

Name: _____ Date: _____

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Can you complete this Venn diagram to show what is different and what is the same about Anglican and Baptist baptism ceremonies. Include as much information as you can.

Anglican Baptism

Baptist Baptism

Name: _____ Date: _____

My Interview with John the Baptist

Question 1:

Response:

Question 2:

Response:

Question 3:

Response:

Question 4:

Response:

Question 5:

Response:

Question 6:

Response:

Christian Baptism

There are lots of different traditions and customs surrounding baptism. Some churches baptise babies when they are very young to welcome them into the church family. Other churches wait until a person is old enough to make the decision to be baptised for themselves.

Christenings

The baptism of babies is often called a **christening** ceremony. At a christening, babies traditionally wear a christening gown. This is usually white to symbolise purity.

A **font** is filled with water which is blessed by a priest or minister. The baby is then held over the font while the priest sprinkles water on the baby's head. Sometimes, the priest will make the sign of the cross on the head.

Sometimes, a **candle** is lit and given to the parents. The candle symbolises the light of Jesus.

As well as the parents, the christening ceremony usually involves **godparents**. These are adults who are chosen by the parents to help make sure that the child is brought up to understand God and remain a Christian.



A traditional Christening gown



A baptismal font

Adult Baptism

Some churches do not baptise people until they are old enough to make the decision to become a Christian for themselves. Once someone has decided to become baptised, they have a total **immersion** baptism which means they are completely submerged in water.

Some churches have a baptismal **pool** within the church. Others have a temporary pool which they can put up and take down when needed.

The person being baptised is asked questions by a church leader to see if they are ready to become a true follower of Jesus. Once they have declared that they are ready to be a Christian, they are immersed in the water. When they arise out of the water, it is symbolising arising to a **new life** in Christ.



An Immersion baptism

Baptisms are always a cause for celebration as they represent leaving sin behind and starting a new life with God. The person being christened or baptised is usually given a **certificate** to commemorate the occasion. Traditionally, gifts of **silver** are also given. Christians will usually celebrate a baptism with a **party** after the ceremony.

Two different Christians were interviewed about their beliefs on baptism.
Here are their responses.
How are they different? How are they the same?

What denomination of Christianity do you belong to?

I am an Anglican. This means my church is part of the Church of England.

What do Anglicans believe about baptism?

People can be baptised at any age but we tend to baptise babies to welcome them into the church. We call this a christening. We christen babies to welcome them into the church family and so that the parents can declare publicly that they will bring up their child to believe in God.

What usually happens at a christening service?

A christening usually takes place during the normal Sunday morning service. During the service, the vicar will ask the parents, godparents and child to gather around the font. He asks the parents, godparents and congregation if they will promise to support the child as he or she grows. He then christens the baby by sprinkling water on his or her head three times. He says, "I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." After that, everyone prays and sings a song to celebrate the baptism.

Who are godparents and what do they do?

Before the service, the parents will choose someone to be the godmother and godfather of the baby. Godparents are responsible for making sure the child is brought up in the Christian faith.

What does the baby being christened wear?

Traditionally, the baby will wear a white christening gown. White represents purity. Today, not everyone wears white and parents can choose whatever outfit they like for the baby.

Why do you baptise babies and not adults?

We do baptise adults too but Anglicans like to welcome children into the church family.

What else happens at a christening?

Sometimes the parents will be given a candle during the ceremony. The candle represents the light of Jesus. They are also given a certificate to mark the occasion. After the service, the family will usually have a party to celebrate the start of the child's journey with God.

What denomination of Christianity do you belong to?

I am a Baptist.

What do Baptists believe about baptism?

Baptists believe that a person shouldn't be baptised until they are old enough to make the decision to follow Jesus for themselves. Baptists will never baptise a baby but children from around the age of ten can be baptised if they feel ready to commit their lives to God.

Can anyone be baptised?

Yes, anyone who is old enough to understand what they are committing to can be baptised. Before baptism, the person will usually take a series of classes to prepare them for their new life as a Christian.

What usually happens at a baptism service?

A baptism usually takes place during the normal Sunday morning service. Some churches have baptism pools that are built in but some will have temporary pools that they put up and fill with water. During the ceremony, the person being baptised will usually give their testimony. This means they explain how they came to believe in God and why they are now dedicating their lives to Him. After that, they will get into the pool with one or two church leaders. The leaders will ask the person to declare that they believe in God and once they have made their declaration, the leaders will immerse the person completely and pull them up again. Being immersed in the water represents the death of your old life and being cleansed from sin. When the person comes up out of the water, it represents being born again into a new life with Christ.

What does the person being baptised wear?

They can wear anything they feel comfortable in. They always bring a change of clothes so they can get into something dry after being immersed!

What else happens during a baptism service?

As well as the actual ceremony itself, there are prayers, songs and readings. The congregation makes a promise to support the person being baptised in their faith. The person is usually given a certificate to mark the occasion. They will usually have a party afterwards with family and friends to celebrate their baptism.

Write a brochure to explain what baptism is and why it is important to Christians.

You will need to include:

- * Where the tradition of baptism came from
- * What the ceremony represents for Christians
- * What happens at a baptism ceremony
- * How different churches celebrate baptism in different ways
- * What baptism means for those who are baptised

You can create the brochure in any format you like but you must include text and images.



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John the Baptist

During the rule of King Herod of Judea, there lived a priest called Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth. They had both wished for a child but had never had any children of their own. Now they were old and had lost hope of ever having a baby. Nonetheless, they were both righteous people and followed all of God's commandments.

One day, Zechariah was in the temple performing his duties when an angel of the Lord appeared to him. When Zechariah saw the angel, he was overcome with fear. "Don't be afraid," the angel said. "Your prayers have been heard and your wife will have a baby. She will give birth to a son and you will call him John. John will prepare the way of the Lord and will lead people back to God."

"How can this be?" asked Zechariah. "Elizabeth is too old to have children."

But the angel said, "I am a messenger of God and these things

will happen. However, as you did not believe you will remain silent, unable to speak until the day these things happen."

When Zechariah left the temple, he tried to tell the people outside what had happened but he was unable to speak. They realised that he must have had a vision in the temple. Just as the angel had said, Elizabeth had a baby boy. Everyone rejoiced with them for finally having a child. They wanted them to name the baby Zechariah, after his father, but Elizabeth refused. "I shall name him John," she said.

While Elizabeth was pregnant with John, a relative of hers called Mary was also visited by the angel. Mary was told that she would have a baby even though she was not yet married to Joseph. He would be a very special baby and his name would be Jesus. Jesus and John the Baptist were born about six months apart.

John grew up to be a man of strong character. Instead of serving in the temple like his father, he lived in the desert where he wore clothes of camel hair with a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey. His only wish was to help people get ready for what was going to happen. To everyone he met, he said, "Change your heart and your minds! Here comes the kingdom of heaven!" He wanted people to realise that Jesus was soon coming and that they should be ready. He encouraged people to turn away from doing bad things and turn back to God.

John started baptising people in the River Jordan. He baptised people who had turned away from their old ways and recognised that they had done wrong. Those who wanted to become right with God were washed clean by the baptism so they could start their lives again. Some of the Pharisees didn't like what John was doing. "Are you the Messiah?" they asked.

"I am not," replied John.

"Then why do you baptise people?"

John answered, "I baptise with water. There is one coming who is greater than me. I am not worthy to even untie his sandals."



When Jesus was ready to start his public mission, he went to John at the River Jordan. Lots of people were there listening to John talk. When Jesus reached the river, he asked John to baptise him. John didn't recognise Jesus. He baptised him as Jesus had asked and as he did so, he saw the Holy Spirit coming down from heaven like a dove and resting on Jesus.

When John saw this, he knew that this man was the Messiah he had been waiting for. Over the next few days, he told his followers who Jesus was. Some of the people who heard him started following Jesus. These men became the first disciples of Jesus.

