, O Christ.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Sermon</b></p> <p><b>¶ The Liturgy of Baptism</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Presentation of the Candidates</b></p> <p><i>The candidates may be presented to the congregation. Where appropriate, they may be presented by their godparents or sponsors.</i></p> <p><i>The president addresses the whole congregation</i></p> <p>Jesus said, 'Let the children come to me and do not stop them'.</p> <p>So I ask you all:  Will you help <i>these children</i> to become part of God's family?  <b>All We will.</b></p> <p><i>The president then says to the parents and godparents</i></p> <p>Parents and godparents,  you have brought <i>these children</i> to baptism and speak for <i>them</i> today.  As we trust God for <i>their</i> growth in faith, will you promise to care for <i>them</i>, pray for <i>them</i>, and help <i>them</i> to follow Christ?  <b>All We will.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>The Decision</b></p> <p><i>A large candle may be lit. The president addresses the candidates through their parents, godparents and sponsors</i></p> <p>In baptism God calls us to new life.  We die with Christ to all that destroys, and rise to live with him for ever.</p>
--	--

The minister asks those being baptized to turn away from evil and turn towards Christ, and their parents and godparents answer on their behalf.

Therefore I ask:

Do you reject evil?

**I reject evil.**

And all its many forms?

**And all its many forms.**

And all its empty promises?

**And all its empty promises.**

*The candidates, together with their parents, godparents and sponsors, may now turn to face the font, a cross, or the large candle*

Do you turn to Christ?

**I turn to Christ.**

And put your trust in him?

**And put my trust in him.**

And promise to follow him for ever?

**And promise to follow him for ever.**

#### **Signing with the Cross**

*The Signing with the Cross takes place here or immediately after the baptism.*

*The president or another minister makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of each candidate, saying*

The minister may make the sign of the cross on the forehead of those being baptized at this point to show that they have entered the process by which they will belong to Jesus Christ. The minister may invite parents and godparents to do the same. When holy oil is used here, it should be the oil of baptism (oil of catechumens) blessed by the bishop. Its use emphasises that those being baptized intend to belong to Christ, because the word 'Christ' means 'The Anointed One'.

Christ claims you for his own.

Receive the sign of the cross.

*The president may invite parents, godparents and sponsors to sign the candidates with the cross. When all the candidates have been signed, the president says*

Do not be ashamed of Christ. You are his for ever.

**All Stand bravely with him.**

**Oppose the power of evil,  
and remain his faithful disciple to the end of  
your life.**

May almighty God deliver you from the powers of darkness,

restore in you the image of his glory,

And lead you in the light and obedience of Christ.

**All Amen.**

#### **Prayer over the Water**

The minister thanks God for sending Jesus to us and asks God to bless the water so that the Holy Spirit may enable those being baptized to follow Christ and live like him.

*The ministers and candidates gather at the baptismal font. The president may pour water into the font. The president stands before the water of baptism and says*

We praise you, loving Father,  
for the gift of your Son Jesus.  
On him you poured your Spirit  
at his baptism in the River Jordan.

We answer that we believe in the Christian faith in which the candidates are to be baptized.

The candidates are baptized in the water.

*If those who have been baptised were not signed with the cross immediately before the Decision, the president signs each of them now.*

He sent his followers to baptize all who turn to him. And so, Father, we ask you to bless this water, that those who are baptized in it may be cleansed in the water of life, filled with your Spirit and know themselves loved as your children, safe in Christ for ever.  
**A// Amen.**

**Profession of Faith**

*The president says*

Let us affirm, together with these who are being baptized, our common faith in Jesus Christ.

Do you believe in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?  
**A// I believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?  
**A// I believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?  
**A// I believe and trust in him.**

This the faith of the Church.  
**A// This is our faith.**  
**We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

**Baptism**

*The president or another minister dips each candidate in water, or pours water on them, saying*

**N,** I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
**A// Amen.**

The minister prays that God will continue to bless those who have been baptized and guide them by the Holy Spirit.

The minister may anoint the candidates at this point if they have not been anointed before baptism. The oil used is the oil of chrism, signifying the joy of belonging to Jesus Christ.

The minister reminds the parents and godparents of the help that those baptized will need from them in order to grow up in the Christian faith.

*The Commission is adapted to the individual occasion: the text opposite is illustrative only. The Commission should include:*

- *The welcome of the church*
- *The importance of Christian fellowship*
- *The responsibilities of parents and godparents*
- *A challenge to grow in Christian faith and practice*
- *A call to pray*

*The president says*

May God, who has received you by baptism into his Church,  
pour upon you the riches of his grace,  
that within the company of Christ's pilgrim people  
you may daily be renewed by his anointing Spirit,  
and come to the inheritance of the saints in glory.  
**All Amen.**

### **Commission**

*A minister addresses the congregation, parents and godparents*

1. Parents and godparents, it has been good to welcome you to (*name of church*) for the baptism of *N and N*. Today we have started *them* on *their* Christian journey.
2. Baptism joins us to Christ and to his whole Church, in earth and in heaven. Here, we shall do all that we can to ensure that there is a welcoming place for you. We will play our part in helping you guide *these children* along the way of faith.
3. Bringing up a child as a Christian has its challenges. *They* will need to learn the story of Christ's birth, death and resurrection, the pattern of his loving life, and the teaching that he gave. We pray that *these children* will come closer to God as *they* grow in faith, and make *their* baptismal promises for *themselves* when *they* come to confirmation.
4. Being a Christian means going to church, and more. Christians are called to stand up for truth and justice, and show compassion to those in need. They are to be faithful and loving. The example that you give by prayer and the life that you lead will profoundly affect *N and N* in the whole of *their* future lives. Remember to ask for God's help, and pray for *them* often, as we pray for you.

Therefore let us now pray for grace in guiding *these children* in the way of faith.

Faithful and loving God,  
bless those who care for *these children*  
and grant them your gifts of love, wisdom and faith.  
Pour upon them your healing and reconciling love,  
and protect their home from all evil.  
Fill them with the light of your presence  
and establish them in the joy of your kingdom,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**All Amen.**

The minister leads us in prayer, ending with the prayer that Jesus himself taught his disciples.

We welcome into the Christian faith those who have been baptized.

We greet each other with the peace that Jesus has given us, shaking hands or embracing those around us.

A lighted candle is given to each of the newly baptized to remind them that they have received light from Jesus Christ.

*Other prayers and intercessions may follow.*

### The Lord's Prayer

Rejoicing in the presence of God here among us,  
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us.

**All** Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.

### The Welcome and Peace

There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism:  
*N and N*, by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.  
**All** We welcome you into the fellowship of faith;  
we are children of the same heavenly Father;  
we welcome you.

*The president introduces the Peace in these or other suitable words.*

We are all one in Christ Jesus.  
We belong to him through faith,  
heirs of the promise of the Spirit of peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you  
**All** and also with you.

*A minister may say*

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

*All may exchange a sign of peace.*

### ¶ The Sending Out

### Giving of a Lighted Candle

*The president or another person may give each of the newly baptized a lighted candle. These may be lit from the candle used at the Decision.*



All are sent out to shine the light of  
Jesus into our lives and into the world.

*When all the newly baptized have received a candle, the  
president says*

God has delivered us from the dominion of darkness  
and has given us a place with the saints in light.

You have received the light of Christ;  
walk in this light all the days of your life.  
**A// Shine as a light in the world  
to the glory of God the Father.**

**The Dismissal**

Go in the light and peace of Christ.  
**A// Thanks be to God.**

**If baptism is to be celebrated in the context of the  
eucharist, please refer to the outline structure above,  
which indicates where the Giving of a Lighted Candle and  
the Blessing and Dismissal should be placed.**

## DRAFT GUIDANCE NOTES

### *Introduction*

To make a baptism service accessible to those who are not used to being in church is to think seriously, both about the texts that are to be used, and about the way the whole rite is articulated. A rite is made up of more than words: movement, action, silence and gesture are also of primary importance. These notes complement the provision of additional texts with suggestions for their use in practice. The first three points are specific to the use of the new material. Points 4 to 7 are especially pertinent to the baptism of very young children on a separate occasion, though they apply also to baptisms at the principal Sunday service.

#### *1. The Decision*

The Decision includes two groups of questions. The first group represents a movement of separation, from sin, the world and the devil, from the old order of sin and death, from the old Adam. The second group represents a turning towards newness of life and an adherence to Christ. This can be well expressed through a turning movement. The articulation of the movement will depend on the layout of the church. The first group of questions might typically be answered facing away from the east end, and the second group after turning to face a symbolic location of new life in the risen Christ, such as the font, holy table, or the Easter Candle. (Ministers should think carefully about where they themselves stand at this point, so that the symbolic turning does not appear as a turning towards the minister).

#### *2. The Commission*

Two alternative forms of Commission are provided. It is intended that the minister will extemporise a short homily, covering the bullet points given. The worked-out texts are offered as examples only.

#### *3. Welcoming a child into the wider congregation*

Where a baptism has taken place at a separate service, the family can be invited to return at a main Sunday service for the child to be welcomed by the wider congregation.

#### *4. The water*

Given that water is essential to the performance of a baptism, and that the symbolism of water is central to the meaning of the rite, it is worth drawing attention to the water. It can be poured into the font from a jug, visibly and audibly, possibly by a godparent, before the prayer over the water.

#### *5. Use of oil*

There are a number of different traditions associated with the use of oil at baptism. At the Signing with the Cross, the minister may trace the sign of the cross on the candidate's forehead with olive oil. Parents, godparents and sponsors may also be invited to sign the candidate with oil. There is rich biblical symbolism associated with anointing. It is an image of cleansing, of blessing, of consecration to God's purpose, of preparation for athletic

contest which is itself an image of the struggle of the Christian life (cf. 1 Sam 16.13, Psalm 23.5, Psalm 45.7, Psalm 133.2).

When the Signing takes place immediately after the Decision, the oil of baptism (also called the oil of catechumens) should be used. The roots of this anointing lie in the enrolment of catechumens at the beginning of the preparation period for baptism.

When anointing follows baptism, the oil of chrism should be used. Anointing with chrism may accompany the prayer after baptism, possibly by pouring the oil over the crown of the candidate's head. Alternatively, it may be used for the Signing with the Cross, if this takes place after baptism rather than as a response to the Decision. Chrism is a fragrant oil, evoking the presence and joy of Jesus Christ, and the blessings of the Holy Spirit.

Many parishes use oil which has been blessed by the Bishop. This underlines the fact that each individual baptism is an act of the whole Church.

#### **6. *White robes***

Immediately after the baptism, the newly baptised can be wrapped in a white scarf or shawl, symbolic of being clothed with Christ.

#### **7. *The giving of the candle***

The candle given to the newly baptized is appropriately lit from the Easter Candle in churches which use one, and will itself often be a miniature copy of the Easter Candle. It needs to be clearly explained that the candle is for the family to take home. They can be encouraged to light it at future birthdays, on the anniversary of baptism, or other special occasions.