

= Christening (The Office) =

" Christening " is the seventh episode of the seventh season of the American version of the comedy television series The Office and the show 's 133rd episode overall . Written by Peter Ocko and directed by Alex Hardcastle , the episode aired on November 4 , 2010 on NBC in the United States . The episode guest stars Linda Purl as Helene Beesly , Rick Overton as William Beesly , Robert Pine as Mr. Halpert , Perry Smith as Betsy Halpert , Bobby Ray Shafer as Bob Vance , and Peggy Stewart as Sylvia .

The series ? presented as if it were a real documentary ? depicts the everyday lives of office employees in the Scranton , Pennsylvania , branch of the fictional Dunder Mifflin Paper Company . In the episode , Pam (Jenna Fischer) and Jim Halpert 's (John Krasinski) baby , Cece , is christened and Michael Scott (Steve Carell) invites the entire office to celebrate . Michael joins a church group of high school graduates on a mission to Mexico , with Andy Bernard (Ed Helms) following along to impress Erin Hannon (Ellie Kemper) .

Since the seventh season of The Office focused on Michael 's departure , the producers wanted to showcase the ensemble cast in various episodes ; " Christening " dealt with Pam and Jim . The episode was watched by 7 @.@ 65 million viewers and received a 3 @.@ 8 rating among adults between the age of 18 and 49 , marking a slight drop in the ratings when compared to the previous week . The episode received mixed reviews from critics ; while a few enjoyed the episode , several felt that the main story was unfunny and forced . Cindy White of IGN even called it one of the worst episodes of The Office to air .

= = Plot = =

Pam (Jenna Fischer) and Jim Halpert 's (John Krasinski) daughter Cece is being christened , and Michael Scott (Steve Carell) has invited all the members of the office to the service , much to their disappointment . During the service , Cece 's dress is ruined when Jim changes her diaper . Jim scrambles to replace the gown , and Cece is eventually baptized in an Arcade Fire T @-@ shirt he found in the back of his car . At the end of the mass , the minister announces there will be a reception hosted by Jim and Pam , who panic because the reception was for family only and they are not prepared for so many guests .

At the reception , food quickly runs out , and Cece goes missing after Jim asks Pam 's grandmother Sylvia (Peggy Stewart) to watch over her . Angela Martin (Angela Kinsey) had been showing a disturbingly intense interest in Cece , so after finding out from guests that Cece was last seen with a " short blond woman " , Jim thinks Angela has kidnapped Cece , and calls her out as she is leaving . Kevin Malone (Brian Baumgartner) attacks Angela 's purse , only for Jim to realize that Pam 's mother Helene (Linda Purl) had Cece .

Michael is inspired by the fellow churchgoers and , following inappropriate comments from the rest of the office staff , angrily lashes out at them for being disrespectful . As the church 's youth ministry ? which is going to Mexico to help build a school ? leave , Michael decides to go with them . The other employees try to talk him out of it , but Michael refuses . Just before they leave , Andy Bernard (Ed Helms) boards the bus with him in an attempt to impress his ex @-@ girlfriend Erin Hannon (Ellie Kemper) . Both get cold feet 45 minutes into the trip , and force the bus to stop . They then have Erin drive them home .

Meanwhile , Toby Flenderson (Paul Lieberstein) hesitates to enter the church throughout the service . He explains that he has a history between himself and " The Big Man " . Finally , Toby enters the church after the ceremony . He looks at the crucifix and asks , " Why do you have to be so mean to me ? "

= = Production = =

The episode was written by Peter Ocko , his first writing credit for The Office since joining the staff in its seventh season as a co @-@ executive producer . It was directed by Alex Hardcastle , the first

episode of *The Office* he directed . Due to the fact that the seventh season of *The Office* was Carell 's last , the writers decided to divide the season into two distinct halves ; the first half would " celebrate Carell 's finale year and highlight different actors on the show " , whereas the second half would focus on his departure and the search for a new manager . As such , " Christening " was written to specifically highlight " potential heirs to the throne " , in this case Fischer and Krasinski 's characters , Pam and Jim . The episode guest stars Linda Purl as Helene Beesly , Rick Overton as William Beesly , Robert Pine as Mr. Halpert , Perry Smith as Betsy Halpert , Bobby Ray Shafer as Bob Vance , and Peggy Stewart as Sylvia .

Within a week of its airdate the official website of *The Office* released two deleted scenes . In the first 46 @-@ second clip , Angela , Kelly Kapoor (Mindy Kaling) , Oscar Martinez (Oscar Nunez) , and Ryan Howard (B.J. Novak) discuss their feelings about having children . In the second 75 @-@ second clip , Jim asks Michael to take a picture of his family , Jim and Pam complain to the camera about the uninvited guests , and Gabe Lewis (Zach Woods) and Ryan talk about their volunteer past . The season seven DVD contains several more deleted scenes from this episode . Notable cut scenes include Jim and Pam discussing the situation surrounding the reception , Dwight placing his business card in the books in the church 's pew , Jim and Pam discussing naming Cece and thanking their friends and family for coming .

= = Cultural references = =

During the cold open , Kelly plays a " your mom " joke on Pam . Michael initially thinks that he is Cece 's godfather , and impersonates Marlon Brando 's character Don Corleone in the *Godfather* movies . During this scene , Michael also references Robert De Niro 's famous line " You talkin ' to me ? " from the 1976 film *Taxi Driver* . Jim wraps Cece in an Arcade Fire shirt , a reference to the Canadian indie rock band . Pam references the miracle of Jesus feeding the multitude , claiming that she and Jim are " gonna need a loaves and fishes kind of miracle to feed " all their guests . Michael defends the churchgoers , and claims that the office members are being catty like the titular antagonists from the 2004 comedy film *Mean Girls* . Erin listens to *A Prairie Home Companion* hosted by Garrison Keillor .

= = Reception = =

" Christening " first aired on NBC on November 4 , 2010 . In its original broadcast , it was viewed by an estimated 7 @.@ 65 million viewers and received a 3 @.@ 8 / 10 percent share among adults between the ages of 18 and 49 . This means that it was seen by 3 @.@ 8 percent of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds , and 10 percent of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds watching television at the time of the broadcast . This marked a seven percent drop in the ratings from the previous episode , " Costume Contest " . " Christening " was the thirteenth most @-@ watched scripted show for the week of broadcast among adults aged 18 ? 49 .

The episode received mixed reviews , with one calling it one of the worst episodes of *The Office* to air . Myles McNutt of *The A.V. Club* wrote that his favorite element of the episode concerned Toby and his relationship with God , but he was slightly critical of the " A @-@ story " , calling it " inert . " Despite this , McNutt felt that the episode portrayed Michael as " a flawed , yet normal , man " . He felt that the episode , like the sixth season episode " Scott 's Tots " , illustrated that Michael was still " searching for his identity despite being over 40 . " He ultimately gave the episode a " B + " . Joel Keller of AOL 's *TV Squad* praised Michael 's maturity in the episode , saying " even when we get an episode that didn 't quite hit the mark , like last night 's , the maturing of Michael still makes the episode interesting to watch . "

Margaret Lyons of *Entertainment Weekly* was more critical , referring to it as " forced , off pitch , and strenuously unfunny " . She was also critical of Michael 's interaction with the youth group , writing that it " didn 't add any development to his character or to the show 's broader arcs ; it just seemed weird , and not that humorous . " Despite this , she praised the cold opening , featuring Pam lecturing the office on proper hygiene . *HitFix* reviewer Alan Sepinwall called the episode "

spectacularly unfunny " and criticized the writers for using Michael 's loneliness as a joke instead of taking it seriously like they had in the fourth season episode " Money " . Despite this , he complimented Lieberstein 's performance as Toby while he was questioning God .

While reviewing the seventh season , Cindy White of IGN said that the episode proved to fans that Jim and Pam dragged the series at times . She wrote that the episode was one of the worst of the series ? noting that only the sixth season clip show " The Banker " was worse ? and blamed it on the writers , who she said " have no idea what to do with [Pam and Jim] anymore " .