

What Baptism means to The Anglican Church

The Anglican Church believes baptism is the gift of our Lord Jesus Christ. When he had risen from the dead, he commanded his followers to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The word baptism means “plunging”. Jesus was baptized in the river Jordan by John.

Baptism with water signifies the cleansing from sin that Jesus’ death makes possible, and the new life that God gives us through the Holy Spirit.

In baptism, the promises of God are visibly signed and sealed for us. We are joined to Christ, and made members of his body, the Church universal.

Children are baptised in response to God’s all-embracing love. Parents and godparents who have responded to that love come to bring their children for baptism. Before the congregation they must express their own trust and commitment to the promises of God and their intention to bring up their children in the faith and practice of the Church. In due time, these children should make their own response to God and be prepared for confirmation.

In confirmation those who have been previously baptised come to confirm their baptismal promises and join with the other candidates to receive the laying on of the bishop’s hand with prayer. We pray that those who are baptized and confirmed will be empowered by the Holy Spirit for the ministry and service to which God shall call them.

Baptism is a community event, welcoming new members of Christ’s flock and providing an opportunity for all the baptised to renew their vows. The baptism is simply the beginning of our life of faith, we join God’s family.

Being baptised won’t necessarily make much difference to you unless there is further input. Often parents ask for their baby to be baptized as they think it’s a celebration for the family or they are told a baby should be baptized, seeing it as a blessing that will safeguard the child. These are not reasons for baptism, it is rather the faith of the parents that should bring them to a baptism.

Information taken from the Prayer Book for Australia and This is Our Faith, edited by Jeffrey John.