

## Where to from here?

Hopefully this leaflet has made things clear. It may have confirmed your intention to proceed with seeking your child to be baptised or dedicated.

However, perhaps from what we've said so far, it's clear bringing your child to be baptised or dedicated is not appropriate at this time. Being a Christian means having radically new beliefs and a radically new lifestyle, including a serious commitment to a church family. If in good conscience you cannot stand up and say publically that you are a follower of Jesus and have committed yourself to our church family, then there are other options. Remember, God prefers honesty to insincerity!

If you'd like to proceed the next steps are:

1. Make a time to have a chat over coffee with the Minister, Matt Purnell (call (02) 6921 2317, or email [info@saintandrews.net.au](mailto:info@saintandrews.net.au)).
2. Be part of our church family. Join us regularly as we meet each Sunday. We'd also encourage you to join a weekly Bible study group and get involved in the social life of the church.
3. When you are ready to make the above promises, *and when the church family knows you well enough to make their promise to you*, then the Minister will bring a recommendation to the leaders of the church, or "Elders", who have to approve all baptisms.

If you don't feel ready for these steps, just coming along on Sundays can be a great way to find out what following Jesus is all about!

Authorised by the Elders on 23 June 2015.

**S†ANDREW'S**  
*Wagga Wagga*

GOSPEL ▲ COMMUNITY ▲ MISSION

# Baptism and Dedication of Children

## Congratulations!

On wanting to have your child baptised. Your enquiry shows that you want the best for them. This leaflet is designed to help answer some of your questions about baptism and to explain what baptism is all about.

## What is baptism?

The Bible has some bad news and some good news. The bad news is all of us have committed high treason against God and have done evil. That is, we've all sinned, and need God's forgiveness lest we face his judgement. But the good news is because of Jesus, forgiveness of sins is possible. Because Jesus lived a perfect life, died for our sins in our place on the cross, and was raised from the dead, now anyone who calls on his name will be saved from God's judgement and share forever in God's New Creation.

Before saying what baptism is, it is helpful to consider what baptism is NOT:

- Baptism is not a naming ceremony in the way the word "Christening" is often used
- Baptism is not necessary to "go to heaven"
- Baptism does not make a person a Christian

So what is baptism? To "baptise" means to wash with water, and being washed with water in baptism symbolises the washing away of sins. Baptism reminds us that because of Jesus, and only because of him, our sins can be washed away, and therefore reminds us of God's undeserved kindness in sending Jesus to rescue us.

## Who should be baptised?

In our church family we baptise adults who have turned away from sin and back to God, putting their trust in Jesus and what he's done. Being washed with water, being baptised, is a public declaration that through Jesus God saves sinners by washing away sins, and that the person being baptised has called upon Jesus' name to save them.

We also baptise the children of Christians. This is because the Bible shows us that the children of Christians should also be regarded as Christians, who are to be brought up to know Jesus as Lord. Our prayer for such children is they will look back later in life and have never known a day when they didn't know Jesus as Lord.

Children being washed with water, being baptised, is a public declaration by their parent/s that through Jesus God saves sinners by washing away sins, and that the parent/s are calling upon Jesus' name to save their child.

### **Child dedication**

Some parents in our church family may want to dedicate their child to God and dedicate themselves to bringing up their child to know Jesus, but may be uncomfortable with the symbol of baptism being applied to a child. We understand this, and don't want to make this a divisive issue. So, we offer a "dedication" ceremony where the same promises are made by the parent/s, but no water is used.

### **Believing and belonging**

It should now be obvious that the only people bringing their child for baptism or dedication should be those who are trusting in the Lord Jesus. In addition, we believe there's no such thing as a "Lone Ranger" Christian. Christians are supposed to belong to a local church family.

So, our policy is to only baptise or dedicate the children of parent/s who are formal members of our church family, or who are prepared to become formal members.

A big part of becoming a formal member is belonging to our church family. Indeed, before a child is baptised or dedicated, our church family makes a promise to support the parent/s. *It takes time to develop this relationship to the point where both parties can make promises to each other in good faith.* It's important to keep in mind that because baptism is merely a symbol, any delay in baptising a child due to taking time to develop this relationship won't disadvantage the child.

### **Serious promises**

These are the serious promises someone makes to become a formal member, or "gospel partner", of our church family:

1. Have you, in the power of God's Spirit, turned from idols to serve the living and true God, waiting for his Son to return, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come?
2. Do you promise, relying on God's grace, and the power of his Spirit, to serve the Lord Jesus and to walk in his ways all the days of your life?
3. Do you commit to regularly gathering together with our church family, giving generously of your energy, time and finances as you partner with us in the work of advancing the gospel to the glory of God?
4. Do you promise to give our minister and eldership all due respect and encouragement, to follow their leadership of our church, and to do all that you can to promote and maintain unity within our church family?

In addition, parent/s who are formal members and who are bringing their child to be baptised or dedicated make these serious promises:

1. Is Jesus Christ your Lord and Saviour?
2. Do you trust him with your whole life?
3. In God's strength, and in partnership with your church family, will you endeavour to do all you can to bring N up to know and love and serve the Lord Jesus?

The church family makes this promise:

Do you, the members of this church family, promise to love this family and encourage them, helping them to live their lives for the Lord Jesus?

It may be that the parent/s become formal members and their child is baptised or dedicated all at once in the same ceremony.

Also it should be noted that if only one parent of the child is a Christian, only he or she is asked to make these promises. The other parent is welcome to join them up the front to support them.