

**Baptism and dedication
preparation videos**

Notes for leaders

Introduction

It's wonderful when families bring babies and toddlers along to our churches for infant baptism, dedication or a thanksgiving service. We know that some of them will not be familiar with a church environment and may still be in the early stages of exploring faith for themselves. [We can come alongside them, support them and journey with them.](#)

We have created some free simple videos that you can either watch with the parents or send to them to watch themselves. The videos have ideas to help parents take some first steps in introducing their little ones to faith, using concepts they are already familiar with.

What do the videos cover?

The three videos are based around the ideas of [Words](#), [Music](#) and [Community](#).

These notes give a brief summary of what each video covers and some suggestions for questions to discuss or ideas to explore.

What don't they cover?

The videos do not cover either the meaning or significance of baptism, dedication or thanksgiving or the practicalities of what will happen in the service. As churches vary so widely in their theology and the way that they do this, we'd really encourage you to explain this in the most appropriate way for your context and the people you are chatting to. If you'd like some support in this, take a look at the [Church Support Hub on baptisms](#) or [We Welcome You](#), which is a guide to what happens at Church of England baptisms. If you want to use this as an opportunity to think through more generally how to help families of babies and toddlers feel comfortable, relaxed and know what to expect, we have some pointers on this [here](#).

How could I use them?

Feel free to use the videos in any way that is helpful to you. If you have a number of families, you could do three sessions and include some social time for the families to get to know each other and meet other people from your church. You could use them as part of a visit and chat as you introduce yourself and make arrangements for the service. If physical visits aren't possible, the videos can also be emailed to the families to watch in advance and followed up with a phone call or you could screen-share them as part of a video call. The videos are short enough that you can watch all three in one visit or call.

How can I introduce them to the parents or godparents?

You could do this in person or in an email or card. On the [baptism and dedication page](#), we've written a welcome to parents and to godparents that you are welcome to use and adapt.

What about keen Christians who are familiar with church and Christian language?

We have [three additional videos](#) that go into more depth for parents who are familiar with church and have an active faith themselves.

BRF's Parenting for Faith team

Parenting for Faith is part of The Bible Reading Fellowship. The Bible Reading Fellowship is passionate about making a difference through the Christian faith. We want to see lives and communities transformed through our creative programmes and resources for individuals, churches and schools. Find out more at brf.org.uk.

1 Words

Key ideas

- God is always there for us and for our child, and he wants to have a relationship with us.
- He has given us words as a powerful tool that we use all the time to share how we're feeling, to communicate what we need and to build and maintain relationships.
- He lets us choose how involved we want him to be in our lives. As we chat to him, we are inviting him to come and be part of what we're thinking, feeling and experiencing. Prayer is just talking to God, and there's no set way to do it or words you have to use.
- God is there for you and for your child too. When you chat to God about your child, it's more than just thinking good thoughts or wishing good things for them. You're asking God to help and change a situation, be happy and celebrate with you, comfort you or give advice. He promises to hear and to understand, wherever and whenever you speak to him.
- Communication with God isn't just one way. The Bible gives lots of examples of him communicating to people through feelings, thoughts, pictures and ideas in their minds and dreams.

Things to try

- When something pops up in your head, chat to God about it. If you're not sure what to chat about, we've made a list of ideas to get you started.
- Try praying out loud when you're with your child, so they can hear what you're doing.
- Chat to God about the things that matter to you as you go about your day. It can be absolutely anything – big or small. When you're walking along with a buggy or sling, sat on the bus or in the car are great times to do this.
- When you're chatting to God, leave some space to see if you become aware of him communicating back to you as well. Just pause and see if he pops an idea, a picture, a thought, a word or a feeling into your mind or body, which might answer a question you've asked him or be his response to what you've shared with him. It's okay if you're not sure if it's him at first. You might want to ask a follow-on question, like, 'Is that feeling of peace from you?'
- Some people find it helpful to use words that other people have written to express themselves to God. Feel free to join in with prayers that are said or read at church or church groups or find one you like to use at home.

Questions to think about or discuss

- Have you ever tried praying? What did or didn't you like about it? When or where did you pray? Did you feel like God communicated back?
- Do you think you might try any of those ideas? Which stood out to you?

Next steps

- We have two other short videos, called 'Connection and communication' and 'Chatting to God for you and your little one', which will help you to explore this more.
- You can also search on parentingforfaith.org for anything you'd like to know more about. You'll find a whole section of videos and ideas for babies and toddlers on there.

2 Music

Key ideas

- The Bible has loads of examples of people using music to express to God how they are feeling and share what they believe to be true about him.
- Music helps us to relate to each other, express what we're feeling, make memories and shift our moods. It can help both us and our children to connect to God too.
- Giving our children music that is positive and talks about God enables them to become comfortable and familiar with Bible stories and ideas of faith. It also helps them to feel part of a group when lots of people are singing the same song together.

Things to try

- Take your child to church or to a church toddler group with a singing time. Engage however you want. Join in with the words if you know them, either singing them out or whispering them to your baby as you smile and make eye contact with them. Tell them which words stood out to you.
- Music isn't just for church and church groups – take some of those songs and start introducing them at home. You could sing or play a song as a wind down to naptime or bedtime. Or stick some music on while you're taking them to childcare, playing with them or doing housework.
- Try out different styles and types of music to find what you and your baby like best. We have a couple of playlists with a range of different styles for you to try – [a calm one](#) and [an upbeat one](#). They won't all be to your taste, so why not make your own playlist as you discover what you like.
- Some different types of songs and music that you might like to explore include:
 - songs that put the words of the Bible to music
 - simple, repetitive songs like nursery rhymes
 - music without words
 - songs that share about who God is and what he does
 - songs that share how we feel about God
- Music is amazing at changing the atmosphere. If you're having a tough day, stick some music on.

Questions to think about or discuss

- What sort of music do you like and why? What sort of music does your baby like? Have you tried playing them what you like?
- Does music help you feel connected to God?
- Which of the different types of songs and music mentioned do you feel most drawn to?

Next steps

- If this is something that you'd like to explore more. You could ask the church you're going to if they have a list, playlist or songbook that they use, so that you can introduce your little one to the songs from church at home.
- The '[Keeping it real](#)' video shares some other ways to help you and your baby connect with God at home.

3 Community

Key ideas

- Parenting can be really hard, and we were never meant to do it alone. We all need other people to help and support us. You may already have many of those people, including grandparents and godparents you've invited to be a part of your child's life, but there's also a wider community ready and willing to support you and your family.
- Church is a group of people who are trying to follow God and be there for each other. It's a place to belong, which is important for us as well as our children.
- It's also a place to:
 - be loved and to love others
 - to be seen just as you are, without needing to pretend
 - to be needed, using what you are good at to help others
 - a place to meet with God at your own pace
 - to meet with imperfect people of all ages who are also doing that
 - a place to ask questions, be prayed for and receive help.
- As you become part of a church community, your child will get to see what a relationship with God looks like for different people and what it looks like when some of those people get together. Even from their earliest days, babies will watch and observe what's happening around them and sense what the atmosphere is like.
- **What to expect** – the video goes through arrival, the service, music, prayers, talk/sermon, Bible reading, communion and coffee time, and it shares what to expect for each of these things and how you can join in with a baby or toddler.

Things to try

- Going to church!

Questions to think about or discuss

- Have you tried taking your baby to church? Which parts did you like? Was there anything you weren't sure about.
- Is there anything that puts you off or that you have questions about?

Next steps

- If you're nervous about trying church, you could ring or email in advance and ask if there is someone who could meet you, sit with you and talk you through what's happening. Or if you already know someone who goes to church, why not ask if you can join them?
- Check out the [Babies and toddlers section of our website](#) or watch the [Parenting for Faith course](#), on your own, with a partner or friend or with a group from church.
- Subscribe to the weekly [Parenting for Faith podcast](#) to get different ideas, hear different perspectives and hear answers to questions that people just like you have sent in.

What next?

If you find these videos helpful and the family are interested in exploring more, you could direct them to:

- **Bite-size babies and toddlers videos** – These five videos are also designed to be accessible to people who are new to or just exploring faith. There are also suggested session outlines if you'd like to run a little group.
- **The Parenting for Faith course** – The videos that make up this course are more in-depth and cover all age groups, but they can be watched at any time. You could encourage parents to watch on their own, with a partner or friend or with a small group from church. There is a handbook which gives ideas for reflection and discussion.
- **Babies and Toddlers: Nurturing your child's spiritual life by Rachel Turner** – This book explores the themes in these videos a little more, but it is still easy to read. You can get a discount by ordering multipacks if you would like to give these to the family as a gift.

Keep in touch

There are several ways you can keep in touch with Parenting for Faith:

- **Join our email newsletter** to stay up to date at parentingforfaith.org/email
- **Follow us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram**
- **Subscribe to our podcasts** at parentingforfaith.org/podcast