



*Thanksgiving  
for the  
Birth of a Child*

## **Introduction**

This service is made available to parents who are not yet ready to identify themselves and their children with the church through baptism, or who wish to leave the option open for their children to make their own decision to be baptised as adults.

The service is an act of thanksgiving, recognising the birth of the child and giving thanks to God in the context of worship. Normally it would take place during the Sunday worship of a gathered congregation, but possibly in the family home with congregational representatives present.

This service is not a baptism service. To avoid confusion, it is urged that this order not be used when others are being baptised. The person designated "Leader" in this service may be either lay or ordained. Hymns used should not be baptismal hymns, and readings should not be those usually associated with baptism. As there are no manual actions there is no necessity for the Leader to hold the child.

Certificates designed especially for use with this service are available from the Connexional Office.

The service is not a naming ceremony; it assumes the child is already named. And neither is it a dedication of the child, as this can only be done of things or oneself.

Because this is not a baptism the child's name should not be entered on the parish membership roll. However, it is appropriate that the child's name go on the cradle roll, and that the child is included along with other children in the life of the church. It may also be appropriate to talk with parents about baptism later on.

The following service is a guide. Alternative and additional prayers of thanksgiving or words of blessing may be included.

## **Thanksgiving for the Birth of a Child**

**Leader:** We are here to give thanks to God,  
who in creation gives us life,  
who gives us new life in Jesus Christ,  
and who, through the Spirit,  
refreshes us and helps us grow.

We are here to celebrate:  
all the good things we have inherited  
from past generations,  
the love and joy of parenthood,  
and all the possibilities and hopes  
here, in this new generation.

**All:** O God, we give you thanks and praise.

*A hymn of thanksgiving may be sung.*

*There may be appropriate scripture readings (eg Psalm 139, Matthew 18. 1-5),  
and further prayers may be offered.*

*The parents come forward with their child,  
along with other family members.*

**Leader:** Loving God, you have given us  
the joy and responsibility  
of nurturing and guiding children.  
Bless this family  
so that they may have love and tolerance,  
patience and understanding  
as they care for this child/these children.

**Parent(s):** I/we thank God for the birth of .....  
With God's help and the support of this community  
I/we dedicate myself/ourselves to  
build and maintain a Christian home in which love,  
sharing and forgiveness  
are cherished and allowed to grow.

**All:** **May this child/these children  
find in your family  
and this community  
Christ's love and understanding.  
Amen.**

*A further hymn may be sung.*

*The parents may be presented with a gift.*

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