

Variations on the French Reformed Church Baptismal Liturgy

For several decades, variations on a portion of the French Reformed Church baptismal liturgy have been used in PC(USA) congregations. When infants are baptized, the minister addresses the child directly, proclaiming the sure promise of God. The Office of Theology and Worship provides these examples, noting that no single set of words is "right." Pastoral judgment may lead to particular variations.

Whatever words are used, the pastor should address the child directly, and should strive to speak rather than read.

A. Citation of the French Reformed liturgy in James B. Torrance's *Worship, Community & The Triune God of Grace*:

For you, little child,
Jesus Christ has come, he has fought, he has suffered.
For you he entered the shadow of Gethsemane and the horror of Calvary.
For you he uttered the cry, "It is finished!"
For you he rose from the dead
and ascended into heaven
and there he intercedes —
for you, little child, even though you do not know it.
But in this way the word of the Gospel becomes true.
"We love him, because he first loved us."

B. From the Church of Scotland, *Book of Common Order*

[Name],
For you Jesus Christ came into the world:
for you he lived and showed God's love;
for you he suffered the darkness of Calvary
and cried at the last, 'It is accomplished';
for you he triumphed over death
and rose in newness of life;
for you he ascended to reign at God's right hand.
All this he did for you, [name],
though you do not know it yet.
And so the word of Scripture is fulfilled:
"We love because God loved us first."

C. From the Office of Theology and Worship

For you, little one,
the Spirit of God moved over the waters at creation,
and the Lord God made covenants with his people.
It was for you that the Word of God became flesh
and lived among us, full of grace and truth.
For you, [name], Jesus Christ suffered death
crying out at the end, "It is finished!"
For you Christ triumphed over death,
rose in newness of life,
and ascended to rule over all.
All of this was done for you, little one,
though you do not know any of this yet.
But we will continue to tell you this good news
until it becomes your own.
And so the promise of the gospel is fulfilled:
"We love because God first loved us."