



Christ Church

UNLOCKING CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL: FAMILY/SCHOOL RESOURCES

A VIRTUAL VISIT ONLINE
The Font – for Baptism



Introduction:

Every church has a font, of some kind or another, and it is usually located near the entrance of the Church, often near the West door. In some churches, the font is made of stone, metal or pottery but this font in Christ Church is made of marble, a very special sort of stone.

This font used to belong to Ely Cathedral and only came to Christ Church very recently. It was created in 1693 and has been delicately carved with cherub or angel faces, each with two wings.



A Cherub, with two wings

The font is also garlanded with marble pearls which link enormous scallop shells. The pearl is a symbol of great value and perfection. The scallop shell is a symbol of pilgrimage, the journey a Christian makes through life. Sometimes, the priest uses a real or silver scallop shell to scoop up the water on the font bowl, to pour it over the person who is being baptised.



Around the font is the following inscription, a quote from Jesus in the Bible:

“The water that I shall give shall be, in them, a well of water, springing up into eternal life.”

Background:

In the Christian church, baptism is one of the most important events or sacraments. When a person is baptized, they become a full member of the Christian family. If they are old enough, they declare they believe in Jesus Christ, so a Baptism is also known as a Christening.

There are five universal symbols of baptism: **the cross**, a **white** garment, **oil**, **water**, and **light**.

1. **The cross**-The cross reminds us that Jesus died on a cross so that everyone could be forgiven.
2. **A white garment**- White is usually worn because it is the colour of purity and truth.
3. **Oil**- Blessed oil is used to anoint the head of the person being baptized, to show how precious he or she is in the eyes and heart of God.
4. **Water**- The font is filled with water which has been blessed by a priest. This makes the water sacred or holy. Water is important because it represents cleanliness, purity, life and the ability to flow continually, like a river, from its source to the sea.

Jesus said he was the “water of life” and promised that those who are refreshed by his life-giving water will never feel spiritually dry or thirsty again.

During the baptism, the priest pours water over the head of the person to be baptized. Sometimes, the person is immersed completely under the water for a few moments. This symbolises a new, fresh start as a Christian.

5. **Light**- Light is given to the person being baptised, in the form of a lit candle. This represents Jesus who said “ I am the light of the world.”

The priest says special prayers and the parents, Godparents and friends rejoice that the Christian family has welcomed a new member. The Godparents agree to help the real parents as the child journeys through life.

Things to do at home- a few ideas

- Read the story of **Jesus’s baptism**. He was baptized by his cousin John the Baptist in the River Jordan (Matthew 3: 13-17). You may be able to find a short film of this Bible story on the internet.
- Look up the **River Jordan** on Google Earth or in an atlas. Can you track its journey to the sea?
- Find some images of different styles of **Font**, old and new. Design your own font on paper or make a 3D model of it.
- For their baptism, babies usually wear **Christening gowns**, which are long dresses worn by both boys and girls. Find some images of Victorian or royal Christening gowns to see how they compare.
- Draw each of the five **symbols** of baptism.