

# Becoming a Christian

## session handout

### What is a Christian?

- *Many people in our society believe themselves to be Christians but have only begun to understand the Christian faith.*
- *Being a Christian is not something vague and private but definite and public.*
- *No one is born as a Christian (although you may be born into a Christian family). No one becomes a Christian by accident either.*
- *You become a Christian by making a decision to say yes to God's gracious invitation to follow Jesus Christ.*
- *The sign of a person responding to God's call in this way and becoming part of the Church is the sign of baptism.*

### The Christian gospel

The Christian Church down the ages has summarized the Christian faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed.

At the heart of the gospel are these truths:

God made us and loves us.

We were made to know God but we have turned away from his love.

God sent his Son, Jesus, to draw the world back to him.

Jesus lived a life without sin.

He died on the cross. God raised him from the dead.

Through Jesus, God offers to everyone:

- *forgiveness of sins;*
- *a new relationship with God and with God's people;*
- *the gift of eternal life;*
- *the call to service and discipleship.*

God invites us to say yes – to respond to this gracious gift.

Our response is fourfold:

- *repentance;*
- *faith;*

- *receiving the promised gift of the Holy Spirit;*
- *becoming a full member of the Church.*

## Baptism

Jesus was baptized in water by John at the River Jordan.

Following Jesus' command, from earliest times, baptism has been the outward sign of a Christian's response to the call of God to follow Christ.

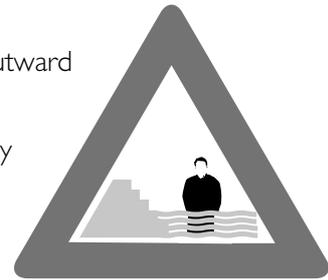
In the service of baptism the candidates publicly turn away from all they know to be wrong and turn to Christ.

The candidates declare their faith in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Baptism in water is a sign of a new beginning as the water symbolizes being made clean. Going down into the waters of baptism is also a symbol of dying with Christ and rising again.

The congregation prays for the candidates to be given the gift of the Holy Spirit and they are welcomed into membership of the Church.

In our baptism we are commissioned to live as Christian disciples and to share in God's mission to the world.



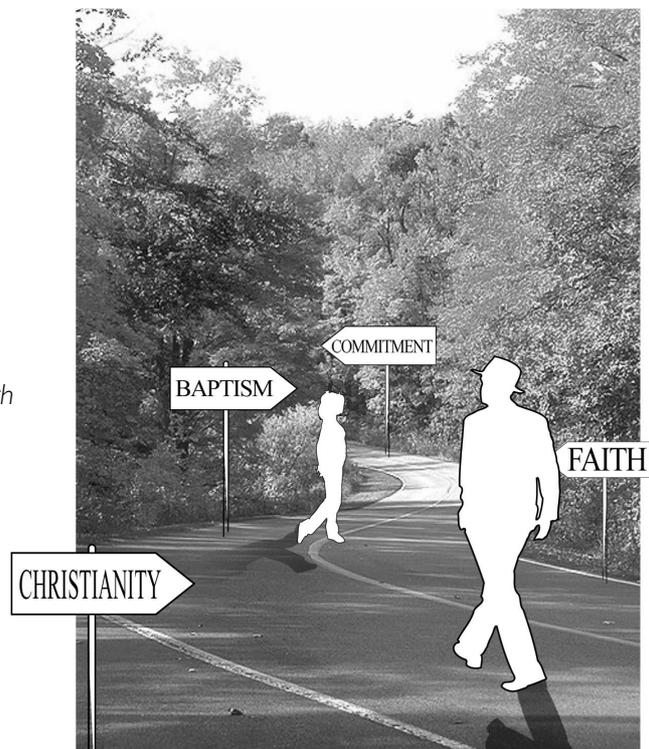
## How do I become a Christian?

Becoming a Christian is a journey that may take months, sometimes years.

Significant points in the journey are often marked by making an appropriate response through personal prayer; prayer with others or public worship.

Such moments of response might include:

- *baptism as a child or an adult;*
- *confirmation;*
- *making a personal commitment through prayer to follow Christ;*
- *prayer to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit;*
- *a public Affirmation of Baptismal Faith;*
- *prayer with others at a new period in your life and Christian service.*



## For reflection

Spend time this week thinking about what all this means for you and perhaps using some of the prayers on the sheet.

