

The Ceremony of Baptism

1. The reception or welcome - the parents and child come in to the back of church and the priest welcomes them and invites them to go to the font.
2. Celebration of the word - the scriptures are read (e.g. a reading from John 3 where Jesus tells Nicodemus he must be born again.)
3. The priest may say a short homily (sermon).
4. Prayers of the faithful or bidding prayers are also said.
5. The priest says a prayer of exorcism, asking that the baby may be rescued from the slavery of sin, and pass into the freedom of God. The baby is anointed with the *oil of catechumens*.
6. The parents and godparents profess their belief by reciting the creed on the baby's behalf.
7. The baptism - water is poured over the baby's head as the priest says: '(Name....) I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.'
8. The baby is anointed for a second time, this time with Chrism - Chrism is used again in confirmation
9. The baby is dressed in a white garment as a sign of sharing the resurrection of Christ.
10. A candle is lit from the Easter candle which represents the risen Christ.
11. Conclusion - Lord's Prayer and blessing

Signs and symbols of Baptism

1. Sign of the Cross – is given by priest, parents and godparents to claim the child for Christ. (*not made with water*).
2. Water - Purifying Symbol of life but also death - Baptism is a sign of New Life - the Christian is freed from the death of sin. (*Poured three times, not with sign of the cross*).
3. Oil of Catechumens – strength and protection. (*RCIA – member of household*)
4. Oil of Chrism - consecration for the service of God. This oil contains perfume. The candidate is 'crowned' as a new Christian – the anointing is on the crown of the head.
5. White Garment – White, the colour for the clothing of the Messiah, reborn in Christ.
6. Candle - Jesus light of the world - lit from the Pascal candle which represents the resurrection of Jesus. Be a light.
7. Words - 'I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.' The key words in the ceremony when the water is poured over the baby's head.
8. Faith. The faith of those involved – parents, god parents, faith community.