

## *Frequently Asked Questions...*

### ***What if we're not sure? Shouldn't we have the child baptised so they have the opportunity to make their own choice later?***

Baptism isn't about options. It is about commitment. Your child will not be excluded at a later time just because they weren't baptised as an infant. They can always be baptised if they turn to follow Jesus themselves.

### ***What if our child died? Would they still be able to go to heaven if they weren't baptised?***

Baptism will not make any difference! It is an important symbol but it cannot save us by itself. There is no ceremony that can help any person find God's forgiveness and acceptance. These things can only be found when we follow Jesus, seeking to obey him because we believe in him. When your children grow up the responsibility will be theirs. While they are an infant this responsibility is yours.

### ***Who should we choose to be God Parents?***

The main responsibility of God Parents is to pray for their Godchild. They should therefore be believers themselves, involved in a church, able and willing to pray. There can be up to three Godparents or the parents can choose to take that role for themselves.

### ***We live too far away from Parramatta to belong to St. John's church but we would still like to have our child baptised at St. John's.***

It is generally far better to have a child baptised in a church where you belong and attend regularly. This is because the child will be supported and helped by the community of people in that church. In the baptism service the members of the church welcome the infant into the church and the community of God's people. It is possible that there will be special circumstances in which it would be helpful for an infant to be baptised at St. John's even when the parents are not members here. In this case we ask parents to undergo preparation in their local church and provide written confirmation from the minister that this has taken place.



### ***When can we arrange for a baptism to take place?***

At St. John's we baptise children in our regular services so that the congregation can welcome the child into church. Our services are worked out on a three month roster and it is therefore generally not possible to organise a baptism less than 3-4 months ahead. During this time we arrange for parents to participate in preparation for baptism.

### ***What about when only one parent believes?***

We hope that your partner will find the joy of knowing Jesus along with you. In the mean time God counts your child as belonging in his family because of your belief and obedience.

### ***Can we have a dedication of our child at St. John's instead of a baptism?***

Absolutely. We would love to celebrate the birth of your child and pray for him or her with you. This does not involve promises on your part or water baptism.

### ***We have already had one child baptised.***

The baptism service includes a promise that parents will encourage the child to be part of a church and provide a Christian example in this regard. Where parents have already made this promise in a baptism service there is an expectation that they will fulfill these promises. Therefore the baptism of subsequent children can only take place where parents have been attending regularly for at least 6 months.



*We hope that reading this has helped you to understand Baptism and answered some of your questions. We would love to talk with you more about these things. Please feel free to contact us to talk with one of the ministers at St. John's.*

*What next? If you would like to proceed with baptism please join us at one of our Sunday Services if you are not already involved. You can ask one of the staff for a Baptism Application Form. Please let us know that you are here!*



# *Baptism at St. John's*

Regular Sunday service times:

8:00am

9:30am

11:00am

7:00pm (in the hall)

Church St. Parramatta opposite the Town Hall  
(Vehicular entry from the Eastern end of Hunter St.)

Tel: (02) 9635 5904  
email: [office@stjohnscathedral.org.au](mailto:office@stjohnscathedral.org.au)

## *What is Baptism?*

Baptism is a symbol of what *God* commits to do for those who commit *their* lives to follow Jesus. Therefore baptism involves two promises – the promise of God and the promise of the person who is baptized.

God has promised forgiveness of sins. That forgiveness is symbolized by the water of baptism, representing cleansing or washing.

However, this promise is not for everyone, but only for those who believe that Jesus has been raised from the dead and have sincerely committed themselves to trust and follow him as their Lord and God. Anyone who does follow Jesus receives forgiveness of their sin, they live with Jesus in this life and Jesus will raise them to new life after death. They are friends with God and they are members of the family of God. Without trusting and following Jesus a person cannot be friends with God.

Following Jesus means obeying his commands which we find in the Bible. Jesus isn't someone we can make up as we wish. He has made himself very clear to us in the Bible. One of Jesus' commands is that his followers should love one another. We do this by meeting together to care for one another and hear the Bible taught. We call this gathering church.



Therefore at baptism we have both the promise of God to forgive *and* the promise of the person being baptized to trust and follow Jesus. Baptism is a wonderful privilege that we have from God.

## *When is it appropriate to baptise children?*

An infant is not able to trust Jesus or make any promises. Why do we baptize children? We baptize children because if the parents are believers then the child is included with the parents in the family of God. Where a child has believing parents he or she has the privilege of already being included in the family of God and this is represented by their baptism as an infant. However, this child must continue in the family of God as he or she grows up: children must grow into their own belief in Jesus' resurrection and their personal commitment to following Jesus as their Lord and God.

Infant baptism looks forward to confirmation and parents promise to bring the child to be confirmed when the child has grown up. In confirmation a person makes for themselves the promises previously made on their behalf when they were an infant.

Therefore, when we baptize children, we do so on the understanding that:

- Parents believe in Jesus' resurrection from the dead and follow Jesus as their Lord and God.
- Parents will teach and train their child to believe in Jesus' resurrection and to follow Jesus as their Lord and God.

In this case parents make promises on behalf of their child at the baptism.

They promise concerning themselves:

- That they sincerely believe in Jesus as their Lord and God
- That they follow Jesus themselves

They promise that they will teach, encourage and raise their children to:

- Follow Jesus
- And faithfully attend church and take their place in the church

## *Should I baptise my child?*

Here are a few questions that may help you think about this issue:

Do you believe that Jesus rose from the dead and now lives as the ruler of all the world and the judge of all people? Yes/No

Are you committed to following Jesus, obeying the things he commands in the Bible? Yes/No

Are you a member of a church, attending regularly to learn and be encouraged yourself and to care for other followers of Jesus? Yes/No

If you answered yes to these three questions then it may be appropriate to have your child baptised and we would love to be involved in this with you.

If you are unsure about these things or if you would like to know more about Jesus for yourself we would love to help you. Please come and talk with us.

