

Thanksgiving for the birth of a child

Introduction

O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures for ever.

Psalm 106:1

We come together as part of the family of God. We welcome especially ... A ... and ... B ... , who have come to give thanks to God for the birth of their child ... N ... , to seek God's blessing upon *their child (children)*, and to dedicate themselves [again] to the responsibilities of parenthood. We share in their thanksgiving. We acknowledge the claim of *this child/these children* upon the prayers and support of this church both now and in the years ahead. We welcome *them* ... duty of parents and the Church together to show the love of God in their lives, so that in due time this child may come to confess *their* ... Christ, and be baptised.

The Word

One or both of the following readings are read.

We read in the Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures):

Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise.

Deuteronomy 6:4-7

We read in the New Testament:

... he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.' And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them

Mark 10:13-16

Thanksgiving, dedication and blessing

All stand. The Minister asks the parents:

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We do.

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We do.

Do you promise so to order your lives that ... N ... will be surrounded by love

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We do.

Where parents are not members the following question may be omitted:

Do you promise, by God's help, to provide a Christian home for ... N ... and to bring *them* [Á ä } Á c @ ^ Á - æ ä c @ Á [- Á c @ ^ Á Ö [•] ^ | Á æ } á Á c @ ^ Á - ^ | [, • @ ä] Á [- Á c @ ^ Á Ö @ ~ ! & @ Ñ

We do.

If there are older children in the family the Minister may include a suitable promise for them to make.

May God bless you and give you grace faithfully to carry out these promises; and may God grant you joy and patience, love and peace.

To the congregation:

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or the blessing of Aaron:

May God bless and protect you,
May God smile on you and be kind to you,
May God look on you with love and bring you peace.

or

God is the One who'll bless and keep you;
yours is the radiance from God's face.
God is the One who calls and meets you;
yours is the promise of God's grace.

God is the One whose favour holds you;
yours is the gift of love to claim.
God is the One whose peace enfolds you;
yours is the bearing of God's name.

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Suggested tune: Spiritus Vitae ('O Breath of life, come sweeping through us')

or as at Rejoice and Sing 420

The Minister or Elder may present a Bible to the parents.

Prayers

God our creator, we thank you for the gift of ... N

We thank you for the love that prepared for *their* coming and welcomed *them* into the world,

and we rejoice with ... A ... and ... B ... in their hopes for the future.

Be with them in their home; guide them in the upbringing of their child and deepen their knowledge and love of Christ.

Give us grace so to live that they, their family, and every kind of family,

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a source of strength and love.

God of love, we commend ... N ... to your care.

Give *them* health of body and mind,

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and in due time draw *them* to come to you in baptism,

to make *their* own profession of faith in you,

and to commit *their* life to Christ.

May *they* grow in kindness, goodness and service to others,

and learn to walk in the ways of peace, courage and love;

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All **Amen.**