

Baptism Service

Note: *This service has evolved over the years and may include items written by others. Please notify Worship Words if you are aware of any potential copyright infringements. Thank you.*

Gathering words

We are here to celebrate the birth and life of XXX, and to witness our own commitment to being a part of their lives – today and in the future.

We are also here to celebrate the lives of X & Y, of Z, their big brother, and of everyone who has gathered today as family and friend. We remember Z's baptism when he was a little baby in [location].

We gather today in God's presence, the power of love and justice, in our lives, and to reaffirm our commitment to one another, and also to our sisters and brothers around the world, as members of a greater family.

Prayer

Pray with me.

Spirit of life, Mother and father of us all, we gather in thanksgiving for your nurturing spirit that lives and breathes in each of us, and for your love that surrounds us. We thank you for families, for love between two people, and for children. We thank you for those in our families who pass down love and truth and invite new generations to know and experience your love and graciousness.

Forgive us when we take your love and the love of others for granted. Make your presence known to us anew in this service: in the words spoken, in the eyes of the children, and in the waters of baptism.

God of all hearts and all nations, open our hearts and our minds, so that we may hear and understand your dreams for us, and for all generations. Amen.

Reflection

God, that unknowable mysterious power of love and light, invites us in baptism to accept this love and light into our lives with the openness and trust of a child.

We often speak of all being part of a world community, part of the family of God. In baptism God proclaims of each child, "This is my beloved child." Each of us is loved and worthy of love. Each of us is a member of this great family that encompasses the entire world. And this we must teach our children.

In Deuteronomy in the Hebrew scripture it is written:

This passage might be read by someone else.

You shall put these words of mine in your heart and soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and fix them as an emblem on your forehead. ¹⁹Teach them to your children, talking about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise.

Clearly, in this passage from Deuteronomy, we are called as a people of faith to pass something on to future generations – to diligently teach our children the love of God.

How do we do this?

I'm going to share something a young mother shared with me on Mother's Day at my church. She helped us think about families and parenting, about passing on our beliefs and values to the next generation, about setting positive examples for our children.

Using the letters of the word “PARENT” she shared this parenting wisdom. [Ask older children to assist], will you help me out with these letters?

So, the question is: how to be good parents? X&Y, you already know this, but a reminder, especially on a special day like today, never hurts.

What is the first letter of the word “Parent”?

P – P is for Pray. Pray for your child, to see God – to see goodness and love -- in your child and in every child, and pray for yourself to be the best parent you can be. P is for...Pray.

What is the second letter in "parent"?

A – is for Affirmation: children need to know they are loved. Affirm their curiosity and efforts. And affirm their kindness, their gentleness and their helpfulness. Remember the *fourth* [second, third] child is as important and as amazing as the first! A – is for Affirmation.

What is the next letter in "parent"?

R – is for Reasonable: set Reasonable limits. Establish healthy and clear boundaries for your children and for yourselves. And in those moments when you are not reasonable, apologize. Help your child know that sometimes you get it wrong, and sometimes you have to say sorry and make things right again. R – is for Reasonable.

What is the next letter in "parent"?

E – is for Example – Be a good example for your children. Model good values and loving and mature behavior, both in public and behind closed doors. E – is for Example.

What is the next letter in "parent"?

N – is for Now. Don't wait. Be present for your child Now, today, in this moment. Extravagantly demonstrate the love you have for them – by listening, by looking them in the eye, by turning off your cell/mobile phone, by turning off the computer, by getting down on the floor and playing or cuddling up with a book, when you really would rather be doing something else. Now is the only time we have with our children. Don't miss it. N—is for now.

What is the next letter in "parent"?

T – is for Teach. Teach your child right from wrong. Teach by example. Teach your children to be loving and generous human beings, equipped to one day leave home with good skills and values.

Don't leave this responsibility for others, but share it with others. Share it with teachers at school, at church, at the sports centre. Share it with doctors and nurses. Share it with family, with aunties, with uncles! T – is for Teach.

So, what must we remember about parents?...

Parents ...Pray, Affirm, are Reasonable, lead by Example, live in the Now, and Teach their children.

May you, X&Y, continue to faithfully step up to the responsibility with which God has entrusted you, and turn to family and friends whenever your task of parenting seems daunting. You are not alone.

Questions to Parents:

X&Y, I have some questions for you. These are the same questions you agreed to when [*names of older children who have been baptized*] was baptized.

- Do you accept the responsibilities and privileges of parenthood for XXX, and promise, to the best of your ability, to lead them by example and instruction, in the way of truth, justice and peace? **We do.**
- Will you strive to love XXX with a wise, generous and patient love and be present for them in times of joy and sorrow? **We will.**
- Will you attempt to choose actions of love, justice and selflessness in your own lives, so that this is the inheritance for your child/ren? **We will.**

Questions for Older Siblings:

- [*Older sibling/s*], do you promise to be a friend to your brother/sister? Yes.
- Do you promise to try to share? Yes
- Do you promise to be a good brother/sister, to try to help them when they need help? Yes

Questions for the family:

- Having heard these promises from X&Y and *older siblings*, do you, as their family and friends, promise your love, support, and prayers for them in easy and difficult times? in good and bad times? as they raise XXX? **We do.**
- And will you love XXX with a wise, generous and patient love? **We will.**

Preparing the Water

Water is a symbol of life and covenant, promises, not just in the Christian tradition, but in the Jewish tradition and Islam

and Hinduism. Without water we cannot live. Without the love of family, we cannot blossom. So today we use water to mark the baptism of XXX.

Prayer

Ask an older sibling or other child to help pour water into font. This might be practiced before the service.

Pour water into the font during prayer.

Pray with me.

God, thank you for the gift of water, which sustains, refreshes and cleanses all life. May this water be a sign and seal of the promises made today, and of the love and light that will be upon XXX today and every day. Amen.

Baptisms

What is the full name of this child? [*Parents respond.*]

XXX, I baptize you in the name of the Creator, the Sustainer and the Giver of Life. Amen.

Presentation to the gathered assembly

I present to you, **XXX**, a child of God.

Prayer

We give thanks.

Spirit of Love, mother and father of us all, thank you for **XXX** and for the grace acknowledged here today in water and Spirit. Bless everyone who will love and care for them – [*name parents, siblings and other significant people*] and so many others. Thank you for embracing us all as family in the one household of your love. Amen.

Commissioning

May we each have strength for life's journey, courage in hard times, and joy in good times, ever growing in faith, love and hope, and living in the light of God. May it be so!