

# Liturgy Resources For Infant Baptism



*Artwork by Dorothy Woodward rsj*

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## **Rituals**

The following are suggestions for the celebration of infant baptism, whether it be of one child or several, within the Sunday Eucharistic liturgy or as a separate Baptismal liturgy. It is not intended that all of these suggestions be used in one liturgy. They are listed here merely as options, and will require adaptation and editing according to the readiness and needs of your community, as well as the actual structure of your worship space.

## **Gathering and Entrance Rituals**

### **Entrance Procession Within a Eucharistic Liturgy**

#### Order of the Procession:

- Processional Cross
- Paschal Candle
- Chrism
- Infants and Parents for Baptism – parents holding their child's baptismal garment and unlit candle
- Servers & Ministers
- Lectionary
- Presider

The Procession proceeds to the sanctuary as an appropriate Processional Hymn or mantra is sung (see music section below). When the procession arrives at the sanctuary, the cross, candle and chrism bearers stand together to one side of the sanctuary. The infants and their parents stand in the centre of the sanctuary facing the community. The Lectionary bearer stands beside the other symbol bearers, and the servers and ministers go to their places, while the Presider stands beside the infants and their parents.

When the hymn has finished, the Presider welcomes all and introduces the infants and their parents. He then introduces the liturgical focus by noting that it is into this community, the living body of Christ, that their child is about to be immersed as a new member. He then highlights the Paschal Candle, the Word of God, the Waters of Baptism (pointing to the baptismal font) and the Chrism, as central symbols of the sacrament. These are displayed to the community and then placed in their allocated positions within the sacred space. He then invites one of the parents of each child, to hold up their child's baptismal garment and unlit candle, mentioning their significance. These are then placed in the sacred space. The infants and parents then go to their places within the community and the liturgy continues on with the Penitential Rite.

### **Gathering Ritual For Baptism Outside A Eucharistic Liturgy**

Begin this liturgy by gathering the group in a central location within the church, away from the Baptismal Font. Welcome them, and explain that they will all process together, following the Paschal Candle and other Baptismal symbols, to the Baptismal font. (*Ideally, if the group is fairly large, and if they are comfortable with church and liturgy, then gather at the main entrance of the church for this procession.*) Advise the Parents and Godparents that when they arrive at the Baptismal font, they are to stand around it with their infant(s), and for the rest of the group to stand in the seats near the font. (Try to brief the group, as concisely as possible, about what they may need to know or understand about the liturgy, before the liturgy begins, rather than interrupting the flow of the liturgy with explanations and directions.) Choose various people to carry the Cross, Paschal Candle, Chrism, Lectionary. Instruct them about where to stand and where and when to place the symbols in the sacred space. Ensure the parents and /or Godparents have their child's baptismal garment and unlit candle with them in the procession.

When all are ready, begin the gathering procession by singing or playing a suitable gathering hymn (see below). When the hymn has finished, the Presider introduces the liturgical focus by noting that it is into this community, the living body of Christ, that their child is about to be immersed as a new member. He then highlights the Paschal Candle, the Word of God, the Waters of Baptism (fingering the water for all to see and hear), and the Chrism, as central symbols of the sacrament. These are displayed to the community and then placed in their allocated positions within the sacred space.

The Presider then asks the parents to present their child by name (holding the child up before the community) and express their intention for Baptism. He then addresses the Godparents re their intentions in supporting the parents. The Presider then invites the parents and Godparents, to hold up their child's baptismal garment and unlit candle as the Presider mentions their significance. These are then placed in the sacred space. The infant(s), parents and Godparents then go to their places within the community and the liturgy continues on with the Liturgy of The Word.

### **Readings**

Isaiah 12: 2- 6

*You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation...*

Isaiah 55: 1-3

*Come to the water, you who are thirsty...*

Isaiah 55: 10 –11

*As the rain and snow come down from the heavens...*

Zephaniah 3: 14-15; 17 –18

*He will exult over you and renew you by his love...*

Jeremiah 1: 4 – 8

*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you...*

Acts 17: 24 – 28a

*It is in him that we live and move and have our being...*

Romans 6: 3-11

*Christ was raised from the dead...we too might live a new life...*

Romans 8: 14-17

*The Spirit himself and our spirit bear united witness that we are children of God...*

1 Cor 12: 12-13

*In the one Spirit we were all baptised...*

Gal 1: 11-12; 15

*God, who had specially chosen me while I was still in my mother's womb...*

Gal 4: 3-7

*God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts...*

Ephesians 1: 3; 9 –14

*Blessed be God who has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ...*

Ephesians 2: 8 –10

*It is by grace that you have been saved, through faith...*

Ephesians 3: 16 –20

*Out of his infinite glory...may your hidden self grow strong...*

Ephesians 4: 4-6

*There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God...*

Col 3: 1-4

*You have been brought back to true life with Christ...*

Col 3: 9-10; 12-13; 15-16a

*You have put on a new self...renewed in the image of its creator...*

1 John 3: 1-2

*We are already the children of God...*

1 John 4: 7-13; 16

*Anyone who lives in love, lives in God...*

Matthew 3: 13-17

*"This is my beloved Son, my favour rests on him..."*

Matthew 13: 4-9

*The Parable of The Sower...*

Mark 9: 33- 37

*Anyone who welcomes one of these little children, welcomes me..*

Luke 10: 21-22

*I bless you father for hiding these things from the learned and wise, and revealing them to mere children...*

Luke 18: 15 –17

*Let the children come to me...*

John 3: 5 –8

*Unless a man is born through water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God..*

### **Invocation of The Saints**

Ideally the litany should be sung. However, when this is not practical ensure that it is recited with some energy and enthusiasm. As the litany is being proclaimed, have the parents or Godparents hold their child high in the air before the community as blessing of the saints are invoked upon the child and community. Alternatively, have the child passed gently among the community or representatives of the community during this litany.

### **Prayers Over the Baptismal Waters**

Have the infant(s), parents and Godparents gather round the baptismal font, in a semi-circle so as not to block the view of the font from the rest of the community. Where possible, immerse the Paschal Candle in the baptismal waters. Have a different person per prayer, lift the candle up high and then down deep into the water. (*Ensure that people see the water and hear the water, either as it drips from the Paschal candle, or by scooping it up in one's hand and letting it spill out through one's fingers*). Where possible, have the community or choir, sing the response to each of these prayers.

### **The Actual Baptism**

If appropriate immerse the child(ren) in the Baptismal waters. If this is not possible, for whatever reason, then be *generous* with the amount of water used to baptize the child(ren). Take time with this powerful ritual - use slow deliberate gestures and really proclaim the words of Baptism so that the whole community can see and hear what is happening. (*Ensure throughout that this is done in such a way that no-one has their back to the community and that the font and the child(ren) can be seen.*) An appropriate hymn could be sung here (See the list below).

### **Chrism, Baptismal Garment and Candle**

When the child(ren) is being anointed with Chrism, again ensure that what is being done and being said are perceptible to the community. Hold the child(ren) in such a way that he/she is facing the community as much as possible, with the Presider anointing the child from behind or beside the child.

At the appropriate time, the parents or Godparents go to the sacred space and collect their infant's baptismal garment. The child is clothed in the white garment, before the community.

When directed, a parent or Godparent goes to the sacred space and collects their child's baptismal candle and lights it from the Paschal candle. The candle is held high above the child and the sign of the cross is made over the child with the lit candle.

### **Prayer Over The Infant's Ears & Mouth**

Have the baptismal candle held over the child as the prayers are prayed over the child's ears and mouth. Ensure that what is being said and done are perceptible to the community.

### **Blessing and Dismissal**

Following the communal prayer of the Our Father, conclude the liturgy with an appropriate blessing of the child(ren). Lift the child high before the community during this blessing and

invite the whole community to extend their right hand over the child. (See below for an appropriate sung blessing). Conclude by singing an appropriate hymn. (See below).

### **Recessional Procession Within A Eucharistic Liturgy**

At the end of the liturgy, have the infant(s) with their parents and Godparents process out behind the processional cross, with the infant's baptismal candle held high in front of the infant throughout the procession. Use an appropriate hymn to accompany this procession.

### **PowerPoint Reflections**

The following PowerPoint Presentations may be helpful and are available on [www.liturgyplanningimages.com](http://www.liturgyplanningimages.com)

- *You Are The Light Of The World* – Scripture Reflection
- *I Have Come That You May Have Life* – Scripture Reflection – Children's Edition

### **Hymns and Music**

**A Baptismal Invocation** (De Lasala/Colye- As One Voice/Vol 2)  
**All Praise Glory & Honour** (Monica Brown – Holy Ground)  
**Baptised In Water** (Michael Saward – Gather Australia)  
**Bless The Lord** (Michael Mangan – Sing Your Joy)  
**Child of Blessing, Child of Promise** (Cole-Turner/Witt – As One Voice/Vol 2)  
**Child of Wonder** (D. Haas, M. Haugen, M. Joncas – Come & Journey CD)  
**Children of The Light** (Michael Mangan – Sing Your Joy)  
**Christ Be Our Light** (B. Farrell – As One Voice/Vol2 & Gather Australia)  
**Come To The Water** (Frank Andersen – As One Voice/Vol1)  
**Enflame Our Hearts** (Monica Brown – Quiet My Soul)  
**Flow River Flow** (B.Hurd -- As One Voice/Vol1)  
**Fountain Of Life (Anointing With Chrism)** (Jane Wood - Gather Australia)  
**Gather Your People** (B.Hurd -- As One Voice/Vol1 & Gather Australia)  
**I Heard The Voice Of Jesus** (H. Bonar – As One Voice/ Vol 1)  
**Jesus Come To Us** (David Haas – As One Voice/ Vol1)  
**Let God's Dream Be Born** (Kevin Bates – As One Voice/Vol 2)  
**Let Heaven Rejoice** (B.Dufford – As One Voice /Vol 1 & Gather Australia)  
**Light Of Christ** (Zaragoza – As One Voice/Vol1)  
**Light Of Christ** (John Burland – Sacred Moments)  
**Litany of the Saints** (Percy Jones - Gather Australia)  
**Loving Spirit** (S. Murray – As One Voice/Vol 1)  
**May God Bless You** (C.Walker – As One Voice/Vol1 & Gather Australia)  
**New People, New Life** (Beha – As One Voice/Vol1)  
**On Eagle's Wings** (Michael Joncas – As One Voice/Vol1 & Gather Australia)  
**Psalm 8 – O Lord Our God How Wonderful** (Noel Ansell – Gather Australia)  
**Psalm 66 – Let All The Earth** (Marty Haugen – Gather Australia)  
**Psalm 89 – I Will sing Forever** (Roger Heagney - Gather Australia)  
**Psalm 118 – This Is The Day** (Christopher Walker - Gather Australia)  
**Receive The Light** (Erica Marshall – As One Voice / Vol1)  
**Song For The Journey** (Erica Marshall – As One Voice/Vol 1)  
**Song Over The Waters** (Marty Haugen - Gather Australia)  
**The Fullness of God** (Frank Andersen – As One Voice / Vol1)  
**The Water of Life** (Michael Mangan – Sing Your Joy)  
**Water of Life** (C. Dean - Gather Australia)  
**Water of Life** (John Burland – Sacred Moments)  
**Waters of Life** (Monica Brown – Quiet My Soul)  
**We Are Called** (D. Haas – As One Voice/Vol1 & Gather Australia)  
**We Believe** (Michael Mangan – Sing Your Joy)  
**We Shall Draw Water** (Paul Inwood – As One Voice/Vol 1 & Gather Australia)

**We Welcome This Child** (P. Kearney – As One Voice/Vol 2)  
**We Welcome You Into The Church** (John Burland – Celebrating The Sacraments)  
**Yes Lord I Believe** (John Burland – Celebrating The Sacraments)  
**You Are God's Work of Art** (M.Thomas – Gather Australia)  
**You Have Put On Christ** (Percy Jones - Gather Australia)  
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## Naming Ritual

### Naming Ritual & Prayer Of Thanksgiving On The Safe Arrival Of A Child



Artwork by Anne Darwin sdv

*This ritual of thanksgiving and naming is appropriate for family members while the newborn is still in hospital. It is no substitute for baptism but rather is an opportunity for the parents to give thanks for a safe delivery and name and bless their child in the presence of close family/friends..*

*It would be appropriate to invite the midwife to participate if time permits. You may wish to light a candle as a sign of God's presence.*

**Leader:** We are gathered here to celebrate a joyful occasion and to give thanks for a safe delivery of this newborn child.

**Let us listen to the Word of God:** (choose one of the following or another short reading which is appropriate. A family member may wish to do the reading)

Ps 8: 4-7

Ps 92 2-3

Ps 100 4b -5

Psalm 139 13 -14a

Luke 1: 46-49

Genesis 1:27 -31

**Reader:** (at the end of the reading): The Word of the Lord

**All:** Thanks be to God.

**Leader:**

..... and..... (*parents' names*) what name have you given your child?

**Parents:** The name we have chosen is.....

**We have chosen this because.....**(*the parents may wish to say why they have called their baby the name/names they have chosen.*)

**All:** Welcome..... and may God bless you.

*(The following ritual of welcome is simply done as the baby is passed to each person present and each has the opportunity to offer a blessing.)*

*The father takes the baby and says:*

**Father:** Thank you God for the safe arrival of ..... Bless him/ her with...(eg peace, joy, kindness, a cheerful outlook, good health etc)...

**All:** ...(*Baby's Name*).... may God bless you with.....(repeat the word/phrase offered.)

**Mother:** Thank you, God, for a safe delivery and for your gift of strength and endurance through the labour. Bless..... with.....

**All:** ...(*Baby's Name*).... may God bless you with..... (repeat the word/phrase offered)

*(The baby is passed around, or if the parents prefer, each person comes forward and touches the baby's head or foot. As each person takes the child, or comes forward, each says:*

**Bless..... with.....**

*And those gathered respond:*

...(*Baby's Name*)... may God bless you with.....

*(When all have offered a blessing for the new baby the leader says:)*

**Leader:** God of all life, thank you for the gift of ...(baby's name)... in our life. We ask you to bless us all with Your love, especially ...(parents' names) as they begin to raise this beautiful child. Grant them wisdom, understanding, kindness, joy, laughter and love. May the love they feel today sustain them in the years ahead. Bless the family and friends gathered here. May they support..... baby's parents..... and .....baby's name..... in love, joy and peace.

**All:** Amen.

**Leader:** Let us conclude our prayer by praying as Jesus taught us.....  
Our Father.....

*Some hospitals have a name card or a medal and it would be appropriate to offer the parents this now with the baby's name on. Otherwise the following may be used.  
(Those present could be asked to sign the card)*

**Prayer of  
Thanksgiving and  
Welcome for**

.....

.....

.....



*Artwork by Anne Darwin sdv*

***Those present:***

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