

## How to Include Children in Baptism

### Children can

- carry water to the font
- gather near the font.
- present the gifts (candle, certificate, Bible)
- learn and join in the response to the questions to the congregation.
- make welcome cards.



### Parents can

- talk at home about the promises they and other parents have made at infant baptism.

### Church School Teachers and Parents can

- talk with children about the symbols of baptism  
*water*: new life, cleansing.  
*candle*: God's presence, light for the world  
*others, if used*: e.g. the sign of the cross, oil (anointing), white garment, sea shell, etc.



*Aaron who was 6, arrived home from church school one baptism Sunday, to ask his parents "Was I baptized as a baby?" His parents explained that they had decided to wait until he was older and could decide for himself. "Well, I want to be baptized now," he announced. "I want to belong. I am one of Jesus' friends too, you know!" Aaron and his parents went to baptism classes. Two months later Aaron and his younger brother Mark were baptized. Aaron's church school class had special seats, right at the front. Aaron's smile said it all.*

# Children and Baptism



Baptism is about belonging.  
When we are baptized we become  
members of the church family, the body of Christ.

## Our Children Belong to the Faith Community

*The Gospels give us three intriguing glimpses into the place of children among the followers of Jesus.*

**CHILDREN BELONG.** Jesus saw children as important in their own right, as members of the community and as part of God's realm. When the disciples "rebuked" parents who were bringing their children to Jesus, he called to them, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:16).



**CHILDREN SERVE.** Children are shown to play a responsible part in the life of the community. When the crowd of Jesus' listeners grew hungry and the disciples wondered what to do, Andrew said, "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two fish" (John 6:9). By the power of Christ this small offering was transformed into a meal for thousands.

**CHILDREN REMIND US OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.** The disciples once asked Jesus, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" In reply, Jesus called to him a child, and placed the child in the midst of them. "Unless you turn and become like children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

## Children and Baptism

*From the days of the early church, the children of believing parents have been baptized and nurtured in the family of God. This acknowledges that children too are part of the covenant relationship with God. When these children are older, they make their own profession of faith in Christ, affirming the faith into which they were baptized.*

### Remember Your Baptism and Be Thankful

Those of us who were baptized as infants cannot remember our own baptism. But, as we experience the baptism of others and reaffirm our baptismal covenant, we come to understand the importance of this act in our own lives.



### The Drama of Baptism

Baptism is a sacrament – an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given by God. In the sacrament of baptism all who are gathered have the opportunity to experience afresh the reality of God's grace – God's love and forgiveness freely given. It is very important that children have an unobstructed view of this important faith drama.

The baptism of children clearly indicates that this is God's action. God's love is always with us and is unmerited. It does not rest on any act of ours. The promises we make in baptism are in response to God's gracious love in Jesus Christ. In infant baptism we have a symbol of the entire Christian life. All of us are continually growing into our baptism.

### Baptism Is about Beginning

Baptism marks our initiation into the Christian faith community. It is here that the one being baptized (or their parents/sponsors) make promises and the faith community pledges support, and gifts are given. Children should be present when adults and youth affirm their baptismal vows through reaffirmation of faith (confirmation). They can be encouraged to look forward to the day when they too can make that choice.

