

GUIDE FOR BAPTISM

Version 1	10/07/2020	Simplification of previous Reopening Churches for Worship Guidance
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1. Introduction

This Guide is part of STEP 5: Safety First in the process for reopening and managing your church building. It provides specific guidance for Baptism services, but should be read in conjunction with the **Guide to Using Your Worship Space**.

2. Specific Considerations for Baptisms

- The Government makes reference to baptisms within the context of what it defines as Other Life Cycle ceremonies, which is part of the overall reopening churches guidance.¹
- Although this is not normally part of Methodist tradition, if baptisms are carried out separately to a normal service they should have no more than 30 people in attendance, and social distancing should be strictly adhered to following a risk assessment.
- Note that 30 is a **maximum** number as a guide and that Managing Trustees have an obligation to assess if this is a safe number to accommodate. If after risk assessment it is found that a chapel can only accommodate a lower number safely, then this would be the maximum for this particular chapel.
- When baptism takes place during a normal service then the number could be greater than 30 as long as it remains within the maximum number of people who can be seated in the chapel safely, as calculated in the risk assessment.
- If possible, ceremonies should be concluded in the shortest reasonable time.
- Water is required for the ceremony, and that is acceptable, but attention should be given to hygiene guidance including handwashing prior to and after the ceremony, and only small amounts of water are to be used to avoid splashing. A shell or other small receptacle can be used for the imposition of the water.
- Only a minimum number of people should gather immediately around the child or adult being baptised to avoid being splashed by water and in order to maintain social distancing.
- If the person being baptised is a baby or infant, then they should be held by their parent or guardian or other member of the child's regular household only.
- It should be considered how those who fall within a vulnerable group are able to attend safely as it is important that those who wish to attend are able to do so safely.
- All spoken voices should use a PA system where possible or practical. Specifically projecting or raising voices should be avoided.
- It is important to liaise and communicate with the parties involved in advance. This will ensure that controls and expectations on the day are managed sensitively:
 - Communication of agreed arrangements in the chapel.
 - Basic arrangement for cleaning and hygiene.
 - Knowledge of numbers attending and potential seating plan.
 - Ability to assess if there are parties who are clinically vulnerable and therefore being able to make additional arrangements and advise others to be aware and sympathetic to this.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july>