



CHRISTENING
SILVER

PLANNING A CHRISTENING



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INTRODUCTION



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WHAT IS INVOLVED IN PLANNING A CHRISTENING?

Planning a Christening can be a stressful endeavour unless you are fully prepared. There is everything from selecting the church and choosing the godparents to consider, through to planning the after Christening celebrations. And then there's lots to learn about the ceremony itself.

This guide will take you through each step with some simple tips and explanations along the way to keep everything running smoothly. Leaving you time to enjoy your baby's special day.



CHOOSING THE CHURCH & DATE

HOW TO SELECT THE CHURCH

For continuity in the future, it is a good idea to choose a local church. Not only will this be helpful logistically in the run up to the ceremony and on the day, this is also the church your children will get to know over the years – a welcoming, local second family. However, if you have connections with a parish church close to your original family home, the vicar would be happy to discuss holding the service there. The Church of England has a useful site to help you locate and contact your local parish church at:

www.achurchnearyou.com

CONTACTING THE CHURCH

Arrange to meet the vicar as soon as is feasible. The vicar will be able to answer any questions you may have and discuss any particular requests. Visit the church and get to know the layout and feel of the building.

CHOOSING THE DATE

Just a couple of things to consider when choosing the perfect date. Make sure it doesn't conflict with any other events or family occasions and give guests plenty of time to fit it in their diary. The weekends around Easter are always popular, as are Summer weekends when the weather is warmer. Most people aim for a date when baby is between 6 and 12 months old.



THE CHURCH & DATE CHECKLIST

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO
WHEN SELECTING THE CHURCH AND DATE?



Contact the church well in advance



Will the church and the venue for your party be free on the same day?



Check your date with close family & friends to make sure they're free



Don't pick a date that clashes with other big events or family occasions



Try to pick a date when baby is between 6 and 12 months old



Make a list of questions for the vicar before you meet



CHOOSING THE GODPARENTS

WHO QUALIFIES TO BE A GODPARENT?

Most parents choose relatives or family friends. It is best to choose godparents who you expect to stay in contact with your family long into the future, providing a supportive role model for your child. A Godparent is someone who is making a life-long commitment to your child's faith and emotional wellbeing. You are not asking them to make a legal commitment - godparents do not become legal guardians. They are there to guide and mentor your child through their spiritual and religious journey.

THE MAIN POINTS TO CONSIDER:

There must be a minimum of three godparents but there can be more.

Two godparents should be of the same sex as your child, whilst one should be of the opposite sex.

You and/or your spouse can be godparents.

Godparents should already be baptised.

Consider whether your chosen godparents will be comfortable making the promises and commitments in the church service we discuss later.



CHOOSING THE GODPARENTS CHECKLIST

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO
WHEN CHOOSING GODPARENTS?

- Minimum of three (at least two of the same sex as baby and one of the opposite sex)
- Do you or your spouse want to be a godparent?
- Are the chosen godparents baptised?
- If choosing a young relative, ensure they are mature enough for the role.
- Will the chosen godparents be around as baby grows up?
- Will the godparents be comfortable with the declarations they must make in the ceremony?



PREPARATION & OVERVIEW 1

THE CHURCH

Do not book the church or print the invitations until you have checked whether the future Godparents are free on the day. That goes for any of the important people in your lives. You want this to be a special occasion so make sure everyone can come before you commit to a date.

GUEST LIST

Think carefully about the guest list and the budget you have for the occasion. How many children will be attending - of what ages? Lots of children will need lots of entertainment and special food.

INVITATIONS

Printed, posted or emailed, invitations should always include:

The Date and the Time

The Location of both the church and the party

Directions and a Map

Accommodation ideas for those travelling a distance

RSVP address, telephone and email (include a date to have these in by)

Dress Code (if you would like one)



PREPARATION & OVERVIEW 2

DRESS CODE

There is no formal dress code for the adults, but many families like to dress up for the occasion. Suits or jackets for the men and elegant outfits for the ladies. Imagine a relaxed informal wedding rather than “red carpet” glamour.

GODPARENTS

If you would like one of the Godparents to propose a toast make sure you give them plenty of time to prepare for it. Godparents may also wish to play a hands-on role in the preparations, which is great. Invite them to meet the vicar and find out more with you.

THE PARTY

Every christening needs a party. The majority of families hold one after the ceremony either at home, or at a local restaurant, hotel, or village hall. The choice of venue will come down to guest numbers and whether you will be entertaining lots of children. Budget may also be a consideration. Make sure you set a limit and stick to it - a house party can be just as good as one arranged at a formal venue. More about the party and budget later.



PREPARATION & OVERVIEW 3

PHOTOGRAPHY

Don't rely on someone taking some good pictures by chance. Make sure you ask a guest or family member to take pictures on the day during key parts of the ceremony. It's worth checking that the vicar knows about this arrangement and is happy for pictures to be taken inside the church during the service. There is usually one budding photography enthusiast who will take on this responsibility with relish, otherwise it may be worth engaging a professional photographer.

BABY'S GOWN

You may like to dress your child in a traditional Christening gown, especially if it is a gown that has been used by other family members in the past. In some families it is customary for the godmother to provide a gown or an item of clothing. There is however no obligation to use a gown and many parents choose something smart that the child is used to wearing. A comfortable, contented baby at a Christening can be far more relaxing for all concerned than a flustered, irritable little bundle, unaccustomed to a formal gown. The main thing to remember is ... babies grow - a piece of clothing that fits when you start planning the Christening may be rather snug on the day.





THE CEREMONY 1

SELECTING THE HYMNS

The majority of vicars will let you suggest hymns to sing at your baby's Christening. It can sometimes be hard to choose something appropriate and often parents go with something that they know well. This is actually a good idea as people attending the Christening are more likely to sing along to something they are familiar with.

The vicar can offer some ideas, but here are a few suggestions:

Morning has broken
All things bright and beautiful
The Lord of the Dance
Sing Hosanna
Lord of all hopefulness
O Jesus I have promised
One more step along the world I go
Dear Lord and Father of Mankind
For all the Saints
Living Lord
Be Still for the Presence of the Lord
He's got the whole world in his hands



THE CEREMONY 2

THE DECISION/PROMISES

Godparents & parents will make a number of declarations and promises during the ceremony, including:

Vicar: In baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light. To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him. Therefore I ask: Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?

Response: I reject them.

Vicar: Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?

Response: I renounce them.

Vicar: Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?

Response: I repent of them.

Vicar: Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

Response: I turn to Christ.

Vicar: Do you submit to Christ as Lord?

Response: I submit to Christ.

Vicar: Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?

Response: I come to Christ.

You may find it useful to review the complete service at The Church of England's official site:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1190836/holy%20baptism.pdf>



THE CEREMONY 3

OTHER KEY ELEMENTS OF THE SERVICE:

SIGNING WITH THE CROSS

The sign of the cross is made on your child's forehead - usually with a special oil.

THE BAPTISM

As you gather round the font, the vicar pours blessed water over your child's head. It is at this point the vicar will use your child's name.

LIGHT IN THE WORLD

A lighted Christening candle is often presented to the child during the service with the vicar saying: "Shine as a light in the world to the glory of God.":

You may find it useful to review the complete service at The Church of England's official site:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1190836/holy%20baptism.pdf>





THE PARTY & BUDGET

The party after the ceremony is a great opportunity to unite friends and members of the family who don't get together very often. The room will be filled with some of the most important people in your life so it is worth taking a little time to plan properly.

CATERING & THE VENUE

The food, drink, theme and location of the venue will all be determined by your budget and numbers, so there is a separate budget section later to help you plan for this. The party does not have to be a massive do, or an expensive one. The best way to manage costs is to get quotations from different venues and catering companies, then decide what you will do yourself. There will probably be plenty of eager relatives happy to contribute their cooking skills to the occasion, so a buffet at home is very achievable for tight budgets.

A LITTLE HINT - INVITE THE VICAR

Don't forget to invite the vicar to the party. They are usually extremely busy and may not be able to attend, but an invitation will be appreciated, so don't overlook them in the whirlwind of planning and preparation.



THE PARTY & BUDGET

CHRISTENING GIFTS

It is useful to plan where to put the gifts that people bring to the party. This needs to be secure, but accessible for everyone as they come in. Giving responsibility for the gifts to a helpful niece or nephew would free you up to greet people and makes youngsters feel helpful. When you get around to opening the presents, have a pen & paper handy to note who gave baby what.

SPEECHES AND TOASTS

A small speech or toast is traditional at the party. Make sure you plan ahead and ask someone to prepare a speech or toast in advance - this will usually be a Godparent.

DRESS

Besides what your child will wear on the day there is also your own outfit and that of your spouse and your other children to consider.

PRESENTS

You may be planning to buy something substantial for your child like an engraved silver cup or some silver jewellery. It is also popular to buy the Godparents a gift. A little memento for the other children attending is also a nice idea.



CHECKLIST & BUDGET



THE GUESTS

- Invitations £ _____
- Guest List
- Choose Godparents

THE CHURCH

- Contact Church & Book Date
- Fees & Charitable Donations £ _____
- Flowers & Decorations £ _____
- Music & Hymns
- Baptism Candle £ _____
- Photography

DRESS

- Baby's Gown & Booties £ _____
- Baptism Shawl/Blanket £ _____
- Family Outfits £ _____

PRESENTS

- Present for Baby £ _____
- Gifts for the Godparents £ _____
- Mementos for Guests £ _____
- Thank You Cards £ _____



THE PARTY

- Food £ _____
- Drinks £ _____
- The Cake £ _____
- Speech/Toast
- Fizz (Cava or Champagne) £ _____
- Balloons & Decoration £ _____
- Table Decor £ _____
- Napery £ _____
- Entertainment £ _____
- Venue Hire £ _____
- Invite Vicar

ADDITIONAL COSTS

- Photographer £ _____
- Photograph Album £ _____
- Video £ _____
- Musicians & Entertainers £ _____
- Guest Accommodation £ _____
- Transport & Parking £ _____