

Pastoral Notes

The birth or adoption of a child is a cause for celebration. Many people are overcome by a sense of awe at the creation of new life and want to express their thanks to God. This service provides an opportunity for parents and families to give thanks for the birth or adoption of a child and to pray for family life. It may be a private celebration at home or in hospital, or it may be a public celebration in church, sometimes with a number of children.

This service is not the same as Baptism (sometimes called Christening), which is the sacrament of initiation into membership of the Church, the Body of Christ. If you are interested in exploring the Christian faith, or finding out more about preparation for Baptism, ask the minister taking this service.

This service is provided for a number of different occasions:

the private celebration of a birth or adoption,
at home or in church with only family
and close friends present;

the public celebration of the birth or adoption
of a number of children,
perhaps in church on a Sunday afternoon;

the public celebration of the birth or adoption of a number
of children as part of a main Sunday act of worship.

It is designed to meet the needs of:

parents who see this as a preliminary to Baptism;

parents who do not wish their children
to be baptized immediately;

others, who do not ask for Baptism,
but who recognize that something has happened
for which they wish to give thanks to God.

Thanksgiving for a Child

Private Celebration

The Greeting

The minister may say

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all

All **and also with you.**

From Easter Day to Pentecost this acclamation follows

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

All **He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

A hymn or song may be sung.

Introduction

The service may be introduced in these or similar words

We are here today to give thanks for *these children*, with *their* family and friends, and to support *their* parents in their responsibilities with prayer and love. God became one of us in Jesus, and understands all that surrounds the arrival and upbringing of children. It is God's purpose that children should know love within the stability of their home, grow in faith, and come at last to the eternal city where his love reigns supreme.

The following may be used

All The works of the Lord are great:
his mercy endures for ever.

All Mary gave birth to a child and called him Jesus:
he will save his people from their sins.

All He will be called the Prince of Peace:
his kingdom will last for ever.

The minister says

Loving God,
you hold all things in life
and call us into your kingdom of peace;
help us to walk the path of your truth
and fill our lives with gratitude and faith,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Reading(s) and Sermon

A suitable passage from the Bible is read (see page 23)

A sermon may be preached.

A hymn may be sung.

10 When a child is adopted
O God of love,
you have made us your children by adoption and grace;
as *N* becomes a member of this family
bind them together by your grace,
and give them wisdom, joy and faith,
that together they may grow into your love
and serve your purposes of peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

11 For the birth parents of an adopted child
Heavenly Father, rich in goodness and mercy,
look with your love on *N*'s natural father and mother.
Keep them in your good care
and grant them peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

12 When a child has special needs
Living God, creator of us all,
we thank you for entrusting *N*
into the special care of *N* and *N*.
Give them and all who surround them
wisdom and understanding, courage and patience;
give them grace to put aside fear and anxiety
and to fulfill your purposes;
fill their hearts with your unfailing love,
that *N* may grow up secure in giving and receiving love
and in the enjoyment of your presence,
to enrich our lives and the lives of others
in ways beyond our imagining,
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

7 For brothers and sisters
Living God,
we pray for *N's brothers and sisters*
and for all whose lives will be changed by *his/her* arrival;
grant them friendship and love
that their home may be an image of your kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

8 After a difficult birth
Loving Father,
you have turned pain into joy
by the birth of *N [this child]*.
May *N [this mother]*,
remembering no longer her anguish,
trust you in all things.
As she asks for all she would receive,
may she discover that in you her joy is complete;
through Jesus your Son.

All **Amen.**

9 For health workers
Father almighty, we give you thanks
for all concerned with the care of *N [this mother]*
and the safe birth of *N [her child]*.
We pray for the doctors and nurses,
midwives and health visitors,
and all who will support the health and welfare of this family
in the coming years.
May they be filled with your love,
moved by your compassion
and supported by your presence.
We ask this in Jesus' name.

All **Amen.**

Thanksgiving and Blessing

Where parents wish to recognize the role of supporting friends it may be appropriate for them to stand with the parents at the thanksgiving. One of them may present the children to the minister, and informal words may be said.

The minister says

Do you receive *these children* as a gift from God?

We do.

Do you wish to give thanks to God and seek his blessing?

We do.

The minister says

God our creator,
we thank you for the wonder of new life
and for the mystery of human love.
We thank you for all whose support and skill
surround and sustain the beginning of life.
We thank you that we are known to you by name
and loved by you from all eternity.
We thank you for Jesus Christ,
who has opened to us the way of love.
We praise you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

The minister may say for each child

What name have you given this child?

A parent or supporting friend replies

His/her name is N.

The minister may take the child.

The minister says

As Jesus took children in his arms and blessed them,
so now we ask God's blessing on *N*.

Heavenly Father, we praise you for *his/her* birth;
surround *him/her* with your blessing
that *he/she* may know your love,
be protected from evil,
and know your goodness all *his/her* days.

When all the children have been prayed for

All **May they learn to love all that is true,
grow in wisdom and strength
and, in due time, come through faith and baptism
to the fullness of your grace;
through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.**

The minister prays for the parents

May God the Father of all bless *these parents*
and give *them* grace to love and care for *their children*.
May God give *them* wisdom, patience and faith,
help *them* to provide for the *children's* needs
and, by *their* example,
reveal the love and truth that are in Jesus Christ.

All **Amen.**

4 God our Father, we pray to you
for all who have the care of *this child*.
Guide them with your Holy Spirit,
that they may bring *him/her* up
in the ways of truth and love.
Through their care enable *him/her* to grow in grace
and become daily more like your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ

All **Amen.**

5 For the father
Heavenly Father,
you entrusted your Son Jesus,
the child of Mary,
to the care of Joseph, an earthly father.
Bless *N [this man]*
as he cares for his family.
Give him strength and wisdom,
tenderness and patience;
support him in the work he has to do,
protecting those who look to him,
as we look to you for love and salvation,
through Jesus Christ our rock and defender

All **Amen.**

6 For grandparents and other relatives
Father God, from whom every family
in earth and heaven is named,
we thank you for the rich variety
of the families you have created for us,
and for the relationships
which we see and enjoy within them.
Help us to respect and learn from each other,
that we may come to maturity
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Additional Prayers

1 For the child/children

God our Father,
we pray for *this child*
that in due time
he/she may be received by baptism
into the family of your Church,
and become *an inheritor* of your kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

For the home and family

2 Heavenly Father,
whose blessed Son shared at Nazareth
the life of an earthly home:
bless the home of *this child*,
and help all the family to live together in your love.
Teach them to serve you and each other,
and make them always ready to show your love
to those in need;
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

3 Father in heaven, bless these parents,
that they may cherish their *child*;
make them wise and understanding,
to help *him/her* as *he/she* grows,
and surround this family
with the light of your truth
and the warmth of your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord

All **Amen.**

Giving of the Gospel

A copy of a Gospel is presented, with these words

Receive this book.
It is the good news of God's love.
Take it as your guide.

The minister may address the supporting friends and say

Will you do all that you can to help and support
N and N in the bringing up of *N*?
With the help of God, we will.

The minister may address the wider family and friends and say

Will you do all that you can to help and support *this family*?
With the help of God, we will.

Prayers

*This prayer may be said by the parents
or by the whole congregation*

**God our creator,
we thank you for the gift of *these children*,
entrusted to our care.
May we be patient and understanding,
ready to guide and to forgive,
so that through our love
they may come to know your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

*The minister may say additional prayers (page 24),
ending with the Lord's Prayer.*

The Lord's Prayer

Jesus taught us to call God our Father,
and so we have the courage to say

All **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

Ending

The minister says this or another suitable blessing

The love of the Lord Jesus
draw *you* to himself,
the power of the Lord Jesus
strengthen *you* in his service,
the joy of the Lord Jesus fill *your* hearts;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among *you* and remain with *you* always.

All **Amen.**

Supplementary Texts

Suitable Bible Readings

If the readings for the day are not used.

Exodus 20.12
Isaiah 9.2,6-7
Psalm 20
Psalm 128
Psalm 139.7-18
Matthew 1.18-25
Matthew 7.24-27
Matthew 18.1-5
Matthew 18.10-14
Mark 10.13-16
Luke 1.39-45
Luke 2.22-24
Luke 2.33-40
John 1.9-14
Ephesians 3.14-21
Ephesians 6.1-4
1 John 2.12-14

Prayer after Communion

*The President says a Post Communion prayer,
and all may say this prayer*

**We thank you, Lord,
that you have fed us in this sacrament,
united us with Christ,
and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet
prepared for all peoples.
Amen.**

The Blessing

The president may use this or another suitable blessing.

The love of the Lord Jesus
draw *you* to himself,
the power of the Lord Jesus
strengthen *you* in his service,
the joy of the Lord Jesus fill *your* hearts;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among *you* and remain with *you* always.
Amen.

All

The Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

All

or, from Easter Day to Pentecost

Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia.

All

Thanksgiving for a Child

Public Celebration

Preparation

At the entry of the ministers a hymn may be sung.

The Greeting

The president says

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all
and also with you.

All

From Easter Day to Pentecost this acclamation follows

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

All

He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Introduction

A minister may use these or similar words.

We are here today to give thanks for these children, with their family and friends, and to support their parents in their responsibilities with prayer and love. God became one of us in Jesus, and understands all that surrounds the arrival and upbringing of children. It is God's purpose that children should know love within the stability of their home, grow in faith, and come at last to the eternal city where his love reigns supreme.

The Prayers of Penitence

A minister says this or some other invitation to confession

As children of a loving heavenly Father,
let us ask his forgiveness,
for he is gentle and full of compassion.

After a short silence a minister continues:

Lord, in our weakness you are our strength.
Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

Lord, when we stumble, you raise us up.
Christ, have mercy.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord, when we fail, you give us new life.
Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

The president says this or some other absolution.

May the God of love
bring *us* back to himself,
forgive *us our* sins,
and assure *us* of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Giving of Communion

The president says one of these invitations to communion

Draw near with faith.
Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.
Eat and drink
in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

(or)

God's holy gifts
for God's holy people.

All **Jesus Christ is holy,
Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.**

or, from Easter Day to Pentecost

Alleluia. Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.

All **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

*The president and people receive the Holy Communion.
Baptized persons who are communicant members of other
Churches which subscribe to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity,
and are in good standing in their own Church
may receive the Holy Communion.*

*Any person may come to the altar for a blessing.
Holding a book is a useful signal to the ministers*

During the distribution hymns and anthems may be sung.

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray with confidence
as our Saviour has taught us.

All **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread
to share in the body of Christ.

All **Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

The Gloria in excelsis

*The Gloria in excelsis may be used, or a Hymn may be sung
or else Choruses and Scriptural Songs of Praise may be used.*

All **Glory to God in the highest
and peace to his people on earth
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

The Collect

*The president introduces a period of silent prayer with
the words 'Let us pray' or a more specific bidding.
Either the Collect of the Day, or this Collect is said.*

Loving God,
you hold all things in life
and call us into your kingdom of peace;
help us to walk the path of your truth
and fill our lives with gratitude and faith,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Liturgy of the Word

Readings

*Either one or two readings from Scripture
may precede the Gospel reading.*

At the end of each the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

*The psalm or canticle follows the first reading;
other hymns and songs may be used between the readings.*

Gospel Reading

An acclamation of this form may herald the gospel

Alleluia Alleluia

[Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.
You have the words of eternal life.]

All **Alleluia.**

When the Gospel is announced the reader says

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to *N*.

All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

At the end

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice
made once for all upon the cross.
Bringing before you the bread of life
and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All

Christ has died:

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.
Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with [*N and*] all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.
Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All

Amen.

Eucharistic Prayer E

The Lord be with you
All **and also with you.**
Lift up your hearts.
All **We lift them to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

Father, you made the world and love your creation.
You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour.
His dying and rising have set us free
from sin and death.
And so we gladly thank you,
with saints and angels praising you, and *saying*:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command, send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died
he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

The Liturgy of Thanksgiving for a Child

Thanksgiving and Blessing

*Where parents wish to recognize the role of supporting friends
it may be appropriate for them to stand with the parents
at the thanksgiving.*

*One of them may present the children to the minister,
and informal words may be said.*

The minister says

Do you receive *these children* as a gift from God?
We do.

Do you wish to give thanks to God and seek his blessing?
We do.

The minister says

God our creator,
we thank you for the wonder of new life
and for the mystery of human love.
We thank you for all whose support and skill
surround and sustain the beginning of life.
We thank you that we are known to you by name
and loved by you from all eternity.
We thank you for Jesus Christ,
who has opened to us the way of love.
We praise you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

The minister may say for each child

What name have you given this child?

A parent or supporting friend replies

His/her name is N.

The minister says (after taking the child)

As Jesus took children in his arms and blessed them,
so now we ask God's blessing on *N*.

Heavenly Father, we praise you for *his/her* birth;
surround *him/her* with your blessing
that *he/she* may know your love,
be protected from evil,
and know your goodness all *his/her* days.

When all the children have been prayed for

All **May they learn to love all that is true,
grow in wisdom and strength
and, in due time, come through faith and baptism
to the fullness of your grace;
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

The minister prays for the parents

May God the Father of all bless *these parents*
and give *them* grace to love and care for *their children*.
May God give *them* wisdom, patience and faith,
help *them* to provide for the *children's* needs
and, by *their* example,
reveal the love and truth that are in Jesus Christ.

All **Amen.**

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

*The president introduces the Peace
in these or other suitable words*

[We are all one in Christ Jesus.
We belong to him through faith,
heirs of the promise of the Spirit of peace.]

All The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you.

A minister may say

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

All may exchange a sign of peace.

A Hymn may be sung and a collection taken.

Taking of the Bread and Wine

*The gifts of the people may be gathered and presented.
The table is prepared and bread and wine are placed upon it.
The president takes the bread and wine.*

The President may use this or other table prayers.

Wise and gracious God,
you spread a table before us;
nourish your people with the word of life
and the bread of heaven.

All **Amen.**

The service ends with one of the following.

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Let us bless the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

The Lord bless us,
and preserve us from all evil,
and keep us in eternal life.

All **Amen.**

Or a Priest may use this or some other blessing.

The Lord bless you and watch over you,
the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you,
the Lord look kindly on you
and give you peace;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All **Amen.**

Here ends a service with no Holy Communion.

Giving of the Gospel

A copy of a Gospel is presented, with these words

Receive this book.
It is the good news of God's love.
Take it as your guide.

The minister may address the supporting friends and say

Will you do all that you can to help and support
N and N in the bringing up of *N*?
With the help of God, we will.

The minister may address the wider family and friends and say

Will you do all that you can to help and support *this family*?
With the help of God, we will.

*This prayer may be said by the parents
or by the whole congregation*

**God our creator,
we thank you for the gift of *these children*,
entrusted to our care.
May we be patient and understanding,
ready to guide and to forgive,
so that through our love
they may come to know your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

*The conclusion of the service is on the next page,
but if the Holy Communion is to follow go to page 17.*

The Conclusion

*A Hymn may be sung, and a collection may be taken.
This reponsory may be used.*

All Make your ways known upon the earth, O Lord:
your saving power among all peoples.

All Renew your Church in holiness:
and help us serve you with joy.

All Guide the leaders of this and every nation:
that justice may prevail throughout the world.

All Let not the needy be forgotten:
nor the hope of the poor taken away.

All Make us instruments of your peace:
and let your glory be over all the earth.

*Or brief prayers of intercession may be offered.
The intercession may begin*

In the power of the Spirit, and in union with Christ,
let us pray to the Father.

These words may be used.

All Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

(or)

All Lord hear us
Lord, graciously hear us.

The Lord's Prayer

Gathering our prayers and praises into one,
let us pray with confidence
as our Saviour has taught us

All **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

Final Collect

This prayer may be said by all

**Almighty God,
we thank you for the gift of your holy word.
May it be a lantern to our feet,
a light to our paths,
and a strength to our lives.
Take us and use us
to love and serve
in the power of the Holy Spirit
and in the name of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**