

Introduction

Welcome to each one of you. My name is Melissa Taylor, and we're here today to participate in this Baptism Ceremony, and to give thanks and celebrate our joy in the arrival of a precious child.

Sandy and Matt want to share their joy with you and they look forward to your continuing involvement with their child's life in the years ahead. They are also aware of the great responsibility that is now theirs. A great deal of their lives will be involved in caring for their child, and guiding him through the many paths of life.

As the years go by, their role as parents will be assisted and enhanced by each one of you here today, as well as by the friends and family that are unable to be here.

The Christening of a child is an important rite of passage to those that recognise the role that God plays in our lives.

The Bible tells us that it is God's will that children be brought to him for blessing. We are reminded of a story in the book of Matthew, chapter 19, where little children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. Jesus' disciples felt perhaps that the children were not important enough to warrant Christ's time and energy, and they turned them away.

However, Jesus said:

"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these".

Then he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on each of them, and blessed them... Let us pray.

Dear Lord, as we gather here, may your Holy Spirit surround us and rejuvenate us. We pray that out of your glorious riches, you may strengthen this child with your Spirit, so that Christ may dwell in his heart through faith. And we pray that this child, being rooted and established in love, may know the love of God that surpasses all knowledge, so that he may be filled to the measure with the fullness of God. Amen.

Sandy and Matt, you are presenting your Child for Baptism. Historically Baptism asks several simple questions: First, as parents are you people of Faith?

(Answer) Yes we are

Will you do your best to provide a home where faith and spirituality are part of the nurturing of this child?

(Answer) Yes, we will.

Do you acknowledge this day that God's love is already at work inside this Child?

(Answer) Yes, we do.

Question for Witnesses

Do you the witnesses give your love and support to this family wishing them all blessings this day? (we will)

Prayer

God our creator, we thank you for the gift of this child, entrusted to our care. May we be patient and understanding, ready to guide and to forgive, so that through our love he may come to know your love; through Christ our Lord.

Father, we ask that you pour your blessings into this water, and sanctify it for our use today. In Christ's name. Amen.

(Melissa will take Natalie from Sandy and Matt),

What name have you given your child? (Parents answer)

The Baptism

(The minister makes the sign on the cross on Child's forehead with the blessed water from the 'font'.) **And, by the authority vested in me by God and his Church, I hereby baptize you in the name of the Father** (cross), **and of the Son** (cross), **and of the Holy Spirit** (cross), **Amen.**

As Jesus took children in his arms and blessed them, so now we ask God's blessing on this Child. *(Natalie returned to Sandy and Matt)*

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we praise you for Natalie's birth - surround her with your blessings that she may know your love, be protected from evil, and know your goodness all her days. May she learn to love all that is true, grow in wisdom and strength and, come through faith to the fullness of your Grace.

May God the Father of all bless Sandy and Matt and give them grace to love and care for their Natalie. May God give them wisdom, patience and faith, and help them to provide for this beloved child's needs.

Eternal Father, 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. We thank you too for love that binds the families that are here today, and ask your blessing on them.

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son shared at Nazareth the life of an earthly home, bless the home of this child, may it provide shelter, warmth and security to the family and to all those who visit.

All this we ask in Jesus's name, Amen.

Closing

Natalie, today we officially welcome you. We wish you a long life and much happiness. May you face all challenges that come to you as a person of integrity,

May you continue to bring great joy to your parents, your grandparents, family, friends, and to all those who come to know you.

May beauty delight you and happiness uplift you,

May wonder fulfill you and love surround you.

May your step be steady and your arm be strong,

May your heart be peaceful and your word be true.

May you seek to learn, may you learn to live.

May you live to love, and may you love - always.

Benediction

The Lord bless you and watch over you, the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious unto you, the Lord look kindly on you and give you peace. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you always.

And now, to Him who is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before Him; to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Presentation of Baptism certificate and Introduction