

Dalsersf Parish Church  
INFANT BAPTISM PARENTS' RESPONSE FORM

It was the case until recently that according to the law of the Church of Scotland baptism could only be given to a child if at least one of its parents is a church member. I was always prepared to make allowance where this was not strictly the case (e.g. where at least one parent although not yet a church member was at least a regular attendee at Sunday worship). The law of the church has now changed so that the emphasis is not so much on the parents being members of the church as on the baptised child being given a Christian upbringing. The result of this is that where parents are not prepared to be regularly involved in the life and worship of the church the vows can be taken by another family member who is and who is willing to undertake the Christian upbringing of the child.

Like marriage the relevance of baptism depends on promises (vows) made. In the case of infant baptism the promises are made in respect of the child by the parent(s) or other family member(s).

The vows of baptism are:-

(i) Do you present this child to be baptised earnestly desiring that he/she may be grafted into Christ as a member of his body the Church?

*(In plain English this just asks if you are sincere in your desire that your child should embrace the Christian faith and all that implies in terms of being part of the Church)*

(ii) Do you believe in one God, Father Son and Holy Spirit and do you confess Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord?

(iii) Do you promise depending on the grace of God to teach this child the truths and duties of the Christian Faith and by prayer and example to bring him/her up in the life and worship of the church?

Whether or not parents should have their children baptised depends therefore on their (or a family members) willingness and ability to make these promises. I would much rather that parents themselves took the final decision about the baptism of their child rather than me, the minister. For this reason you are asked to consider a few questions relating to the vows in order to guide you in making a decision.

Please give your response to the following questions as clearly as you can. *(The space provided for your answer does not necessarily indicate the length of answer required. One short sentence may be enough.)*

(1) Why do you feel you should have your child baptised?

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(2) What do you understand by the expression "confess Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord"?

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(3) In what way would you hope to teach your child the truths and duties of the Christian Faith?

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(4) In accordance with the requirements of the third vow are you able to set an example to your child of involvement in the life and worship of the church? If “yes” describe.

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You will have a good idea yourself in your answering of these questions just how ready you are to take the vows of baptism. If you are having difficulty giving positive answers to the above questions please do not be discouraged but read on.

YOUR RESPONSE

Name.....  
Address.....  
Tel. No. ....

Please choose one of the following three responses. *Tick box where appropriate*

- (a) I/we do not feel it would be appropriate to have my/our child baptised at present
- (b) I/we do not feel ready *at the present time* to take the vows of baptism for my/our child but would like help to develop my/our faith and involvement in the life and worship of the church.
- (c) I/we am/are unable myself/ourselves to take the vows of baptism but there is a family member who could.
- (d) I/we are ready to take the vows of baptism as reflected in my/our answers to the questions.

In the case of responses (b), (c) or (d) (optional *in the case of response (a)*) please send your completed form to Rev. Dr. D. Cameron McPherson, Dalserf Manse, Manse Brae, Dalserf , Larkhall ML9 3BN

In cases (a) and (b) the minister may be able to offer a private or public service of blessing and thanksgiving not requiring the same promises as baptism. This would serve to offer thanks to God for the life of the child and pray for God’s blessing upon him/her and on you the parents.

If interested in this option please contact the minister in writing or by telephone on 01698 882195 in order to discuss.