

tabernacle : penarth

purpose: to reflect God's love in our church,
community and world.

Asking God's Blessing

The blessing of infants and the dedication of parents

The Blessing of Infants and the Dedication of Parents

First we want to share your joy and give thanks to God for the birth of your baby. This will be a time of mixed emotions. After the initial thrill and thankfulness at the miracle of birth comes the realisation of the awesome responsibility of parenthood. Your child is a sacred trust placed in your care.

As family and friends admire the new arrival and express differing opinions of who the baby is like, you will wonder what the future holds. What sort of person your child will become. You will have high hopes and want the best for this child?

Where then do you start?

Many people want to mark the birth of their baby in a meaningful way. Some churches offer a Christening Service, often called Infant Baptism. At Tabernacle, however, we do not baptise infants, because we believe that baptism is for those who have put their trust in Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour and want to become part of the church. When someone is old enough to make the decision for themselves that they want to become a Christian, we believe they ought to also be making a decision for themselves about whether to be baptised or not.

However, we recognise that every child is special and has an important place in God's love. The Bible tells us that Jesus Himself blessed little children in the Gospel of Mark chapter 10, verses 13-16. We believe he wants to bless your child in the same way.

We, therefore, hold a Service of Blessing and Dedication. Though this is often called "Infant Dedication", the emphasis is on the parents dedicating themselves to the sacred responsibility of parenthood. In the service we ask for God's blessing in three ways:

- ◆ For the child—We give thanks to God for his/her birth, asking His blessing as Jesus blessed the children.

- ◆ For the parents—We ask God for His grace to help you as you dedicate yourselves to Christian parenthood.
- ◆ For the Church—We promise to help you in the nurture of your child, through prayer, pastoral care and practical support.

Because we believe that church plays an important part in the upbringing of children, and children should play an important part in the life of the church, we always hold these services of dedication and blessing during our normal Sunday morning services.

The next step?

If you now feel you would like to mark your baby's birth by such a Service of Blessing and dedication, you need to speak to one of the Pastors who will arrange with you a convenient Sunday Service for this to take place. They will also explain more fully the nature and meaning of the Service, confirm practical details and answer any questions you might have. No doubt you will want to invite family and friends to share this special occasion with you.

You can be assured that the Church will be sensitive to your own situation. You may be a single parent; the child may be adopted or have a disability of some kind; as parents, you may want to give thanks to God for the baby's birth, but may not feel ready to make a commitment to church membership at this time. The Church will continue to offer you its loving support.

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