

With Great Joy!



Preparing to Celebrate
Infant Baptism

Welcome to these sessions

This booklet has been prepared to help you to reflect about the importance of baptism for your child and your family. In this resource booklet you are invited to take part in a reflective journey where you will examine the important moments in the liturgy and relate them to your own journey of faith.

OUTLINE of BAPTISM of INFANTS:

Welcoming, Naming & Claiming

1. Welcome & Greeting at the entrance of the Church
2. Naming the child
3. Request for baptism
4. Parents & Godparents acceptance of role
5. Welcoming the Child into the Christian community
6. Procession & Song

The Celebration of God's Word

7. Scripture Readings & Homily
8. Prayer of the faithful
9. Invoking the help of the saints

Prayer of Protection & Anointing before Baptism

10. Prayer of Protection
11. Anointing with the oil of catechumens

The Celebration of Baptism

12. Prayer at the Font
13. Blessing of water
14. Renunciation of sin & Profession of Faith
15. Baptism in water
- 16 Anointing with oil of chrism
17. Clothing with White garment
18. Receiving the Light of Christ

Conclusion of the Rite

19. Praying the prayer Jesus taught us
20. Blessings & Thanksgiving Hymn

PARENTS PRAYER



Do not be afraid for I have redeemed you, I have called you by your name, you are mine

O God, you know everything about this child from the moment of conception

Do not be afraid for I have redeemed you, I have called you by your name, you are mine

Before this child speaks you know the first word

Do not be afraid for I have redeemed you, I have called you by your name, you are mine

*You are always there, taking care of, and loving this child all the time
Because you are everywhere, no matter where this child goes you are there*

Do not be afraid for I have redeemed you, I have called you by your name, you are mine

Adapted from Isaiah 43:1 & Psalm 139

Baptism: What's it all about?

It's a community event

It's about belonging

It's celebrating new life

It's about the gratitude we feel

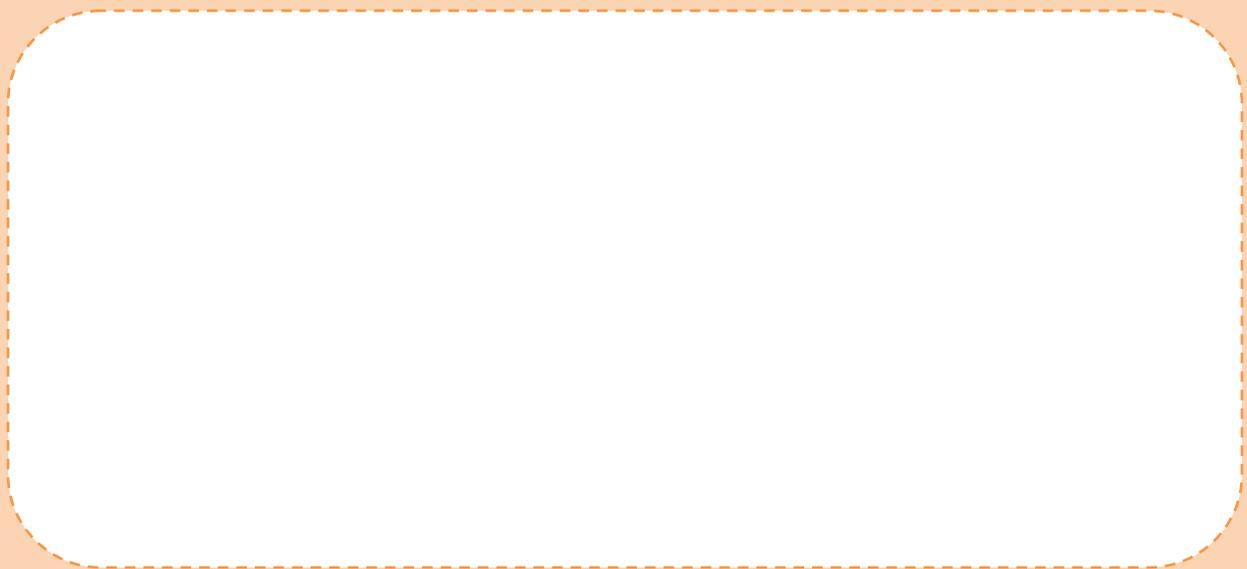
We're thanking God for the baby's health

It's about passing on our family values

It's about the precious life of God in our child

We want our child to know they are loved by God as well as us

Which of these answer best fits your own?



Baptism: What's it about?



- It's about Welcoming

When we celebrate baptism we do so as a Christian community

That's why we greet new members with these words:

The Christian Community Welcomes you with great joy

The priest/deacon says these words on behalf of everyone

Parents then state their intention to do all they can to enable their child to grow daily in faith and love.

This moment is like entering into a partnership where parents are affirmed in their commitment by the constant support of the Christian community

WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT DO YOU NEED FROM THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY TO HELP YOU PASS ON YOUR FAITH TO YOUR CHILD?

- It's about Naming

When we welcome your child we also name him/her publicly

Names are important. They tell us something about the person.

Sometimes our name links us into our family roots, or it is symbolic of who we might become.....

For the Christian community the name of the person is linked to their unique identity as a son or daughter of God

This is why the priest asks:

What name have you given this child?

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE A PARTICULAR NAME for YOUR CHILD?

At his baptism God said to Jesus:

'You are my Son the Beloved.

My favour rests on you.'

Imagine God speaking to your child at baptism

What might God be saying to him/her?



- It's about Claiming



As we welcome your child we also claim your child as a beloved son or daughter of God by marking him with the sign of the cross.

The priest says:

I sign you with the sign of the cross
and claim you for Christ our Saviour.....

When you think of the sign of the cross, what do you associate with it?

Parents and God parents will be invited to sign your child with the cross.

Why do you think we do this?

From the early years of the Christian Tradition the Cross became a sign:

A sign of belonging to Christ

A sign of contradiction in our world

A sign of the grace won for us by Christ

A sign of Christ's love for us

A sign of healing and forgiveness

A sign of hope pointing towards glory

A sign of Christian identity

Proclaiming the Good News



When we celebrate all the sacraments we listen to God's word being proclaimed

In the Rite of Baptism, these are directly connected with life in Christ.....and the experience of Jesus at his Baptism

These are words of life for us

Calling us to a response of faith

Enabling us to grasp more fully the meaning of living as God's children

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

As soon as Jesus was baptised he came up from the water, and suddenly the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove coming down from heaven.

And a voice spoke from heaven:

'This is my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on him.'

Matthew 3: 16 - 17

What words or phrases stay with you?

In what way/s have you experienced God's favour in your life?

Praying with the saints



After the homily we pray together to the saints

Saints are those who fully lived out their baptism and are now with God forever

Saints are examples to us of what it means to live in Christ

Saints inspire us to follow Christ more deeply

- Who is your parish saint?
- Notice any images of other saints in your parish Church
- Take time to reflect on saints who inspire you
- What is it about the saint's life that is so compelling and attractive?

The Oil of Catechumens



In the Adult Rite of Initiation this oil strengthens those who are on the journey towards baptism

In the Infant Rite of Baptism the baby is anointed on the breast

The prayer that is said is about:

- Strengthening
- Protecting
- Setting free from the power of darkness
- Salvation – bringing health

How will you ask God to strengthen and protect your child on his/her journey of faith through life?

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Proclaiming your Faith



Infants are not old enough to stand up for themselves and say what they believe in

Even adults find this difficult

The Church expects that parents will be ‘the first teachers’ of their child in the ways of faith.....

Hopefully this seed of faith that is sown will blossom and grow

This is why parents proclaim their faith before the all God’s people

Godparents share in this awesome responsibility

They too hand on their faith to your child throughout their development

Who nurtured your faith?

- Can you name anyone who helped you to grow in your faith as a child?
- In what way/s did they help you?
- Can you name anyone, apart from yourself, who could help your child to grow in trusting faith?

Baptised in water



As the priest baptises your child he says these words:

**I baptise you
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.'**

Baptism calls us to live out a life-long relationship of love with God who is Father, Son and Spirit.

This relationship needs to be nurtured and encouraged

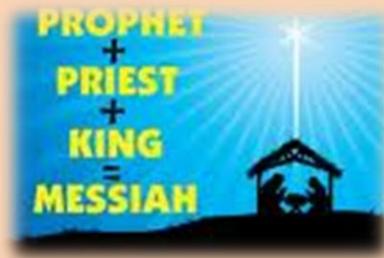
How can you encourage your child to grow in relationship with God?

What will you do to nurture your child's faith?

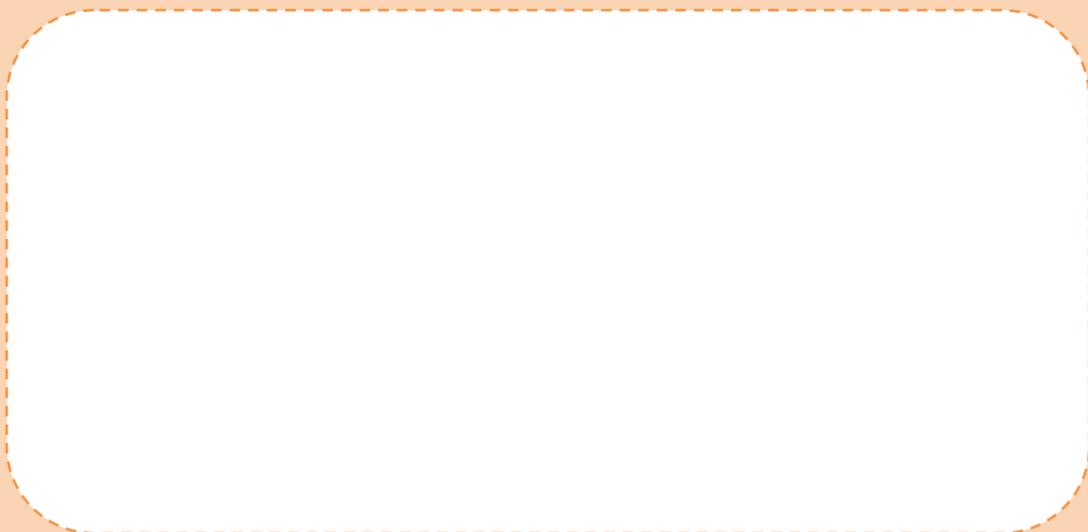
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Anointing with Chrism

- This perfumed oil is consecrated by the Bishop on Holy Thursday
- In baptism we are called to live like Christ the anointed Son of God, who is a priest, prophet and king....
- A priest is one who worships and prays
- A prophet is one who speaks out for the truth
- A king is one who serves



- How can you enable your child to live as
 - One who prays and worships
 - One who speaks out for the truth
 - One who reaches out in service to others?



Clothing with White Garment

The clothing with a white garment is a sign of the new relationship with Christ brought about by baptism

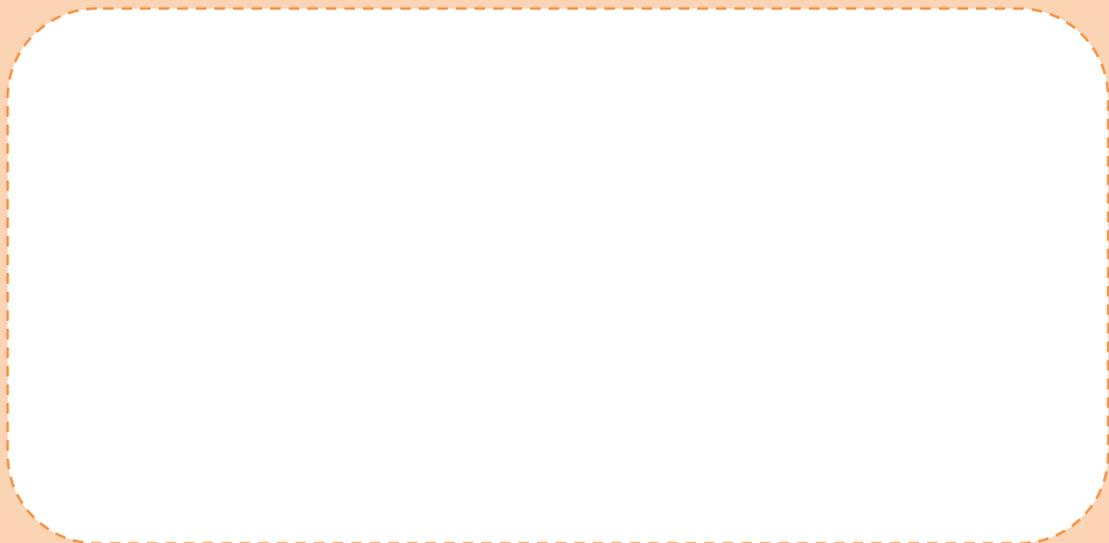
White is the liturgical colour representing the resurrection

The priest says:

*You have become a new creation
and have clothed yourselves in Christ...
See in this white garment the outward sign
of your Christian dignity...*

*With your family and friends to help you by word and
example, bring that dignity unstained into everlasting life*

- Imagine that your child is wrapped and held in the embrace of God
- How will you enable your child to grow in understanding of their Christian dignity?



Praying the prayer of Christians

As your child is newly baptised, s/he is called a neophyte

A neophyte is one who is newly born or reborn in Christ

As children of God we address God as our Father

As a new Christian gathered with the community the newly baptised are entitled to pray the Our Father

This is THE prayer that Jesus taught and a model for all of our prayer throughout our lives.....

Our Father
who art in heaven
hallowed by thy name
thy Kingdom come
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us
and lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil

- Why is this prayer a model for all Christian prayer?

The Blessing of God

Christian parenthood is a high calling and an enormous responsibility

So we ask for God's blessing on the mother and father of the new child

*God the Father; through his Son,
the Virgin Mary's child,
has brought joy to all Christian
mothers,
as they see the hope of eternal
life shine in their children.
May God bless the mother of
this child.*

*She now thanks God for the gift
of her child.*

*May she be one with her child in
thanking God forever in heaven
in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

*God is the giver of all life,
human and divine.*

*God bless the father of this child
May he bear witness to the faith
by what he says and does....*

*May God make us,
wherever we may be,
faithful members of his holy
people*

First blessing the mother: focus of the prayer is on thanksgiving and Mary as the model of motherhood

Second blessing the father: focuses on gratitude to God the giver of all life and to role of the father's witness to his faith

Third blessing: For each one of us, that we will be faithful followers of our Lord Jesus Christ.....

- What blessings are you now grateful for?

- What do you need from God to persevere in your journey of faith and to witness to your faith?

SUGGESTED HYMNS

Abba Father Send your Spirit
Alleluia, alleluia give thanks to the risen Lord
Be still for the presence of the Lord
Christ be beside me
Come Lord Jesus Come
Forth in the peace of Christ we go
God forgave my sins in Jesus name
God's Spirit is in my heart
He is Lord
Lord Jesus Christ you have come to us
Lord of all hopefulness
O living water
O the word of my Lord
Spirit of God come dwell within me
Take me Lord use my life
Take my hands and make them as your own
Thanks be to God
The light of Christ has come into the world
The Spirit lives to set us free
This, then is my prayer
Walk with me o my Lord

Psalms:

*Do not be afraid for I have redeemed you
I the Lord of sea and sky
I will be with you wherever you go
I will never forget you my people
If God is for us
O God you search me and you know me*

Gospel Greeting:

*Seek ye first
Alleluia - celtic
Eightfold alleluia
Halle, halle, hallelujah*

EVALUATION:

1) What have you found most helpful about this preparation time?

2) What has been less helpful for you?

3) How could this time of preparation be improved?

NOTES: