

Handbook for Parents

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

THINGS TO DO

CELEBRATION



“Since parents have conferred life on their children they have a most solemn obligation to educate their offspring. Hence, parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children. Their role as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it.”

DECLARATION ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

We hear today that we as parents are the primary educator of our children. How can we be? For most of us all formal religious education ended after we received Confirmation. We studied the tenets of the faith, answered questions the Bishop posed, said our prayers. How can education be our job? We aren't qualified in the passing on of the traditions and basic teaching of the Church – right? WRONG!

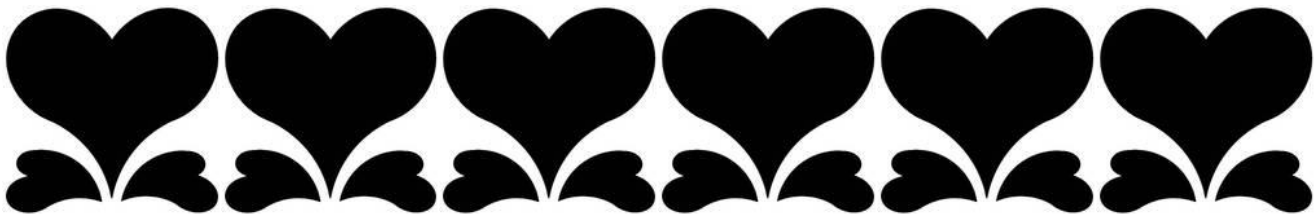
Each parent has a keen responsibility in the religious formation of their child; in fact, each is already passing traditions and basic church teachings on to them. Maybe not the way we envision nor maybe not even to our own liking, but we are.

Think a moment about your attitudes towards Mass attendance. Positive or negative, they've been passed on. How about the Sacrament of Penance or talking about our neighbor down the block or the appliance repairman? Yes, all of these instances are opportunities for passing on our faith. Now we know. We also must be aware that if we adults do not have a clear-cut understanding, an openness to change and grow, continuing our own religious formation, then what are we going to pass on to our children? Perhaps, a shallow understanding of our faith.

As educators within the parish community, we hope to assist you as the primary educator of your child through parent formation and other adult faith formation opportunities bringing to you our own knowledge and experience of Catholic teachings in light of the Second Vatican Council. Anything else we might do to help, we hope you will not hesitate to call upon us. We are the family of God, the Body of Christ, as in any good, wholesome family relationship, we help each other.

The next pages are meant to give a background of sacrament. This is meant for you as an adult to understand the theology of sacrament, where your child is in his/her development in relation to the experience of sacrament and some practical ways you may work with your child during his/her growing up years.

WHERE DO WE BEGIN?



WITH LOVE

“Parents are always teaching and their first lessons are about love. A mother holding her baby in her arms speaking to him in her gentle voice, softly stroking his hair, teaches him that he is dear and that she loves him.... A father's strength and bigness, the tenderness of his grasp, even the familiar sound and smell of him, so surely speak of love to a child that although he is too young to put it into words, he knows what love is because he has experienced it.”

Mary Reed Newland, Homemade Christians

CONCEPT OF GOD

A child's understanding of God is first perceived through his/her knowledge of his/her own parents. A very young child can see only what is concrete. Therefore, the way you as a parent share your concept of God, the way you act, who you are and how you relate to God and others influence your child's understanding; i.e. a loving parent within the home will help a child understand God as love, a forgiving parent will help the child understand forgiveness, an authoritative parent within the home or a fearful parent will project that image of God. How do you want your child to see God? Formal education can teach them of a loving Father, but only you can make Him real.

We see that each of us has a dynamic relationship with God. We respond to his relationship through a Person not a thing or law or act. The Person is Jesus.

God's greatest gift to us is our free will. God calls and invites us to Him. We have but to respond, through love and caring in relationship to Him and through our relationship with others. Jesus teaches us this through all the writings in the New Testament. His life is our model.

“This was Jesus' answer: ‘I solemnly assure you, the Son cannot do anything by himself—he can do only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does he shows him.’” John 5:19-20

Slowly we learn what God is asking each of us to become. We grow and develop our talents and potentials one day at a time.

As a child grows and matures his understanding of God will broaden to see that Jesus, God the Father's gift of Himself in human form, is the perfect revelation.

“No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, ever at the Father's side, who has revealed Him.”
John 1:18

As we can see, it is through Jesus that we grow to know the love of God our Father. Reach for the Bible, especially the New Testament and read, read, read. You will fall in love with the beautiful message that is contained therein.

We must admit our mistakes to ourselves and to our children and be confident that God is with us. For we know we will make them. Our children must learn to grow beyond us into a world of freedom and manipulation, love and hate, sin and grace. They must be encouraged to develop through each of them uniquely.

CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY

People need people to help them to grow. “No man is an island, no man stand alone...” We develop healthy relationships with others, we learn more about ourselves and hence our knowledge and relationship with God deepens. We are a community people. God did not create man, Adam, to be alone.

“The Lord God said: ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him.’” Genesis 2:18

We also see this communal concept within the trinity. Three persons in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Trinity is a relationship of beings. The Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father. The fruit of this love relationship is the Spirit. Within our families this love relationship exists as well.

Our first sense of community comes within our family – mother, father, sisters and brothers—the larger family; grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, the school community; our governmental community and our Church community.

“...the parish, under the leadership of the pastor, is the door to participate in the ordinary Christian community. Therefore, ‘it is the responsibility of pastors and laity to ensure that those doors are always open.’ It is the place where the Christian faith is first received, expressed and nourished. It is where the Christian faith deepens and where the Christian community is formed. In the parish members of the Christian community ‘become aware of being the people of God.’ In the parish the faithful are nurtured by the word of God and nourished by the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. From the parish the faithful are sent on their apostolic mission in the world. ...it is the responsibility of the parish community and its leadership to ensure that the faith that it teaches, preaches, and celebrates is alive and that it is a true sign, for all who come in contact with it, that this truly is the living Body of Christ.” National Directory for Catechesis, USCCB, pg 100

SACRAMENTS

What is a sacrament? A sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace. Our grandparents learned this definition of sacrament. Today, the Catechism of the Catholic Church #1116 states:

“Sacraments are ‘powers that come forth’ from the Body of Christ, which is ever-living and life-giving. They are actions of the Holy Spirit at work in his Body, the Church. They are ‘the masterworks of God’ in the new and everlasting covenant.”

Christ gave us the Church as our universal sacrament. As the Church has grown and developed, she has defined seven sacraments as living signs of Christ working through the Holy Spirit in and through our faith community.

GOD

FATHER

JESUS CHRIST

SON

HOLY SPIRIT

CHURCH

SACRAMENTS

Baptism Confirmation Eucharist Penance Anointing of the Sick

Holy Orders

Matrimony

Each of our sacraments has a purpose, signs and symbols of their own. They call us to a deeper relationship with God, Our Father.

“The purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify men, to build up the body of Christ, and finally, to give worship to God. Because they are signs they also instruct. They not only presuppose faith, but by words and objects they also nourish, strengthen, and express it; that is why they are called ‘sacraments of faith.’ They do indeed impart grace, but, in addition, the very act of celebrating them disposes the faithful most effectively to receive this grace in a fruitful manner, to worship God duly, and to practice charity.

It is therefore of capital importance that the faithful easily understand the sacramental signs, and with great eagerness have frequent recourse to those sacraments which were instituted to nourish the Christian life.”

CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY #59
SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

SIGNS & SYMBOLS

A sign is something which indicates a reality beyond itself. The sign is meant to convey an idea. For example, a stop sign does more than say stop. Our learned experience is that we must stop or something will happen, an accident, a ticket, etc. When we apply this to the sacraments as a sign we are saying that Eucharist is more than just bread and wine, Baptism more than just water or oil, Penance more than just forgiveness. The bread and wine, the water are signs of the sacrament but carry a richer meaning, one that goes beyond. In our sacraments, we experience the presence of Jesus in a real way through the believing community of the Church, the people of God.

A symbol is a sign for which we assign a meaning. For instance, the cross or a handshake. These symbols have a power in themselves to bring us a meaning that does not depend on us alone.

Our sacraments have a very real sign and symbol language. Take the time to learn about them.

BAPTISM

As we have said, the parent is the child's most influential educator. It is the parent who brings their child to the Church community to be baptized. They want their child to grow in relationship within the believing community of faith in Jesus Christ. Baptism is offered to each person by God. It is a free gift from God through Jesus Christ, the way, the grace of eternal salvation. God invites us to Him and we freely accept Him in Baptism. It is the community who will influence the child's growth. The parents continue to expose their child to this faith environment by entering into it themselves through attendance at Mass, reception of the sacraments, personal prayer, works of service, continuing their own religious formation and that of the child and in many other ways. By witnessing to their faith, they become examples to the community and likewise the community supports them in an environment of faith in Christ.

In Baptism the godparents represent a part of the Christian community. It is not enough to choose a relative or friend as an honor, special privilege or because the family wants that person drawn closer. The purpose of a godparent is that of a true witness to the faith. It is important for the parents to choose godparents who responsibly witness their faith within the believing community. For this reason, it is wise to choose as godparents, Catholics who are married in the Church (if they are married) and are truly living their faith. Your child will grow and see this faith in action and imitate the response of these people.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO ORIGINAL SIN

Unfortunately sin is still with us. Our understanding of sin is that of breaking a relationship with God. A child is born into a world in which sin exists. He/she is helpless at this point to do anything about the effects of sin, such as war, prejudice, violence, hatred to name but a few. The Bible tells us that our first parents, Adam and Eve, thought themselves masters of their own destiny. Power, control, pride and selfishness cause sin. As long as we can remember, people have had to deal with such sins. We call this original sin. Humankind strives to overcome this evil and search for true meaning in life. Accepting God's gifts, striving to follow Jesus Christ and the way He taught us to live, we ask for assistance and declare our faith within the believing community through Baptism.

“God created man in his image and established him in his friendship. A spiritual creature, man can live this friendship only in free submission to God. The prohibition against eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil’ spells this out: ‘for in the day that you eat of it, you shall die.’ The ‘tree of the knowledge of good and evil’ symbolically evokes the insurmountable limits that man, being a creature, must freely recognize and respect with trust. Man is dependent on his Creator and subject to the laws of creation and to the moral norms that govern the use of freedom.”
Catechism of the Catholic Church #396

GRACE

God's graciousness, His love, His mystery comes to us through each of the sacraments. Especially in Baptism, our entrance into a new life with Christ, grace is given to us to strengthen us on our journey; a process that ends only in death.

“The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions.”
Catechism of the Catholic Church #1131

In the early Christian Church, adults were the principal candidates for Baptism. The Sacraments of Initiation, Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, were received at the same time. After a catechumenate period (preparation and instruction) of approximately three years, a person was then ready to present himself for Baptism. A sponsor who assisted in the preparation presented the candidate to the believing community and vouched for his readiness. After several Scrutinies – (This practice revised in the recent Rite of Christian

Initiation of Adults has a two fold purpose: revealing anything that is weak or sinful in the hearts of the catechumens so that they may be healed and revealing what is upright, strong and holy so that they may be strengthened. The Scrutinies are intended to free them from sinfulness and give them strength in Christ.) the candidate is received into the community on Holy Saturday at the Easter Vigil.

This special liturgy, the Easter Vigil, is one of the most beautiful liturgy of the year. All the signs and symbols are there, the Paschal candle – Jesus’ light present to the world; the blessing of the water – cleansing and new life; the white vestments – white indicating the newness and freshness of life in Christ. We are a new creation. How rich and beautiful is this ceremony and all that it means.

Following the candidates Baptism during the Liturgy of the Word, they are then asked to join the community. In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, after professing their belief, they are intimately joined into the Body of Christ. In the early Church, adult Christians entered the Church bringing their whole households with them, wife, children, slaves, etc. During the Black Plague in the Middle Ages, people were dying in droves. Baptism was requested for children. Infant baptism because normative.

Today we celebrate this sacrament much the same as in the early Christian Church. Unless Baptism is celebrated by committed parents in the faith community with a purpose of growing and being supported on an ongoing basis by the community, it takes on a magical appearance. Hence, Baptism is to be seriously considered. It is our call to new life, a new life in Christ.

Baptism has its roots deep in the Old Testament. Water was very significant in many part of the Scriptural world. The power of water, i.e. the Flood of Noah’s times and the fulfillment of water, i.e. when it rained and showered water on the crops to help them produce, are but a few signs of what water can do both productively and destructively.

Light and/or fire are also a very clear sign in the Old Testament. Fire destroyed and fire warmed. Light overcame darkness as in the story of creation. The Psalms echo over and over the love, the power and beauty of all God’s creation. Imagine the awe and grandeur of the One who created out of love for us.

Through the New Testament, these symbols persisted and came alive. From Mark’s Gospel comes the story of Jesus’ baptism and before Him John the Baptist.

Here begins the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In Isaiah the prophet it is written:

John the Baptizer

“I send my messenger before you to prepare your way: a herald’s voice in the desert, crying, make ready the way of the Lord, clear him a straight path.”

Thus it was that John the Baptizer appeared in the desert, proclaiming a baptism of repentance which led to the forgiveness of sins. All the Judean countryside and the people of Jerusalem went out to him in great numbers. They were being baptized by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins. John was clothed in camel’s hair, and wore a leather belt around his waist. His food was grasshoppers and wild honey. The theme of his preaching was: “One more powerful than I is to come after me. I am not fit to stoop and untie his sandal straps. I have baptized you in water; he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit.”

The Baptism of Jesus

During that time, Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. Immediately on coming up out of the water he saw the sky rent in two and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. Then a voice came from the heavens: “You are my beloved Son. On you my favor rests.” Mark 1:1-11

When we celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism we are celebrating the life, death and resurrection of Our Lord, Jesus Christ.

“In the human nature which He united to Himself, the Son of God redeemed man and transformed him into a new creation (Gal 6:15; 2 Cor. 5:17) by overcoming death through His own death and resurrection. By communicating His Spirit to His brothers, called together from all peoples, Christ made them mystically into His own body.

In that body, the life of Christ is poured into the believers, who through the sacraments are united in a hidden and real way to Christ who suffered and was glorified. Through baptism we are formed in the likeness of Christ: “For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.” (1 Cor. 12:13). In this sacred rite, a union with Christ’s death and resurrection is both symbolized and brought about: “For we were buried with Him by means of Baptism into death.” And if “we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be so in the likeness of his resurrection also.” (Rom. 6:4-5)

DOGmatic CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH
SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

SIGNS AND SYMBOLS

NAME – our name gives us identity and meaning. We are called by name into the community of believers.

WATER – is a symbol of life. Baptism is a sign that we share in a new life with Christ. We are called to bring new life to others, to bring the life of God to them. We live in the power of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit through the sign of the pouring or immersion in water.

OIL – in Baptism is put on the heart and crown of the head in the sign of the cross. We are anointed in the sign of the Cross, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The baptismal oil (chrism) is a sign of life in the Spirit. Oil in ancient times was a sign of royalty, the royal priesthood and was used by athletes as a sign of strength.

CANDLE – is lighted from the paschal candle, which is a sign of Christ as the light of the world. We are asked to bring light to others and are called to eliminate darkness or sin wherever it is possible.

WHITE GARMENT – This symbol shows our dignity as a Christian. The color signified our baptismal innocence and grace, of a new birth into a life with Christ. The garment also shows our priestly status, we are a priestly people all ordained by our Baptism. It also shows our renouncing evil or our old life and accepting and taking on a new life in Christ.

PARENTS – Bring the child for Baptism into the faith community. They are symbols of God's love for each of us through their concern, their loving relationship and their sacrifice. In Baptism we enter into a community and this community accepts and supports us. That means that we are not alone.

GODPARENTS – are a sign to the child and the community as models of faith. They sponsor the child and speak in supportiveness toward helping the child and parents grow in their faith.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

We may ask what does physical, emotional, moral and mental growth and development have to do with learning more about our faith. Why should I as a parent be concerned about my child's behavior or even my own behavior with my child or with others?

It is the environment within the home and the attitudes and responses we have with our children that make them receptive to what we say or not. Very simply, we must practice what we preach.

Once we become aware of a child's growth and development, we are better able to understand why he/she acts the way he/she does. We can then better cope with our children and respond to their needs. Jesus showed us this so plainly. He loves us just the way we are. If we are hurting, if we are happy or selfish or any number of other behaviors, he loves us. We are called to practice of virtues of kindness, gratitude, gentleness, peace, patience, understanding, forgiveness.

If we grow in knowledge of ourselves and our children, we will grow in our knowledge of Christ.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

Developing Responsibility in Children

Responsibility cannot be “taught”, it must be given. Some ways to do this are:

1. Never do for a child what he can do for him/herself.
2. Encourage a child’s first attempts to help you or to do things for him/herself. (Remember, he/she is learning so he/she will not do the task as well as you can.)
3. Give a child credit for trying to help out.
4. Give plenty of time to learn.
5. Don’t criticize or make fun of poor results. Encourage him to try again and carefully steer him toward a better way.
6. When a child is ready for larger responsibilities, let him take them on.
7. Let a child know you trust and have confidence in him.
8. Praise more than you punish. Praise for efforts as well as performance.
9. Let your child make mistakes without feeling guilty.
10. Be sure the child knows that his assistance helps the whole family.
11. Don’t keep punishing for the same offense. Help the child find a better behavior.
12. Admit your own mistakes when you make them.
13. Never make fun of or ridicule a child.
14. Don’t demand more of a child than he can give.
15. Remember, “A child needs encouragement as a plant needs water and sunshine.”

HOW TO LISTEN TO YOUR CHILD

LISTEN TO THE LANGUAGE OF BEHAVIOR

Tears, a laugh, a sullen face, a slammed door have meaning just as words do.

RESPOND TO VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION APPROPRIATELY

Let the child realize that you accept his feelings, whatever they may be, and therefore he can verbally express them to you if he so chooses.

LEARN TO RESPOND REFLECTIVELY

Let him know what you think he is feeling at a particular moment without placing a value judgment on his feelings.

BE LESS TEACHY

Do not get so caught up in the idea that you have to be “teaching” your child something all of the time. In doing this, you may overlook his problems of the moment.

REALIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING

This can play an important part toward enhancing your child’s feeling of self-esteem and self-confidence (listening can communicate any number of different but overlapping messages – such as “You’re a worthwhile person” and “I respect your point of view.”).

BE AN ACTIVE LISTENER

Make a conscious and obvious effort to understand and care about what your child is saying.

ACCEPT EARLY LANGUAGE IMPERFECTIONS

The English language does not always follow its own rules. A child who is constantly corrected might have difficulty being spontaneous and sharing his/her experiences or feelings because he/she fears criticism.

START LISTENING EARLY

Communication between parent and teenager is extremely difficult if the groundwork has not been laid early. What is “important” is a relative matter and any child’s concern is important to him.

IT IS NEVER TOO LATE

Good communication patterns do begin early – but better communication is always possible.

HOW TO GET YOUR CHILD TO LISTEN

ANSWER YOUNGSTER'S QUESTIONS

Be quick, as candid and as forthright as possible. You can communicate any number of messages and make your child feel he is important and is respected.

BE AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF TIMING

When your child asks a question, it is a sign that he is ready to listen and wants your opinion. Be careful to choose an appropriate time for discussing touchy subjects with your child. (Privacy helps.)

DON'T PLAY GOD

It is always tempting to know all the answers. Sometimes we do know best. But sometimes we don't, and we are well advised not to pretend that we know all. Admitting that we don't know is one way of conveying that we are not perfect, that we are human, too.

ALLOW FOR DISAGREEMENT

Sometimes parents worry that allowing children to disagree with them will undermine their respect. Actually, children feel more respect for parents when they feel free to express their side of things. Permitting youngsters to disagree with us shows them that we're strong enough to be challenged (and big enough to back down if necessary).

AVOID USING SARCASM OR RIDICULE

Humiliating your child is a quick and sometimes permanent way to get him/her not to listen. None of us want to talk or listen to another person if we feel he/she will cut us down.

ALLOW A CHILD TO EXPRESS FEELINGS

Let him/her know we can accept his/her "good" feelings and his/her so-called "bad" feelings – and still think no less of him/her. Telling your child that he/she should feel differently or that he/she should not feel what he/she does feel won't encourage him/her to listen to you.

WATCH THE USE OF LABELS

Your perceptions should change from month to month and year to year as your child changes. Sometimes we say things in the presence of a child which fix in the child's mind for better or for worse (more often for worse) our conception of him/her. A child whom we have judged or labeled will find it difficult to listen or to "hear" us for fear of being judged and labeled even more.

UNDERSTAND ADOLESCENCE FOR WHAT IT IS

Perhaps the hardest thing that parents face during their youngsters' teen years is their child's refusal of adult help and discipline. Growing up is no simple task. The insecure side of the adolescent wants to feel safe and protected – the adventurous side wants to grow up and do new things. Relating (advice, praise, discipline) should be geared to a young adult, not a young child.

DON'T GIVE UP

Getting your child to tune you in rather than out may at times be hopeless, but you can do it – and probably better than you are doing it now. If you want your child to listen to you, he must know for certain that you will listen to him.

ANOTHER WORD ABOUT FEELINGS AND JUDGMENTS

Feelings are neither right nor wrong, they just are. A child has a right to feel as well as does the adult. All too often we make a judgment about the child based on feelings. We often deny them the right to have feelings. Let's be careful qualifying clearly what we are really saying. For example, the child might say, "I don't like you." We reply, "You don't mean that, we should like everyone." Let the child explain why he/she feels the way they do right at that moment and talk about it. Feeling angry or frustrated is okay. How do we act on those feelings?

MORE ABOUT PERSON AND BEHAVIOR

There are times when we will say to a child, "You are bad!" Think about what we are saying. Do we really mean your behavior is "bad"? Separating person and behavior is important when communicating our perceptions to a child. Perhaps, say "I love you, but I don't like that particular behavior."

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

YEARS	FACTORS	RESPONSES
0-3	Environment for development Love Security Stimulation - things	Adequate nourishment Speaking Social partner Atmosphere of consistency Variety and contrast Toys and other playthings Physical handling Opportunities to move about Limits and prohibitions
3-5 Pre School/ Kindergarten	Room to explore Love and security Environment for development (safe and stimulating) Guidelines with freedom to choose Social stimulation	Share personal interest A learning environment – free and sensory Prompt attention Positive emotional climate Relationships of trust Rich and varied cultural experiences Varied play activities
6-7 Grade 1	Active Changeable Emotionally responsive Highly imaginative Loves to dramatize, create, explore Spontaneous Open Relationship with both parents	Warm, secure environment Artistic activities Affective level Worship experiences Guidance and reassurance Encouragement in learning efforts Concrete sense experiences
7-8 Grade 2	Acceptance and love Sense of belonging Adult relationships outside family Consistent guidelines Short attention span Sense of wonder	Life themes Opportunities for spontaneous worship Emphasis on receiving Personal involvement
8-9 Grade 3	Need to belong Fear of not succeeding Limited ability to set up rules Can see another's thinking in limited way Trust in adults Interpersonal dialogue beginning	Guidance and support Personal involvement – writing poems, prayers, hymns, stories Group activities Emphasis on giving – reasons and ways
9-10 Grade 4	Eager for facts Self-motivated Responsible self-reliant Extroverted Group oriented Needs group acceptance Development of conscience Longer attention span	Memory games Problem-solving situations Group activities Communal celebrations Understanding of reconciliation Beginning sex education Introduce Bible Make Jesus real

	<p>Action/skill oriented No sense of history Eager to explore and discover</p>	
10-11 Grade 5	<p>Wide variance in maturity Peer group importance Aware of individuality Aware of skills, talents Self-confident Intense curiosity Thirst for knowledge Desire to organize facts collected</p>	<p>Freedom to make decisions Analyzing own decisions and motives Dynamic presentations of Jesus, prophets, etc. related to student's lives Activities</p>
11-12 Grade 6	<p>Physical development Peer group importance Rational thinking Understand abstract ideas Likes facts, reasons Action prone Discovers through experimentation Topics for models (heroes) Influenced by those admired</p>	<p>freedom to make decisions analyzing own decisions and motives dynamic presentations of Jesus, prophets, etc. related to student's lives activities</p>
12-13 Grade 7	<p>Seeking own identity Peer group importance Emerging awareness of gap between conduct and voiced faith of community Tension over physical changes Ability to reason Sense of history Beginning capability of evaluation</p>	<p>Relate "God News" to life Opportunities to plan, problem solve and discover Freedom to make mistakes Example of Christian life</p>
13-14 Grade 8	<p>Girls about 2 years ahead Preoccupied with self Peer group still important Façade of "apathy" Abstract thinking Capable of reflection and rational judgment Reevaluating their life, rejecting religion</p>	<p>Acceptance of negativism Explore new dimensions of faith Discussion of "who" and "why" student is Social issues in society Group activities Field trips</p>
14-15 Grade 9	<p>Boy: awkward but full of energy Self conscious Shy around girls Negative feelings of self Religious interest revolves around self Girl: more developed self-image Sensitive to other's feelings Interested in people and relationships Negative view of life Both: opportunities to express ideas</p>	<p>Treat as responsible Acceptance of each as individual Concrete goals Allow setting own goals and guidelines Humanity of Jesus and way he lived Support by adults concerned and understanding Example of adult Christian witness</p>

15-16 Grade 10	<p>Boy: extremely negative Leaves projects and endeavors half done Critical of adults, particularly parents Order of no value Capable of asking philosophical questions Developing personal relationships Boredom-leading to bad habits Girl: testing new kinds of behavior Feels deeply and intensely</p>	<p>Study of moral responsibility of individuals Problem solving approach Small group format Input is necessary, will be evaluated by students Adult witness of Christian values</p>
16-17 Grade 11	<p>Intellectually curious Interpersonal relationships Need to test and challenge ideas/values Idealistic – no compromise Seeks self perfection Ready for serious conversation Needs to verbalize thoughts</p>	<p>Present Christian interpretation of life Teacher of patience and humility Authoritative teaching – teacher must reveal self Life-oriented – news, movies, social issues, literature</p>
17-18 Grade 12	<p>Threshold of adulthood Concern for personal future (prolonged adolescence) clear self-image capable of philosophical thinking</p>	<p>Small group format and informal setting Individual study projects Teacher provides input</p>
19-29	<p>Desire for happiness Need to put life in order Social ability Responsible Moral Stable Aware of own pride, selfishness</p>	<p>Doctrine in depth Worship – formal and informal Variety of approaches in continued education Formational Centered upon Christianity as a faith inspired way of life expressed in worship and service</p>
30+	<p>Emotionally stable Need for love and responsibility Personal moral value system</p>	

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THINGS TO DO

BAPTISM CERTIFICATE

Place a copy of your child's Baptismal certificate on this page. Talk with your child about the place, setting, date and sponsors who attended his/her Baptism. Why did you want your child baptized?

NAME OF CHILD

Why did you choose your child's name? Did you like the sound of the name? Was it the name of a friend or family member? Talk over your choice with your child.

Isaiah 43:2

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

MAKE A FAMILY TREE:

Mother

Grandmother

Grandfather

Father

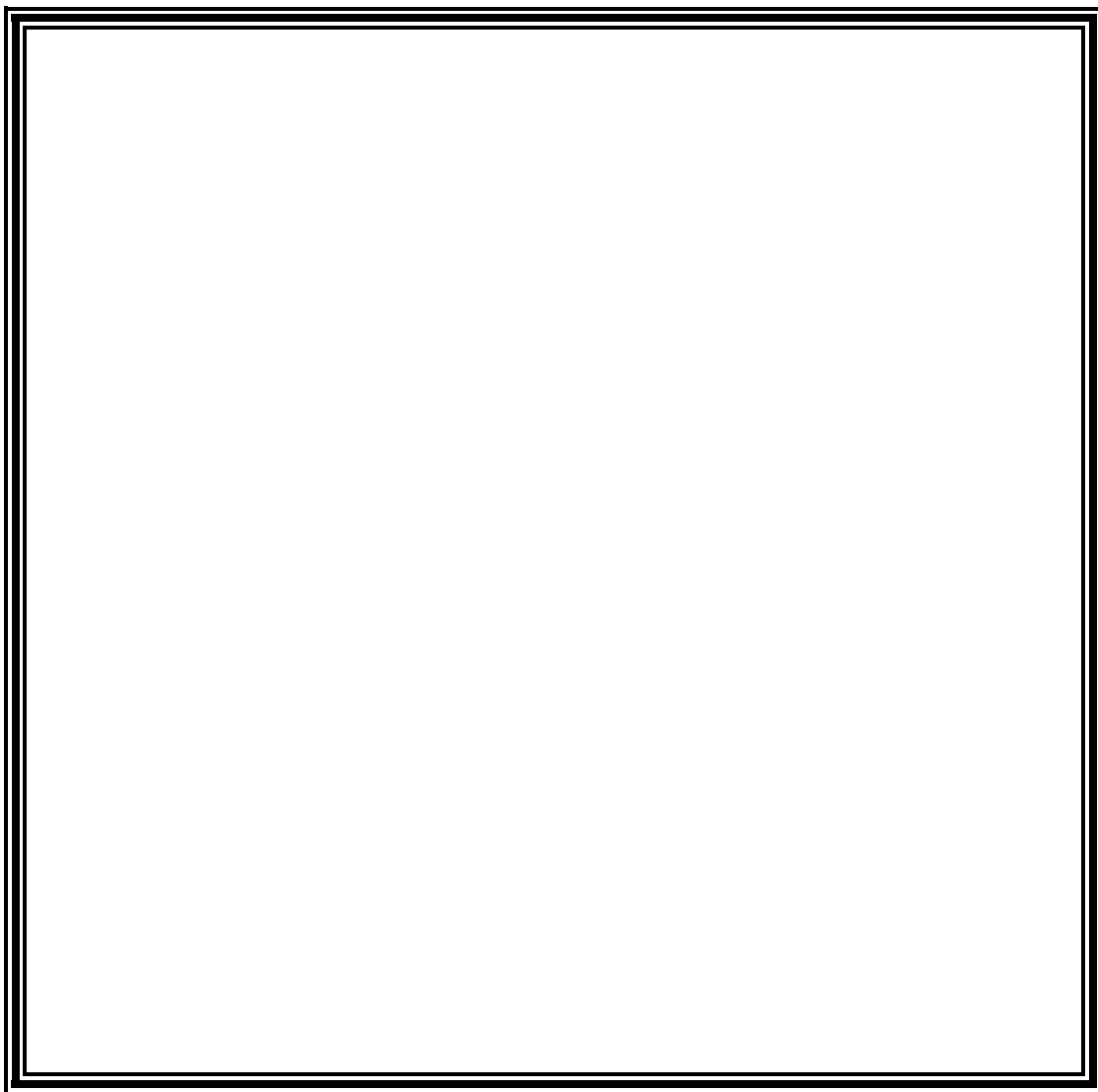
Grandmother

Grandfather

WHO AM I?

(Place a picture of your child here)

WHAT SAINT IS THE MODEL FOR THIS CHILD? WAS HIS/HER NAME CHOSEN FOR A PARTICULAR SAINT? WRITE A PARAGRAPH ABOUT THE SAINT ON THIS PAGE.



PICTURE OF CHILD'S BAPTISM

TAKE A TRIP TO THE BEACH, LAKE, MOUNTAINS

Discuss God's creation, the beauty of nature, the significance of water

Write comments on this page

Water

Discuss the good things and the destructive things water can do. Talk about water as absolutely necessary for life. Color this picture or draw one of your own.

COMMUNITY

Who was present at the child's Baptism? Why was it so important that these people attend?

Write your comments on this page

THE WORD OF GOD

Look up in your Bible the following passages:

Matthew 5: 1-17

Mark 1: 1-11

Luke 3: 1-22

John 3: 22-30

Discuss with your child what these say about Jesus.

WRITE YOUR COMENTS ON THIS PAGE.

Fun for the Whole Family

How is your child growing in his/her faith? What are you doing as a family to create an environment of faith?

BAPTISMAL CANDLE WHITE GARMENT

Do you have the child's Baptismal candle pack away? Where is the white dress or garment he/she wore for Baptism? Bring them out and show your child.

Put comments or pictures on this page.

PLAN, PLAN, PLAN

Plan a day, evening or afternoon to do something special as a family to celebrate your child's Baptismal feast day.

What did you do?

CELEBRATE A BAPTISM

If at all possible, attend the Baptism of a family member or friend. Discuss with your child about the ritual. Watch for all the signs and symbols and explain them to your child. Celebrate with the family!

PRAY WITH YOUR CHILD

PRAY BEFORE MEALS, PRAY BEFORE BEDTIME AND UPON AWAKENING, PRAY WHEN YOU BOTH ARE TROUBLED OR ANGRY, AND PRAY WHEN THERE IS JOY AND SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE. BE CREATIVE IN YOUR PRAYER. WE MAY RECITE THE SIGN OF THE CROSS OR THE OUR FATHER BUT ALSO PRAY SPONTANEOUSLY.

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YOU ARE A CHILD OF

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PRAY OFTEN

BAPTISMAL CEREMONY

Ceremony

A Community celebration, part of the Eucharist or a Liturgical Service. Rite of Infant Baptism promulgated in 1969.

Role of the Community

Emphasis on community celebration and the part the community plays in supporting the faith life of the child and his/her family.

Role of the Parents

Rite stresses parents as the primary educator of the child.

Location

Place appropriate for: Reception of the child - Celebration of the Word, Celebration of the sacrament, The concluding rites. Baptistery or place which can accommodate all and dramatizes entrance into the Church

Questions

Addressed to parents

Sign of Cross

After the priest/deacon signs the child on the forehead, he invites the parents and godparents to do the same.

Liturgy of the Word

Scripture readings and homily.

Exorcism

A prayer addressed to God the Father

Oil of Catechumens

First anointing of oil. May be omitted for serious reasons.

Blessing of water

Outside the Easter season, water is blessed for each service. Words clearly express the mystery of salvation

Baptism

Parents have the option of immersion or infusion in flowing water.

Garment

A white Baptismal garment to be placed on after Baptism

Lighted Candle

Candles lit from the Easter Candle

Ephphetha

Prayer over the ears and mouth of the child. Optional.

Blessings

Prayers for the mother, father and all.