Suggested order of service, July 2017

Words suitable for all
Words suitable where Christian faith is currently expressed
Words suitable where Christian faith is a future possibility
AB – names of child
C and D – names of parents

[The minister invites the parents and the child to come to the front of the church]

Words of scripture
Mark 10: 13-16

People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.
Words of welcome

Just as Jesus welcomed little children, took them in his arms and blessed them, we welcome A here among us this morning and seek God’s blessing. And as Mary and Joseph presented Jesus in the Temple, C and D come to give thanks for this new life with all its promise and hope.

We will celebrate the gift of life and the faithfulness of God as we gather to seek God’s blessing on A and to make promises as parents, family and church, making our promises before God for the sake of this child.

Together we celebrate the significance of community and the truth that parents and children need not be alone. Here we confess and proclaim that all our hope rests in Jesus Christ and we pray in trust that the Holy Spirit will call this child to follow him, call them to be baptised, and call them to enter into all the fullness of life as his disciple, walking the way of cross and resurrection. Scripture invites us to see in children a sign of the kingdom of God. A is a living sign that God welcomes us without condition, lavishing love and grace on all who come to him with empty hands and open hearts.

Together we celebrate the significance of community and the truth that parents and children need not be alone. God is our refuge and strength. He can sustain, bring peace and give wisdom for all of life’s demands. Scripture calls us to see in children a sign of the kingdom of God. A is a living sign that God welcomes us without condition, lavishing love and grace on all who come to him with empty hands and open hearts.

Words of Scripture
Deuteronomy 6: 4-7

Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Prayer of thanksgiving

[A prayer of praise and thanksgiving for God as creator of all life, and for the gift of this child’s life especially]

Promises

Leader: C and D, do you thank God for the gift of your child, and do you accept the joys and duties of parenthood?

C and D: We do.

Leader: Will you promise to bring your daughter/son up within the Christian community, and, by God’s grace, so live that s/he will be nurtured by Christian love and surrounded by the life of Jesus?

C and D: As disciples of Jesus, we will.
Leader: Will you promise to bring your daughter/son up aware of God and his love for them, living your lives as good examples at home, work and in your community?

C and D: With God’s help, we will.

[The minister asks any brothers or sisters of the child being presented]

Leader: Will you promise to love and help care for your sister/brother?

Sister/brother: Yes!

Naming

[The minister then addresses the parents]

What names have you chosen for your daughter/son?

[The parents state the names of the child. The minister receives the child from the parents.]

AB we greet you in the name of the Lord Jesus and welcome you into the community of God’s people.

[Addressing the congregation]

Gathered here as members of this congregation and as representatives of the wider Church of God, do you promise to offer A and their family your love and support, and being faithful in prayer, will you share your faith with them by word and example and in turn be open to receive all that God has to give us through this life?

Gathered here as part of this congregation and as representatives of the wider family, Church and community will you promise to offer A and their family your support and encouragement wherever possible, being faithful in prayer, sharing faith with them, and be open to receive all that God has to give us through this life?

If you will promise this, please stand.

Blessing

[The minister addresses the child]

A, we celebrate that you are God’s gift to us. Grow strong in the knowledge and love of God; we pray that one day you will be a disciple of Jesus Christ, following him through the waters of baptism and in a life of faithful witness; bear the fruit of his Spirit and live his great gift of love.

A, we celebrate that you are God’s gift to us. Grow strong in the knowledge and love of God; and we pray that you will be aware of him and his love for you.
[The minister may make the sign of the cross upon the forehead of the child while saying]
A, the Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift the light of his countenance upon you and give you peace, this day and always. Amen.

[Words of blessing taken from Numbers 6: 24-26]

Meeting the congregation

[The children of the church family may be invited to come forward and greet the child who has been presented, and they may bring gifts as a sign of welcome or the minister may walk among the congregation and choose to introduce the child to a few people.]

Prayer

[A prayer is offered for the child and their family, asking for God’s help in the days ahead]

Heavenly Father, just as Jesus welcomed little children and blessed them, we have welcomed and sought your blessing for AB. Just as Mary and Joseph presented Jesus in the temple, so C and D have brought A into your presence here today.

We offer you our thanksgiving for A and all that they are and all that they will become. They are made in your image, perfectly reflecting your glory and majesty. We pray that just as they are surrounded by your love, they too will be surrounded by the love of their parents, their wider family, and this church family.

Loving God, we live in a difficult and dangerous world and we ask that you will keep her/him safe from harm. We pray for C and E and ask for your wisdom and strength in the care and nurture of A.

We put ourselves into your safe keeping for the whole of our lives, the ups and downs, the good moments and the testing times. Teach us to trust in you and to seek your wisdom and grace.

This we ask in the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.