

What happens at a christening?

At a christening a child is baptized with water. This is the heart of a christening.

There are several moments in the service which have a special meaning too.

Follow each step to see what happens.

“...I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Welcome

The vicar will welcome everyone and especially the child who will be christened and their family. There will be a Bible reading, and the vicar will also talk about what a christening means.

The promises

The parents and the godparents will make some important promises for the child in the service. You can [see the full order of service here](#).

Everyone promises to continue supporting the child from this moment.

The vicar says:

“...People of God will you welcome this child and uphold them in their new life in Christ?”

Everyone present says:

“...With the help of God, we will.”

The sign

Often, this is the point in the service when parents and godparents will be invited to come out to stand at the front with the child.

In many churches, a special oil may be used to make the sign of a cross on the child's forehead. It's a significant moment, which marks the child as belonging to God.

The vicar will say:

“...Christ claims you as his own. Receive the sign of the cross.”

The water

Water which is blessed in the church's font will be poured over the child's head by the vicar. This is the child's baptism. It's a sign of a new beginning and becoming a part of God's family.

The vicar says:

“...I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Prayers and welcome

The vicar, or someone else from the church, will pray for the child and for all those who will support them in their path of faith.

Everyone present welcomes the child into the family of the church with words given in the service.

A candle

A candle may be given to the child at the end of the christening or sometimes at a service soon afterwards.

The vicar says:

“...Shine as a light in the world to the glory of God.”

What's next?

Families are warmly invited to come to church whenever they can. The church may also keep in touch in other ways. Even when people move, there will be a Church of England church local to them in their new parish, so we are always there for them wherever they are.

[Continue the journey](#)

[Find my local church](#)

[Read through the christening service in full.](#)

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