

# The Rite of Baptism

# What happens during the baptismal ceremony?

Let's walk through the Rite of Baptism step-by-step:

#### Reception of the Child

The minister—a priest or deacon—invites the parents and godparents to present their child for reception of Baptism and asks them to undertake the task of Christian parenthood.

The child is then welcomed with joy and claimed for Christ with the Sign of the Cross on his or her forehead, traced by the minister, parents, and godparents.

#### Liturgy of the Word

The minister reads from the Gospel and gives a brief homily on the meaning of Baptism.

#### **Intercessions**

As in the Mass, prayers of intercession follow the Gospel and homily.

#### Invocation of the Saints

The saints, including the namesake of the child and any special patrons requested by the family, are called upon for their help and intercession.

#### Prayer of Exorcism and Anointing

A prayer for the child to be set free from the power of original sin is followed by an anointing with the oil of catechumens to strengthen him or her in resisting sin and evil.

#### Blessing of the Water

The minister blesses the water of the baptismal font, calling down the Holy Spirit to transform its waters and make them holy.

#### Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith

Parents and godparents are invited to renew their baptismal promises and are reminded of the responsibilities they undertake by seeking Baptism for their child.

#### **Baptism**

The minister pours (or sprinkles) water over the head of the child, saying, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

### **Anointing with Sacred Chrism**

The child is now anointed with chrism as a symbol that he or she now shares in Christ's mission as priest, prophet, and king.

#### Clothing with White Garment

The child is presented with a white garment, symbolizing that he or she has been clothed with Christ and has been reborn in him.

#### Presenting the Baptismal Candle

Parents are given a baptismal candle, which is lit from the Pascal candle. This symbolizes the light of faith that parents have handed on to their child through Baptism.

#### Ephpheta (meaning "be opened")

The minister gives a special blessing over the child's ears and mouth so that he or she will be open to receiving and proclaiming God's Word.

#### Our Father

All present pray the Our Father together.

#### Final Blessing

The minister says the closing prayer, then blesses the gathered community and concludes the rite.

## **DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS**

- 1. What parts of the baptismal rite do you find especially meaningful or powerful?
- 2. Do you have any questions about the ceremony?

# What Parents Do and Say During the Ceremony

#### Who holds the baby?

You do! The child's parents (or one of them) hold the child as the minister pours the water and invokes the Trinity—"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

#### Where do we stand?

This will vary depending on the practice of your parish, which usually is dictated by the placement of the baptismal font and the number of children being baptized on a given Sunday. Typically, parents and godparents are situated around or near the font. Don't worry the minister will give you the details!

# Could you offer a step-by-step overview of what we say and do?

- The minister will ask you what name you have given your child. You will respond with your child's first name.
- 2. The minister will then ask what you are seeking from the Church for your child. You will reply, "Baptism."

- Then, the minister will ask if you understand what you are undertaking and you will respond, "We do."
- The minister will invite parents and godparents to trace the Sign of the Cross on your child's forehead.
- During the general intercessions, several prayers will be offered. All present reply, "Lord, hear our prayer."
- During the invocation of saints, the minister will call upon several saints. After each saint's name, all will reply, "Pray for us."
- 7. The minister will call upon you to renew your baptismal promises, asking a series of brief questions. You will reply to all, "I do."
- 8. The minister will ask, "Is it your will that N. should be baptized in the faith of the Church, which we have all professed with you?" You will respond, "It is."
- 9. After each prayer of the rite, all respond, "Amen."



# The Role of Parents and Godparents

# What am I committing to as a parent?

This one is simple. At the beginning of the rite, after you state that you are seeking Baptism for your child, the minister will clarify that:

"You are accepting the responsibility of training him (her) in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him (her) up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor."

# How do I live out my commitment as a parent?

In Baptism, you are committing to:

- 1. Practicing the Catholic Faith.
- 2. Handing on the Faith.

This is not a commitment to pass along information about God or Jesus to your child; it is a commitment to live the Faith and hand on this life. On one hand, this is simple. It means attending Mass, going to confession, fostering a life of prayer in your home, having a family commitment to service and involvement in your parish, and giving age appropriate instruction in the Faith. Most especially, this means striving to live God's commandments and being a role model for your children. On the other hand, there are many distractions, and there will be the constant temptation to treat your faith as one "extracurricular" activity among many others. Ultimately, in Baptism, parents commit to making the Catholic Faith the central reality of family life.

## **DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS**

- 1. How are you currently living your faith? How could you deepen it?
- 2. What are some things your parents did in fostering faith that are worthy of following with your own children? What could you do differently?

## What is the role of godparents?

Godparents serve as witnesses and make an invested commitment to the formation of the child in the Catholic Faith. They should be selected because they are good Christian witnesses who live and practice their faith.

During the ceremony, they stand with the parents and child and share in the commitment that is being made by renewing baptismal promises and participating in the responses. In addition, the godfather lights the baptismal candle from the Paschal candle as a sign that he is helping hand on the light of Faith to the newly baptized.

# **DISCUSSIONS QUESTIONS**

- 1. Who have you selected to be godparents and why?
- 2. How do you plan on keeping them involved in your child's life as he or she grows up, especially in matters of faith?