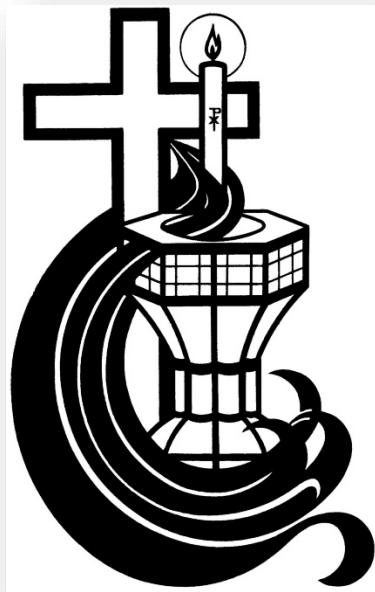


*Baptism Policies, Guidelines,  
Resources, and Best Practices*

*Infants up to age 7*



*Diocese of St. Augustine*

*Office of Christian Formation*

*May 2020*

## Understanding Baptism

*“Christian initiation is accomplished by three sacraments together: Baptism which is the beginning of new life; Confirmation which is its strengthening; and the Eucharist which nourishes the disciple with Christ’s Body and Blood for his transformation in Christ.”*

(CCC#1275)

The Sacrament of Baptism is the initial sacrament of faith and through the waters of Baptism we enter a new life, the life of the spirit. “Through baptism men and women are freed from sin, are reborn as children of God, and, configured to Christ by an indelible character, are incorporated into the Church.” (Can 843)

Infant baptism celebrates the faith that is already transforming the lives of the parents and the parish community---a faith that will be shared, by both word and example, with the newly baptized infants as they grow into adulthood. Parents and the community must clearly understand the Christian meaning of baptism and freely choose to celebrate the sacrament as a time of growth in their own relationship with God as well as a beginning for the infants.

For Christians, Christ is the “sacrament,” the effective sign of God’s love, mercy, and power in our lives. Christ acts through His Church—the Christian community. Baptism is the door to life and the kingdom of God. It is the beginning of initiation into a life that is committed to Christ.

Parents, aided by the parish community in choosing baptism for an infant, accept the responsibility to continue the initiation of the baptized through Eucharist and Confirmation toward Christian maturity. “The fact that infants cannot yet profess personal faith does not prevent the Church from conferring this sacrament on them, since in reality it is in her own faith that she baptizes them. This point of doctrine was clearly defined by Saint Augustine: *“When children are presented to be given spiritual grace,” he wrote, “it is not so much those holding them in their arms who present them—although, if these people are good Christians, they are included among those who present the children—as the whole company of saints and faithful Christians.... It is done by the whole of Mother Church, which is in the saints, since it is as a whole that she gives birth to each and every one of them.”* (Pastoralis actio #14 Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1980)

# **Policies**

## **Policy 1**

**Arrangements for Baptism are to be made through personal conversation with the parish priest or designated minister prior to Baptism. It is recommended that this happen prior to the birth of the child.**

Pastoral Guidelines:

1. The purpose of this is for the parish to:
  - a. Express joy at the birth of the child
  - b. Help the parents come to an awareness of the significance of the event in the faith life of their family.
  - c. Extend an invitation to the parents and their families to enter more fully into the life of the church as well as discern their openness to do so.
2. This conversation should be in a setting conducive to discussion and dialogue
  - a. Dialogue should provide clarity of intent.
  - b. Dialogue should provide evidence of founded hope that the child will be raised in the Catholic faith.

Law:

Parents are obliged to see to the baptism of their infant within the first few weeks of birth. Even before, parents are to go to the pastor to request the sacrament for their child and to be properly prepared for it. (Can 867)

Pastors of souls and other members of the Christian faithful, according to their respective ecclesiastical function, have the duty to take care that those who seek the sacraments are prepared to receive them by proper evangelization and catechetical instruction, attentive to the norms issued by competent authority.” (Can 843.2)

For an infant to be baptized lawfully, it is required:

The parents or at least one of them or the person who is lawfully in their place, gives consent. There must be a founded hope that the infant will be brought up in the Catholic faith. (Can. 868)

## **Policy 2**

**Parents are expected to participate in a preparation process for the baptism of their children. When parents need some basic formation in the Catholic faith, it is the responsibility of the parish to provide this in addition to the preparation process for the baptism.**

#### Pastoral Guidelines:

1. All parents are welcome in the parish and they will be helped to see the Church's care for them, especially in situations wherein a sacrament needs to be postponed.
2. This time of preparation may also be a time for the parents to complete their initiation and/or be assisted in bringing their marriage into conformity with Church law.

#### Law:

Christ's faithful have the right to be assisted by their pastors out of the spiritual goods of the Church, especially the word of God and the Sacraments. (Can 213)

"For the grace of Baptism to unfold, the parents' help is important. So, too, is the role of the godfather and godmother, who must be firm believers, able and ready to help the newly baptized..." (CCC#1255)

#### **Policy 3**

**Every parish shall ensure sacramental preparation for parents prior to the baptism. Catechesis and preparation that is appropriate to the needs of the family, particularly families with additional children, should be provided at the parish, the privileged place for all catechesis.**

#### Pastoral Guidelines:

1. The community members, particularly those who have been formally trained, work with priests and deacons in the necessary preparation for baptism. The process should be one of evangelization as well as catechetical based on adult learning models.
2. The number and content of the preparation sessions should be determined on the based on the needs of the parents and the resources that can be made available.
3. The number of sessions for this catechesis is left to the discretion of each pastor and his available staff and resources.
4. Parents who have participated in baptismal preparation for their first children should be encouraged to prepare for the baptisms of additional children, but not in the same manner. Ideas for other formational events are given in the resources section of this booklet.
5. It is strongly encouraged that the godparents also attend the sacramental preparation sessions.

#### Law:

"Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God. (LG 11). The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the

liturgical life of Christian families; it is the privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents.” (CCC# 2226)

#### **Policy 4**

**There are instances that would give legitimate reason for delaying the baptism of the child. The purpose of the delay is always to allow time for the parents to come to a fuller understanding of what they are asking of the Church and what their responsibilities are in asking for it.**

#### Pastoral Guidelines

1. The initial conversations and follow up should discern in the Catholic parent(s) a sincere effort to live the Christian life and to establish a reasonable hope that the child will be raised in the Catholic faith.
2. The basis for recognizing a Catholic Christian might include:
  - acceptance of the Creed
  - sharing in the worship of the Church; personal prayer; concern for charity
  - a lifestyle influenced by the life of Christ and a commitment to that way of life.
3. The “absence of real hope” should not be measured with negative criteria. Examples of this might include the lack of use of parish envelopes, lack of valid marriage of the parents, lifestyle of the parents. Efforts must be made to look for the real hope, not to look for reasons not to find it.
4. The pastoral concern of valid marriage or even a marriage being present can be part of the ongoing catechesis to accompany the family into a more Catholic Christian lifestyle.

#### Law:

“Sacred ministers may not deny the sacraments to those who opportunely ask for them, are properly disposed and are not prohibited by law from receiving them.” (Can 843)

#### **Policy 5**

**In the Baptism of infants, the parents have the responsibility for choosing a godparent (s) who will serve as good examples for living a Catholic way of life. It is customary to have two godparents, however only one is required. A godparent may be male or female, but if two are chosen, one must be male and one must be female. A godparent must be a fully initiated Catholic (baptized, confirmed, and have received the Eucharist), and have completed their sixteenth year.**

## Pastoral Guidelines:

1. Godparents should be ready to commit the time and person care to nurture and support the child and the parents.
2. The words “Godparent” and “Sponsor” are synonymous terms. The 1983 Code of Canon Law uses the term “sponsor” for godparent. Occasionally, a parish will received the request by a parent to change or delete the name of a godparent from the Baptism register because the parent has had a falling out with the godparent, or because the godparent has died, or the godparent no longer is living a moral life. It must be explained to the parent that the Baptism register is a record of an historical event, that the said godparent was physically present and a witness to the sacrament, and that the person’s name cannot be deleted. Additionally, Church Law (CC 872) requires only one godparent, and if the other godparent can continue to help the child lead a Christian life, there is no need to add a substitute godparent.
3. If both godparents are no longer acceptable and the parents insist upon adding another person to fulfill the role of godparent, the diocesan bishop can allow the naming of a new individual if he judges it opportune. The name of the other person may then be added in the “notation” section. However, no change may be made to the original entry or on the Baptism certificate. A sample wording for this might be: “At the request of parent on (date), John Doe is henceforth considered by parent to be sponsor in lieu of (one or both named sponsors). Canons 535, 877, 1541, speak to Sacramental registers as legal record of an event that occurred. The record cannot be changed.
4. The Church asks that there be one or two godparents. In some cultural traditions, there are many godparents. While there is no reason why there cannot be honorary godparents, there needs to be only two for the official records. For pastoral sensitivity, perhaps the minister of baptism could ask the honorary godparents to sign the back of the certificate as a way of including them in the ritual.
5. If the godparent is unknown to the parish or the minister, the diocesan Suitability of Sponsor or Godparent Form should be used. See appendix 1.
6. Parents may wish to have a baptized and believing Christian act as a Christian witness and stand alongside of a godparent. This is permissible, but the distinct roles of the witness and the godparent must be made during the formation process.

## Law:

“Insofar as possible, a person to be baptized is to be given a sponsor who assists an adult in Christian initiation or together with the parents presents an infant for baptism. A sponsor also helps the baptized person to lead a Christian life in keeping with baptism and to fulfill faithfully the obligations inherent in it.

There is to be only one male sponsor or one female sponsor or one of each.

To be permitted to take on the function of sponsor a person must:

be designated by the one to be baptized, by the parents or the person who takes their place, or in their absence by the pastor or minister and have the aptitude and intention of fulfilling this function;

have completed the sixteenth year of age, unless the diocesan bishop has established another age, or the pastor or minister has granted an exception for a just cause;

be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist and who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on;

not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;

not be the father or mother of the one to be baptized.

A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community is not to participate except together with a Catholic sponsor and then only as a witness of the baptism.” (Code of Canon Law 872-874)

## **Policy 6**

**To reflect the communal nature of faith, the ecclesial aspect of Baptism, and its relationship to Confirmation and Eucharist, Baptisms take place in the parish church and not in private homes, chapels, schools, shrines. (Can 857, 860) For this same reason, Sunday is an opportune day for the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism. (Can 856) The proper pastor of the family’s domicile parish oversees the reception of sacraments for members of his parish.**

### Pastoral Guidelines

1. If for a pastoral reason a baptism is requested outside of the family’s domicile parish, the pastors of the churches should discern together the proper course of action.
2. Whenever possible, the Eucharistic celebration is the proper place for the celebration of Baptism. The new Order of Baptism for Children (2020) provides in the appendix (# 251 and 257-295) a comprehensive outline as to how this can be done. It also encourages the celebration to occur during the Sunday Mass for two key reasons:
  - a. The Sunday Mass is the Commemoration of the Resurrection of the Lord. Administering Baptism at this time further illustrates the connection to the Paschal Mystery.
  - b. The whole community, who are expected to be a part of this child’s formation in the faith, can welcome them into the community.

## **Policy 7**

**If there is reasonable and prudent doubt of a valid Baptism, as defined by law, then a conditional Baptism may be celebrated privately according to the standard set by the local Ordinary.**

### Pastoral Guidelines

1. A conditional Baptism is a last resort after all avenues have been exhausted. (Eph 4:5).
2. Some of these avenues can include: witness testimony, video, or pictures of the event.
3. The theological background of the minister who is administering the Baptism does not come into play, just the matter and the form of the sacrament.
4. Please see diocesan Validity of Baptism document, which is Appendix I, for specific churches.

### Law:

1. The particular law for the United States for the Conditional Baptism of those seeking reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church can be found in the 1988 National Statutes for the Catechumenate, # 37 [see also Can 869].
2. There may be a reasonable and prudent doubt concerning the Baptism of such Christians which cannot be resolved after serious investigation into the fact and/or validity of Baptism, namely, to ascertain whether the person was baptized with water and with the Trinitarian formula, and whether the minister and the recipient of the sacrament had the proper requisite intentions.
3. If Conditional Baptism then seems necessary, this must be celebrated privately rather than at a public liturgical assembly of the community and with only those limited rites which the diocesan bishop determines.

## **Policy 8**

**To give every assurance possible to the Christian faithful living in the diocese that any man presenting himself as an ordained minister of the Church is suitable for conducting sacramental ministry or teaching on matters of the Catholic faith, the Diocese of St. Augustine requires that any ordained priest or deacon from outside of the diocese demonstrates that he is in good standing with their proper ecclesial authority before he is allowed to conduct public ministry. Any priest or deacon visiting the diocese who wishes to perform public or sacramental ministry must present an attestation of his good standing that has been written by an ecclesial authority proper to his particular circumstance before performing sacramental ministry or conducting any public ministry. An original attestation letter must be received at the Diocesan Chancery and must have been authored within the last 6 months preceding the visit.**



# **Guidelines, Special Circumstances**

## **1. Outside the parish**

- A. Baptisms at hospitals within the Diocese of St. Augustine should be recorded in the Baptismal register within the canonical boundaries of where the hospital is located. Please contact the Chancery for information on canonical boundaries.
- B. Prison Baptisms are recorded in the Baptismal register of the parish within the canonical boundaries of where the prison is located. Special attention should be paid to preparing the incarcerated for full initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist) and not solely Baptism.

## **2. Youth, those under the age of eighteen**

- A. A child is baptized into the rite which is chosen by the parents. If there is no mutual agreement between the two parents as whether the child should be baptized in the Latin Rite, the child is enrolled into the ritual church of the father. (Can 111)
- B. No one but a legal guardian can request sacraments for a child under 14. It is the role of the parish to ascertain permanent legal guardianship. This includes children who are in the process of being adopted. The adoption must be finalized prior to the Baptism. (see separate document in Policy Manual on the recording of sacraments for details on notation.)
- C. Children who are born through artificial means, such as invitro fertilization wherein a healthy egg is fertilized and then implanted into the mother are baptized in much the same way as children who are adopted. Care must be taken to ascertain that the process was legally done. These children are frequently called, “snowflake babies”, and they are more numerous than we know.
- D. Anyone who has completed their fourteenth year can select their own religious affiliation.
- E. If aborted fetuses are alive, they are to be baptized if at all possible. (Can 871)

## **3. Role of celebrant and the role of godparent**

In general, in order to honor the role of the celebrant and the role of a godparent in the liturgical celebration of Baptism, the priest or deacon should not serve in both roles.

Law:

While the law is somewhat silent on this, the pastoral considerations seem to point to the following:

1. The canons on baptism and the rite of baptism presume a distinction between the minister who confers the sacrament and those who serve as sponsors. The former is treated in canons 861-863 and latter at canons 872 - 875. The two roles are:
  - a. Sponsors assume the duty to will help the baptized to lead a Christian life in harmony with baptism, and to fulfill faithfully the obligations connected with it. At the liturgy of the baptism of a child, they also present the child for baptism (c. 872), promise to assist the parents in their duties, may be asked to sign the infant with the sign of the cross, renew the profession of faith and rejection of sin, receive the lighted candle and the white garment.
  - b. The minister poses the questions, administers the rites, preaches, and leads prayer as the rites indicate.
  
2. Having the priest serve in two liturgical roles at the baptism, one as minister and one as sponsor, appears quite contrary to fundamental principles of liturgy and the intentions of Canon Law. The same would be true of a deacon who is the father of a child to be baptized. His office of parent, a true spiritual task in the Church and one which has its own role at the liturgy, is not the same as that as minister of the sacrament, and the roles should not blend. If an exception to this policy is desired, the bishop should be consulted.

**Approved: Bishop Felipe J. Estévez, April 27, 2020**

# **Best Practices in Creating an Evangelizing Baptismal Experience**

## **Some basic questions/practices for welcoming**

When a parent/guardian inquires about baptism, in person, on the phone, through email, what is the first response of the receptionist, secretary, baptism coordinator, etc.? Are first responders given appropriate information about the process to share with inquirers? Are first responders trained to greet with an evangelizing attitude?

How are the policies and guidelines for your parish's baptismal preparation explained to the inquiring family? Are team members aware of the parish/diocesan guidelines? If there are perceived impediments to baptism, how are these handled?

Is there a sponsor/mentor (person, couple or family) that journeys with the family through the baptismal process and beyond? Do not call the parent gatherings classes or meetings. These sessions should involve prayer, fellowship, and hospitality.

When families come to a baptismal preparation session, what will help them to locate the room/building in which they are to meet? How is the signage? Is there a campus map and are buildings clearly marked? Are people available to assist those who may be lost?

Are the rooms set appropriately for the session? Are chairs comfortable? Lighting sufficient? Is the room temperature comfortable? Is there access to restrooms? Are refreshments available? Does equipment work?

Are people there to greet attendees? Are name tags supplied and opportunity for introductions provided?

Are family members/children encouraged to attend? Are there appropriate places/items for play for those infants/children that attend?

Is prayer a part of the preparation process? Are attendees taught how to pray?

Are adult learning methods, in addition to lecture, incorporated into the preparation process?

Is there any mention of ministries/opportunities/ongoing faith formation available in the parish beyond baptism preparation?

Are parents and godparents somewhat familiar with the area in which the baptism will occur? Are guidelines given for photography, family/guest seating, dress, etc.? Who will make sure families are made comfortable and greeted for the baptismal ritual?

Who follows-up with families after the actual baptism? How will the parish continue to connect with these families, at their various stages of faith development? How will the parish

continue to minister to these families between Baptism and First Reconciliation/First Eucharist/Confirmation? Who will follow up on RCIA/sacramental inquiries of adults?

Does the parish process allow for the family to be welcomed by the community, to gather with other parents and infants and members of the faith community, to celebrate the baptism ritual in the context of community, and to reflect on the celebration in a follow-up session?

If there is an irregular marital circumstance, how will this be addressed and what assistance will be given for the resolution?

Is there an available packet of information on resources available to families to develop their domestic Church?

### **Specific Practices to Enhance the Celebration and Its Lasting Effects**

Send anniversary of baptism cards to the child and their family. This could be done by school aged children or a group of the parish. As the child approaches age 4, let them know of the formational opportunities available at the parish.

Maintain a list of contact information for those baptized so that they can receive a personal invitation to parish events that are baby and child friendly.

Provide a mentor family to all new families who have their children baptized.

Have parish sponsored annual gatherings for those baptized during the previous year. At this gathering, have information about the parish programming for families.

# Recommended Content for Formation

Preparation sessions for parents or guardians, and sponsors should not only be lecture oriented, but rather utilize the best techniques of adult faith formation: discussion, faith sharing, and the drawing of conclusions. It should also be noted that this time of preparation is not the appropriate time to present the entirety of the Church's teaching to parents and sponsors.

The catechetical sessions should include the following:

- A. The meaning of salvation in Jesus Christ
- B. The meaning of Church and one's responsibility to it.
  - 1. What does it mean to be Church?
  - 2. An introduction to the parish and community life.
- C. Faith development, including cultural influences
- D. Good parenting skills
  - 1. Nurturing, growth of the domestic church
  - 2. Emotional, moral, and faith development of children
- E. Sharing in the sacramental life of the Church
- F. The meaning of the Sacrament of Baptism
- G. Explanation of the baptismal ritual and celebration
- H. Role of the sponsor
- I. Resources for parents and sponsors

Pastoral considerations on catechetical sessions:

Sensitivity to the cultures of those present

Sensitivity to the literacy level of those present

Sensitivity to the marital status, various relationships that comprise family structures

## **A Catechumenal Approach to Infant Baptism: A general outline**

The catechumenal process, used by the early Church and restored in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, is the premier formational process according to the *National Directory for Catechesis*. It makes sense to apply the 4 stages of the Baptismal Catechumenate to infant Baptism as well. Here is a plan that would enable you to incorporate this into infant Baptism preparation:

## Period I **Inquiry**

This period includes the basic announcement of the kerygma and the opportunity to form a relationship while building rapport. This period prepares those participating in it for the coming steps.

*Welcoming conversion with parish priest, deacon, or designated minister:*

- Express joy at the birth or impending birth of their child
- Help parents recognize the significance of this event
- Extend invitation for parents to more fully enter the life of the Church
- Affirm the parents in their desire to fulfill their own baptismal call
- Discern parent readiness, and sincerity to live the Christian life and establish a reasonable hope that the child will be raised in the Catholic faith.

*Group introduction session:*

- To proclaim the kerygma
- To create community among those presenting their children
- To clearly set expectations of those who are in formation and preparing
- To incorporate godparents into the process

*Introduction to parish at Sunday Mass prior to Baptism*

- Modeled after the Rite of Entrance, this introduction would prepare the parish to welcome the new member of the family.
- Introduce (or reintroduce) the family to the parish)
- Encourage community to welcome the child and their family

## Period II **Catechumenate**

This period includes in depth catechesis and proclamation of faith which plant the seeds for a lifelong relationship with Christ and His Church.

*A period of catechesis designed to proclaim the good news and a move towards an enculturation of the Gospel into the lives of the family members.*

- Review theology of Baptism (see resources)
- Review the role of the faith community in the formation of children and families
- Review the liturgy of Baptism (see ritual)
- Add additional learning objectives based on community needs and programming.
- Provide opportunities for prayer and spiritual growth

*Opportunities for personal response to the activity of God in their family.*

- A period of reflection
- A presentation on the call to holiness and an opportunity to commit to living an authentically Christian life.

*An opportunity for parents to receive support in forming the domestic church.*

- Testimony and perhaps pairing with another family about how they have developed their domestic church.

- provide practical materials and opportunities for families

### Period III **Purification and Enlightenment**

*This period includes the more prayerful reflection and the immediate preparation for the Sacrament of Baptism.*

- An at home activity that incorporates prayer and scripture that prepares the family for the celebration.
- A home blessing by the parish priest
- Encouragement to personal study and prayer
- Sacrament of Reconciliation offered

### Period IV **Mystagogia**

*This period includes the response of the family to the sacrament and the invitation to live the Christian life in full participation with their child (ren).*

- The newly baptized should attend the weekly Sunday Masses, being visible in the front for all to meet and they should be included in the prayers of the faithful.
- Parents should be introduced to a mentor family who can more fully help them be involved in the parish.
- A member of the parish staff should be assigned to keep in contact with them about potential community activities.

# A Sampling of Resources for Infant Baptism

(most have been updated for 2020 ritual, most available in Spanish)

Brochures for Infant Baptism from the Office of Christian Formation:

<https://bit.ly/2tB1kDI> (English)

<https://bit.ly/2N42nBs> (En Español)

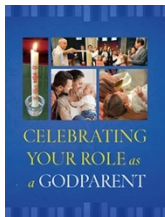
## For Godparents:

Duquin, Lorene Hanley *Catholic Parent Know How: How to be a Godparent* Our Sunday Visitor, 2019

<https://www.orderosv.com/product/catholic-parent-know-how-how-to-be-a-godparent-revised>

<https://www.orderosv.com/product/catholic-parent-know-how-how-to-be-a-godparent-revised-spanish>

Vanni, Trish Sullivan. *Celebrating Your Role as Godparent*. The Pastoral Center.



<https://pastoral.center/celebrating-your-role-as-a-godparent>

You have been invited to be a baptismal sponsor, a godparent. This booklet will help you understand the expectations and opportunities of that special role. You will be an important force in shaping your soon-to-be godchild into a faith-filled and faithful follower of Christ.



It is an awesome responsibility being a Godparent. What IS a Godparent? What do you do? How can you prepare?

**Catholic Parent Know-How: How to Be a Godparent** will give you practical pointers, Scripture, and more. Not only will you discover what Godparents are, but the Sacrament of Baptism will be explained, you will find out what Godparents do during the Baptism, what they do after the Baptism, and how Godparents can help in understanding a child's faith development.

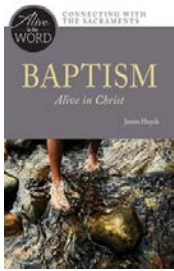
The Prayer for a Godchild is perfect for anytime.

## For Parishes and Parents:

Huyck, Justin. *Baptism: Alive in Christ*, Liturgical Press, 2019

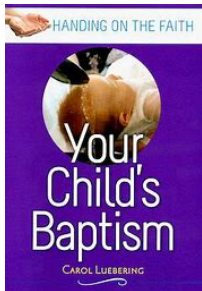
<https://litpress.org/Products/6403/Baptism-Alive-in-Christ>





Baptism is not just an event that happened in the past-but the identity we are immersed in as followers of Jesus. This volume helps us reflect on this identity in the midst of our contemporary church and world. Explore three New Testament passages to contemplate what it means to be alive in God's love, alive in Christian community, and alive in Christ's death and resurrection.

Luebering, Carol. *Your Child's Baptism (Revised): Handing on the Faith* Liguori (2019)



What do you ask of God's Church for your child? This question, taken from the Rite of Baptism, requires only the briefest of answers: Baptism, faith, eternal life. And yet, the baptism of your child is a complex event, embracing those difficult concepts we understand only by degrees: faith, life, relationship, Church. The far-reaching and clearly formed insights in *Your Child's Baptism*, will help you as you prepare for the simple, and yet complex, beginning of your child's life in Christ.

This book complies with the 2020 Order of Baptism of Children

McNamara, Beth Branigan, et al *Parent Letters Our Sunday Visitor*

<https://www.orderosv.com/product/parent-letters-spanish>

<https://www.orderosv.com/product/parent-letters-revised-c-2010>



Completely updated with a vibrant design, fresh content, and all-new parent gifts, **Parent Letters** is better than ever! This series of 7 post-Baptism mailings makes it easy to engage new families and keep them inspired in the Faith! Starting right after Baptism and every 6 months thereafter, **Parent Letters** delivers the Catholic wisdom, support, and encouragement parents need to nurture their child's spiritual growth. Available in Spanish and English.

**Parent Letters** is a proven successful program to:

- Increase the percentage of baptized children who receive future sacraments
- Increase the percentage of baptized children who participate in parish pre-school activities
- Help parents feel supported and relevant at their parish

Naffziger, Ann and Paul Canaese. *After the Plunge: Reaching Out to Parents After Baptism.*

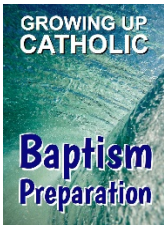
The Pastoral Center



<https://pastoral.center/after-the-plunge-eresource-kit-for-reaching-out-to-parents-after-baptism>

Reproducible and ready to personalize handouts to guide parents after Baptism. Also suggestions on forming a domestic church.

The Pastoral Center. *Growing Up Catholic Baptismal Preparation Program*



<http://products.pastoral.center/pc/pc150/1/preview/index.html>

This resource, available in Spanish and English comes in either a binder or an e-resource format. Leader's guide and adaptable lessons including follow up. This program could be used to train potential baptism team members as well.

Schaeffler, Janet O.P. *Catholic Parent Know-How: Preparing Your Child for Baptism Our Sunday Visitor* (updated 2019)



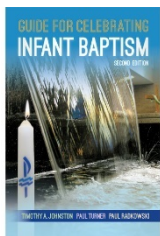
<https://www.orderosv.com/product/catholic-parent-know-how-baptism-revised-spanish>

<https://www.orderosv.com/product/catholic-parent-know-how-baptism-revised>

This small booklet is not just about the moment of Baptism, because Baptism is not just about one moment. *Baptism is a lifetime sacrament.* It happens only once (it cannot be repeated) -- but it is about the rest of our lives. What we do and say in those few moments is lived each day for the rest of our lives. Available in Spanish and English.

Turner, Paul, et al *Guide for Celebrating Infant Baptism* Liturgical Training Publications

<https://www.ltp.org/products/details/EGCIB2/guide-for-celebrating-infant-baptism-second-edition>



The celebration of infant Baptism stirs joy within a community and reminds those who have gathered that God has called each of us to be missionary disciples. Celebrating Baptism well has the potential to evangelize and transform a parish community so that their faith will be stirred, deepened, and renewed. This second edition provides pastoral guidance for preparing joyful and communal celebrations of infant Baptism within or outside Mass according to the newly translated Order of Baptism of Children. It provides guidance for selecting Scripture readings, prayer texts, and music; arranging the environment; scheduling ministers; and preparing liturgies that engage and evangelize. As part of the Preparing Parish Worship™ series, this book includes:

- Theological reflections on the meaning of Baptism
- Historical overview of the development of the baptismal rites for children
- A walk-through of the newly translated Order of Baptism of Children
- Answers to frequently asked questions with responses to difficult pastoral situations
- Assistance with best liturgical practices
- Inspirational and informative quotations from Scripture and Church document

## DVDs/Media

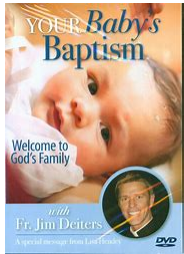
*Your Baby's Baptism: Welcome to God's Family* with Fr. Jim Deiters

*El Bautismo de su bebé: Bienvenidos a la familia de Dios* with P. Jim Deiters

Liguori Publications

<http://www.liguori.org/your-baby-s-baptism-dvd-deiters.html>

<http://www.liguori.org/el-bautismo-de-su-bebe-dvd.html>



dvd.

This 30-minute DVD, available in both Spanish and English, celebrates and renews your faith while strengthening your decision to raise your child in the Catholic faith. As you ask "What name will I give my child?," "What do I ask of God's Church?," and "Am I willing to raise my child in the practice of the Church?," be present to God's Word and symbols and experience the fullness of the prayer that happens during the rite of baptism. Free downloadable study guide. There are also parent books in Spanish and English to accompany the

*Baptism is a Beginning* CD Rom with bilingual handouts for parent preparation.



<https://www.ltp.org/products/details/BBBCD/baptism-is-a-beginning-bilingual-reproducible-handouts-for-infant-baptism-preparation-el-bautismo-es-un-comienzo-hojas-bilingues-fotocopiables-para-la-preparacion-del-bautismo-de-ninos>

This book with CD-ROM provides parishes with all they need to prepare parents, families, godparents, and sponsors for the Baptism of a child and for continuing support and formation after the Baptism. Eighteen different pamphlets can be reproduced for distribution to families and are enriched by the insights of Sofia Cavalletti, founder of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Topics found in *Baptism Is a Beginning* include:

- awaiting the birth
- a message to adoptive parents
- signs of Baptism
- choosing godparents
- a message to godparents
- an explanation of the Rite
- a message to grandparents
- praying with young children
- moral formation
- religious capacities and needs
- cultivating wonder
- a detailed plan for a presentation/meeting with parents/godparents

The Sacrament of Baptism: Past and Present with Kathleen Chesto. The Pastoral Center.

<https://pastoral.center/kathleen-cesto-on-the-sacraments-the-sacrament-of-baptism-dvd-past-and-present>



A bit of an older video, but with good information. Study guide. 230 minutes.

### For children:

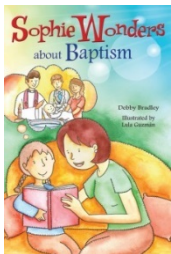
*Born Into the Kingdom: The Miracle of Baptism* DVD Liguori Publications



In this happy presentation, Brother Francis invites us to share in the realities of the Sacrament of Baptism and the union it provides us with God's big family!

This DVD is bilingual Spanish and English

Bradley Debby, Illustrated by Lourdes Guzmán *Sophie Wonders about Baptism*  
Liguori Publications



Sophie is a curious little girl, as little children tend to be. She talks with her mom and others about the sacraments and helps children to glimpse the sacraments through the girl's sense of wonder. When Sophie asks about the photo of her baptism, she learns about her Christian family, and how her parents made a promise to teach her how to live like Jesus.

P.S. Sophie wonders about all 7 sacraments, so there is a book for each.

Maresca Catherine, Illustrated by Nathan Röhlander *When You Were Baptized / Cuando te bautizaron*

<https://www.ltp.org/products/details/SWB/cuando-te-bautizar0>

<https://www.ltp.org/products/details/EWB/when-you-were-baptized>

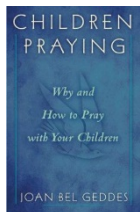


The sacrament of Baptism welcomes us into a community of faith and prepares us for life in God. Each gift received on the day of our Baptism will grow in meaning and purpose as we grow in faith. Using age-appropriate text and engaging illustrations, *When You Were Baptized* invites children to reflect on this sacrament through the rituals and symbols of the Baptismal rite: water, light, holy oil, God's Word, and the baptismal garment. Each time they read *When You Were Baptized*, parents and their children will recall their baptismal

day and form a loving bond around their memories of when they were welcomed into a community of Christian faith

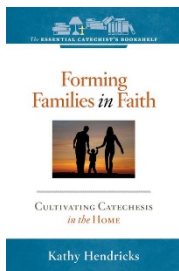
## Helpful Family Books and Media for Developing the Domestic Church

Geddes, Joan Bel. *Why and How to Pray with Your Children*. Notre Dame Press



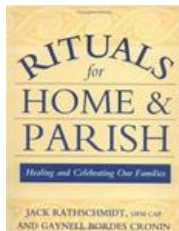
This is an older book, but still great. Buy on Amazon.

Hendricks, Kathy. *Forming Families in Faith: Cultivating Catechesis in the Home*. Twenty-Third Publications



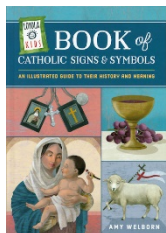
Very practical, modern, and easy to read resource to provide to families.

Rathschmidt, Jack OCF.CAP and Gaynell Bordes Cronin. *Rituals for Home and Parish*. Paulist Press



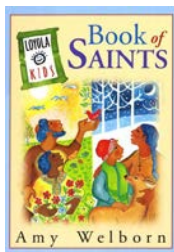
A good resource for prayers of healing and celebration for families. Buy on Amazon.

Welborn, Amy. *Book of Catholic Signs and Symbols*. Loyola Press



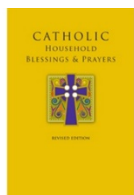
An illustrated guide to the history and meaning of sacramental signs and symbols.

Welborn, Amy. *Loyola Kids: Catholic Book of Saints*. Loyola Press



Readable, true stories of some modern saints as well as some classical saints.

USCCB. *Catholic Household Prayers and Blessings*. USCCB Publishing 2020



This resource from the USCCB is being revised.

<http://catholicmom.com/> CatholicMom.com is a ministry of [Holy Cross Family Ministries](#). Father Willy Raymond, C.S.C., President, welcomes you to CatholicMom.com and assures you that you will be inspired, informed and entertained by the work of the contributors.

<https://www.catholicicing.com/> Lacy Rabideau runs this website and blog and it is loaded with ideas for family and classroom use.

<http://www.decentfilms.com> Dcn Steven D. Greydanus created this website in 2000 to help Christian families discern appropriate films for their families.

<https://www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/family> Loyola Press provides prayer and activities for Catholic families on this website.

<https://www.pluggedin.com> Focus on the Family movie reviews.

<http://sisterrosemovies.com/> “**Sister Rose Goes to the Movies**” is a website featuring Daughter of St. Paul and media expert Sister Rose Pacatte offering insight with a moral, theological, educational and artistic perspective into **films** both new and old.

<http://www.catholicfamilyfaith.org/> We created **Strong Catholic Family Faith** to empower and equip Catholic leaders to accompany and form faith-filled Catholic families. Recent research states the importance of parents in the faith formation of their children. We curate relevant content and meaningful experiences so that leaders might better partner with parents in passing on the faith

# Appendix I Validity of Baptism Document

## Determining Baptismal/Confirmation Validity by Church of Origin

### Introduction

*“Baptism constitutes the foundation of communion among all Christians, including those who are not yet in full communion with the Catholic Church. “*  
(CCC#1271)

#### **This quote contains two basic truths:**

The majority of Christians, not just Catholics, are doing the same thing when they baptize.

The baptism of a non-Catholic is respected as much as Catholic baptism.

*“Baptism imprints on the soul an indelible spiritual sign, the character, which consecrates the baptized person for Christian worship. Because of the character, Baptism cannot be repeated.”* (CCC#1280). This is also a matter of Canon Law (#845)

This means the Catholic Church will under no circumstance baptize anyone unless it is certain they have not been validly baptized. Per the RCIA Statutes (#37) the diocesan bishop determines how a conditional baptism is celebrated. It is always done privately. Every effort must be made to investigate the baptism, including some or all of the following: eyewitness testimony from others or from the person themselves if old enough to remember details, photographs, video.

Please note, for purposes of this document, children over the age of reason are treated as adults, although specifics for children are listed.

#### **Validly baptized:**

Those baptized in a non-Catholic ecclesial community are not to be baptized conditionally unless there is a serious reason for doubting the validity of their baptism on the ground of the matter or the form of the words used in the baptism, or of the intention of the adult being baptized or that of the baptizing minister. (CC # 869 § 2)

This means for validity, Baptism involves the following:

#### **Intent**

The baptism must be “into Christ”

**Form**

The formula must invoke Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

**Matter**

Water must be used and must flow over some part of the skin.

*The following has been compiled to assist parishes in determining the canonical status of your people in RCIA and children being brought forward for Sacraments in the Roman Catholic Church. This list is not exhaustive. It is difficult to discern intent of either the minister or the recipient, and so this list focuses on the matter and the form in most cases.*

**Eastern Churches in Communion with Rome**

Baptism and Confirmation conferred in the Eastern Churches are always valid. Since Confirmation is conferred at the same time as Baptism, it is sufficient to establish that Baptism was conferred. Usually, the child has also received First Communion at the time of Baptism. The Eastern Churches in Communion with Rome include the following:

*The Alexandrian Rite*

The Coptic Catholic Church  
The Ethiopian Catholic Church

*The Antiochene Rite (West Syrian)*

The Malankara (Malankaese) Catholic Church  
The Maronite Catholic Church  
The Syrian (Syriac) Catholic Church

*The Armenian Rite*

The Armenian Holy Apostolic Church

*The Chaldean Rite (East Syrian)*

The Chaldean Catholic Church  
The Syro-Malabar Catholic Church

**The Byzantine Rite**

The Melkite Catholic Church  
The Byzantine Slovak Catholic Church  
The Byzantine Ukrainian Catholic Church  
The Albanian Catholic Church



The Byelorussian Catholic Church  
The Bulgarian Catholic Church•  
The Greek Catholic Church  
The Italo-Albanian Catholic Church  
The Byzantine Yugoslav Catholic Church  
The Russian Catholic Church  
The Byzantine -Romanian Catholic Church  
The Ruthenian Catholic Church

Notes:

- Children who have celebrated full initiation in one of the above Eastern Rite Churches will need further catechesis concerning the Sacraments of Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation. Families should enroll these children in a religious education program either in a Catholic School or Parish School of Religious Education.
- Adults who desire to change ritual must receive special permission from the Holy See. Their children may join them when permission is given for their parents to change ritual.

### **Eastern Churches not in Communion with Rome**

The initiation rites conferred by the Eastern Churches not in communion with Rome are considered **valid**. The churches included here are any of the Orthodox Churches and the Assyrian Churches of the East. (Nestorian Church). The certificate of Baptism will refer to “Chrismation”, which is Confirmation.

- In the case of children, a child will have received full initiation at Baptism. After catechesis of a minimum of two years, they would simply make a profession of faith (RCIA #473- 474).
- In the case of adults, an adult would receive a formal RCIA process which would end with a profession of faith. (RCIA #473-474)

### **Christian Baptism**

It is important to read a baptismal certificate thoroughly. Occasionally, a certificate may read that the person has been baptized in the ‘holy catholic church.’ This does not mean that they have been baptized Roman Catholic.

The Roman Catholic norm for valid Baptism must follow the proper matter and form. The “matter” is water Baptism either by immersion or pouring. The “form” is the Trinitarian formula described in Code of Canon Law #849, 850 and in RCIA #226. Always insure that this has been followed.

If the rituals or established customs of a church or community describe Baptism by immersion, pouring or sprinkling together with the Trinitarian formula (in the name of the Father, and of

the Son, and of the Holy Spirit) it can only be doubtful if that minister did not observe the regulations of his or her own church or community.

The Roman Catholic Church considers the validity of baptisms and where appropriate confirmations. This is based on what is normally done by each denomination. Recall a valid Confirmation must follow apostolic succession. For the RCIA process, all those with valid Baptisms would be candidates. (RCIA 400-504) Those with invalid Baptisms would be Catechumens.

Adventist	Valid
African Methodist Episcopal	Valid
African Methodist Episcopal Zion	Valid
American (United American Catholic)	Valid Baptism, Invalid Confirmation
Amish	Valid
Anglican	Valid
Apostolic Church	Invalid
Armenian Apostolic	Invalid
Assembly of God	Valid
Baha'i Faith	Invalid
Baptist	Valid
Bohemian Free Thinkers	Invalid
Chinese Catholic	both Baptism and Confirmation recognized
Christadelphians	Invalid
Christian Community (Rudolf Steiner)	Invalid
Christian Fellowship	Valid
Christian and Missionary Alliance	Valid
Christian Scientist	No baptism
Church of Christ	Valid
Church of Divine Science	Invalid
Church of God	Valid
Church of the Brethren	Valid
Church of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons)	Invalid

(see end of document for more information on this) \*

Church of the Nazarene	Valid
Church of the New Jerusalem	Invalid
Church of Scientology	Invalid
Church of the Universal Brotherhood (Doukhobors)	Invalid
Community of Pope Pius X (Lefebvre)	both Baptism and Confirmation recognized
Congregational Church	Valid
Disciples of Christ	Valid
Dutch Reform Church	Valid
Eastern Non-Catholics (Orthodox)	both Baptism and Confirmation recognized
Episcopal Church	Valid, Invalid Confirmation
Evangelical Church of the Covenant	Valid
Evangelical Churches	Valid
Evangelical United Brethren	Valid
Holy Order of Mans	Invalid
International Council of Community Churches	Valid
Jehovah's Witnesses	Invalid
Liberal Catholic Church	Valid
Lutheran	Valid, Invalid Confirmation
Masons	No baptism
Mennonite	Valid
Methodist	Valid
Missionary Hill Church	Valid
Moravian Church	Valid
New Apostolic Church	Valid
New Church of Mr. Emmanuel Swedenborg	Invalid
Old Catholic Church	Valid
Old Roman Catholic Church	Valid, Valid Confirmation
Old Roman Church	Valid
Orthodox (see above)	both Baptism and Confirmation recognized
Pentecostal Churches	Invalid

People's Church of Chicago	Invalid
Philippine Independent Church (Iglesia Filipina Independiente)	Determine case by case
Polish National Church (is Eastern Rite)	both Baptism and Confirmation recognized
Presbyterian	Valid
Quakers (Society of Friends)	No baptism
Reformed Church	Valid
Salvation Army	Invalid
Seventh Day Adventist	Valid
Shakers	No baptism
Unitarians/Universalists	Invalid
United Church of Canada	Valid
United Church of Christ	Valid
United Reformed	Valid
Uniting Church of Australia	Valid
Waldensian	Valid
World Harvest Church	Invalid
Zion	Valid

### **Miscellaneous Notes**

If an individual has a valid Baptism and Confirmation and they wish to enter into the full communion with the Roman Catholic Church, they will need to make a profession of faith after a suitable period of catechesis. (RCIA 473-504)

In regards to children:

If a child is not baptized and is under the age of reason (7), after catechesis of both the child and their parents the child can be baptized. It is assumed that at least one parent is Roman Catholic. These children should also be enrolled in Catholic School or Parish Religious Education Program.

If the child is older than 7 years of age, they enter an RCIA process.

If a child's parents are from the Eastern Rite, they remain in the rite of their parents.

Children of adults received into the Church who are under the age of seven and who are validly baptized should be enrolled in Catholic School or Parish Religious Education Program and undergo sacramental preparation with their age group. When they receive their First Communion, they make a profession of faith with the other children. Note in the First Communion registry that they have made their profession of faith. Information about their Baptism should be noted in the baptismal registry with a note that they made their profession of faith at the time of their First Communion. Include the date.

**\*Mormon (Church of Latter Day Saints)**

In 2001, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith declared that Mormon baptism is invalid. This was a declaration based on the divine law and is therefore retroactive.

**Approved: Bishop Felipe J. Estevez, September, 2018**

Resources:

Archdiocese of Baltimore, Office of Worship

Diocese of Columbus, Office for Divine Worship

Chancery Policy Manual, Diocese of St. Augustine Enclosure 3 in RCIA Policy

Huels, John M. J.C.D. The Pastoral Companion: A Canon Law Handbook for Catholic Ministry