



Some Guidelines





If you are looking at this page, you may be thinking about baptism for yourself or one of your children (otherwise known as Christening – Baptism and

Christening mean the same thing). If so, we're delighted that you've made it this far and we look forward to welcoming you at St Mary Magdalene, Geddington or St Mary the Virgin, Weekley. Our two churches offer baptism to everyone and we aim to make it a rewarding and memorable experience. There are, however, a few, simple expectations which are detailed below. These are mainly there to make sure that you and/or your children are suitably prepared for baptism, understand what baptism is really all about and so that we have the opportunity to get know one another better.

Baptism is one of the Church's sacraments – a visible sign of God's love for us in which he bestows his life giving grace upon us. Jesus was himself baptised as the sign of a new beginning at the start of his public ministry. He told his followers to baptise others as a sign that they had turned away from their old life and begun a new life with him, a life governed by his love, peace and grace. In baptism an

individual promises ongoing commitment to the Church family and receives the inward Spirit of grace to begin growing a personal faith and trust in God. If it is a young child who is being baptised, then their parents and godparents make those promises on the child's behalf and agree to commit to bringing that child up as a Christian in the life of the Church. This means attending church with them regularly and encouraging them to attend Sunday School and/or Youth Group.

To be a Christian is to walk a life-long journey with God which includes ongoing dedication to his Church and perseverance in faith (even when it feels like a struggle). In the Church of England it is common to baptise young children; this is sometimes known as 'Christening', because it marks



the first step on that life-long Christian journey. Whether you are seeking baptism for yourself or for your child, it marks a new start: a decision and commitment to follow Jesus Christ within the family of the Church. In Baptism you will make promises to God and the Church Community. All we ask is that you take these promises seriously.

○ **CAN I OR MY CHILD BE BAPTISED AT ST MARY
MAGDALENE OR ST MARY THE VIRGIN?**

You or your child can be baptised at St Mary Magdalene or St Mary the Virgin if:

- (1) you are resident within the parishes or
- (2) if you regularly attend services at our churches.

Sometimes those who live and worship elsewhere but have a long-term connection with the parish may wish for a baptism at St Mary Magdalene, Geddington or St Mary the Virgin, Weekley.

If this is the case, please contact Geddingtonweekly@gmail.com and we will help you to explore the possibilities.



○ **IS THERE ANYTHING THAT I OR MY CHILD WILL BE
EXPECTED TO DO?**

1. Being baptised (or christened – both mean the same thing) marks the beginning of a life-long journey of faith in the Church. In baptism you commit to becoming a regular churchgoer. Therefore, the way you begin the journey is important. We open our arms to anyone wishing to be baptised or have their children baptised, but we do ask that you take it seriously. We therefore ask that all families wishing to be baptised begin attending church each week after they have made their booking. This means that we can get to know you a little better, and you

us, outside of all the hustle and bustle of the baptism service itself.

2. You will also be visited by a member of our baptism calling team who will help to prepare you and/or your child for what to expect in Baptism. The meaning of baptism and the significance of the promises that are made are important and these will be discussed at this meeting. This is a good opportunity for you to ask any questions that you may have.
3. In baptism, you promise to become a regular member of the church. Therefore, following baptism, it is an expectation that you and your family will continue attending church most weeks. We understand that making time for church in a busy schedule can be difficult, but it's in you and your family's best interests as you grow in love, faith and understanding. There is much research to suggest that attending church regularly benefits your health, outlook and wellbeing, and enriches society.
4. If you have children, we try to make attending Church as easy as possible for you. But please do not prevent your child from experiencing church just because you are nervous, unsure or embarrassed that they might become disruptive. They are as much a part of God's family as anyone else and that means that they are just as welcome in God's house. Children are welcome at every main Sunday morning service. There is a children's corner for

young children, a Sunday School for primary aged children, toddler friendly 'Worship 4 All' services in the afternoon once a month, a regular Youth Group and quarterly Aspire youth services, as well as other family friendly events throughout the year.

○ **WHEN DO BAPTISMS HAPPEN?**

Baptism is entry into the Church where an individual makes a public declaration of belief. As such the whole Church community should be present. For this reason, Baptisms usually take place in the main morning service. There could be one, two or more baptism candidates at each service. This gives the service more meaning and makes it more vibrant and enjoyable for all. We have all been to those baptisms where nobody sings and the service is dull and meaningless. The format at St Mary Magdalene, Geddington and St Mary the Virgin, Weekley looks to avoid such a disheartening scenario.

Baptisms take place during the main service at 9.45am in Geddington or 11.15am in Weekley. We will advise you of available dates and times when we meet you to discuss your baptism following your initial contact with us so that you can decide which available date suits you best. PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE MADE A BOOKING AT CHURCH BEFORE ARRANGING A RECEPTION PARTY OR INFORMING RELATIVES. We regret that, due to competing demands we are unable to offer baptisms outside of these times.

○ **GODPARENTS**

Godparents make the same promises as parents to help raise children in the Christian faith. It is an important and responsible role. Godparents can be family members or friends and must be baptised themselves, and one confirmed. Because they are making promises for a child's long-term spiritual welfare, Godparents must also be over 16 years of age. Canon Law does not allow minors to become Godparents. Choose people you trust to take an interest in your child's spiritual welfare, not just someone who you are fond of. Usually there are three godparents, although there is provision for up to four. Perhaps you would like to invite your chosen godparents to a Sunday morning service? It might also be helpful for them to attend the baptism preparation evenings when our caller visits you.



○ **NEXT STEPS**

If you would like to take this further, we would love to hear from you. Please email Geddingtonweekly@gmail.com. We hope that your own or your child's baptism will be a wonderful and memorable occasion and that it will mark the beginning of a long and happy association with St Mary Magdalene, Geddington or St Mary the Virgin, Weekley.

*May God's blessing be upon you as you consider
this next step on the journey of faith.*



We hope to see you soon!