

Welcome!

You are about to embark on a very important journey! As a member of this church, you have asked for your child to be baptized. Baptism is an extremely important sacrament – in fact, THE most important – so this is a huge responsibility for you, and for those whom you will ask to be godparents to your child.

Because of the importance of this sacrament, preparation is essential – which is why we have this training course. . Experience has taught us that when parents embark on this journey of preparation, God uses it to reinforce and illuminate aspects of our own baptism. Many parents comment that they were unaware of certain things, or did not fully realise the significance of many of the truths, promises and blessings which are ours through our baptism in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Whether you consider yourself a mature Christian or still taking baby steps, this promises to be an exciting journey and an opportunity of a lifetime.

Your facilitators will have told you of the time involved, number of sessions, etc. so please book that time in your diary so that you do not miss any of this. Your facilitator is just that – however much knowledge that person has, this course is about YOU and YOUR understanding of baptism. For that reason, feel free to ask anything you like – there are no silly questions when we are exploring our relationship with God.

You may be the only couple doing this course, or you may be in a group. If the latter, it is also an opportunity to develop long-lasting relationships with those who journey with you.

In between your sessions you will be asked to review the areas you have already covered. This, too, is an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to speak to you in a new way, and so enrich your life.

It is said that generally we are not given training for one of the most important jobs in our life, that of parenthood. This course is about spiritual parenthood and your attending this course is the best gift you can ever give your child. It is also one of the best gifts you can give yourselves because you are about to experience “how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge.”

God be with you!

Godparents' / Sponsors': Information Page

Duties, Joys, and Privileges

A child has been born and there is great joy! A Baptism is being planned and you have been asked to be a godparent to the child – a great honour, **but** also a great responsibility to the child, its parents, and to God. To help you to make an informed decision, here is a brief summary of what is expected of a godparent according to our church.

Historically, godparents were needed as life expectancy was short and godparents were a means by which the baptised children could be assured of material as well as spiritual support until they could look after themselves. In the world in which we live, we generally have longer life expectancies, though with chronic and terminal diseases this is changing. Our society is also less Christian and certainly less well-disposed to people who seek to follow Jesus than it used to be decades ago. This means that the role of a godparent is no less important today than it has been in the past. It is usual to have three godparents; two of the same gender as the child and one of the opposite.

Godparents are there to support the parents (whose primary role it is) in the spiritual nurture of the child. This includes matters such as learning to pray; reading and understanding the Bible as it applies to them; becoming an integral part of the local church and participating fully in its communal life. They need to be there (when needed) for talking about Jesus, the faith, life and its difficulties, and personal issues. A godparent will also remember and celebrate the child's birthday and (as important) its Baptismal day in appropriate ways. If this includes gifts, these should reflect this commitment, e.g. a children's illustrated Bible, or some other suitable gift from your local Christian bookshop. Remember also to include gifts and experiences that expose your godchild to the wonders of God's creation. All of this speaks of building a life-relationship with the godchild. Godparents should be able to talk as easily about Jesus as about cricket, soccer, tennis, or any other interest. Apart from these interactions with the child, the godparents promise God that they will pray daily for him or her; they also see that basic material needs are met so that the child can develop into a healthy, balanced, well-adjusted person.

It is requirement of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa (**ACSA**) that all godparents be baptised Christians who are personally and actively involved in the life of their own church, so that they model a life of Christian commitment for their godchild. As the child to be baptised is being brought up in the Anglican Church, it makes sense that at least one of the godparents should be a practising Anglican Christian.

These requirements are of the essence of the "job" of being a godparent and are not optional! People who undertake the role of godparent must be fully aware of the fact that this is the role to which they are committing themselves in making their public vows in the church service at which the child is baptised. Godparents are usually most effective when they are local – this means they are able to see the godchild regularly and frequently; attend the Baptism Preparation Course; and, attend the Baptism itself.

As Christians who are part of the Anglican Church, our understanding of Baptism (and its implications) is based on the Bible and its account of God's loving dealings with His creation, and not only on those passages that speak directly about baptism. This includes a life worth living that God longs for His people to know about and to live out – this new life that becomes ours by the new birth of Baptism.