For Christians around the world, water plays a vital role in maintaining health and holiness. Water is associated not only with creation but also eternal life.

**Water in the Bible**

- In the *Old Testament* water is often presented as a *gift from God*.
- Rainfall can be a sign for God's favour and goodness. Droughts can be a sign of God's anger.
- In the *New Testament* water becomes a *sign of rebirth* in Jesus' baptism.

**Water and rituals**

- **When water is blessed by a priest it becomes holy water.** It can be used for baptism, for blessing people, places or objects, or for repelling evil.
- Holy water is kept in a *font*, often near the entrance to a church.
- Catholic believers will often dip their fingers in holy water as they enter a church, as a *reminder of baptism*.
- In the Middle Ages, holy water was seen as so powerful that some fonts had *locked covers* to prevent theft.

**“Emmeline was christened in a Roman Catholic church. In the Catholic faith the tradition should be performed as soon as possible. Emmeline was christened when she was 4 months old. Baptism is one of the seven sacraments, meant to absolve newborn babies of original sin. At the christening Emmeline was blessed by a priest and had holy water poured on her head with parents, godparents, and the wider family present.”** Marisa, 37, mum to Emmeline

**Water and pilgrimage**

- Every year, millions of Christian pilgrims (particularly Roman Catholics) visit *Lourdes* in southwestern France.
- It is believed that spring water from the grotto *can heal people* if they are sick.
- Millions of visitors come to Lourdes each year in the hope of being cured.

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**Word glossary**

- **Bible** - A collection of religious texts, sacred in Christianity, Judaism and many other faiths
- **Church** - A place of worship for Christian
- **Baptism** - The ceremony where holy water is used to welcome someone into the Christian church
- **Font** - Where holy water is often kept