Baptism

Telling the Story of the Sacrament of Belonging
Introduction

This resource is designed as a supplement to the materials used in the preparation of parents for the sacrament of Baptism when their children are no longer infants but are young children. It is to be used WITH the children and is primarily composed of pictures so that families may look at the photos and share their feelings, thoughts and information about the pictures and people in them.

This booklet follows closely the ritual of Baptism and was designed by Father Troy Overton and Marie Seaman SFCC to assist families in preparing their four, five, six and seven year olds to celebrate the sacrament of Baptism.
The story of Baptism

- Parents
  - Why baptize your child
  - Importance of prayer
  - Sharing about your own Baptism
  - Naming your child
  - Godparents
  - Church
  - Baptism as sacrament
  - Order of the ritual

- Family
  - Importance of family
  - Name
  - Sign of the Cross
  - Godparents
  - Church
  - Baptism
  - Symbols of Baptism
    - water, sacred chrism, baptismal garment, candle
The presider welcomes the community to the celebration.
Families come in many shapes and sizes!
Who belongs to your family?
Can you remember a time when your family had a special celebration for someone?
Parents: some reflection questions

- Why do you want to baptize your child?
  What effect will baptism have on your family life?
  For you, why is being part of the Church important?

- How important is prayer in your family?
  How does your family pray together?
  When does your family pray?
  How important is celebrating the Eucharist to you?
  How often do you celebrate Mass?
Sharing with your child

- In this section share what you know about your own Baptism. If you have photos share them with your child.
  - Who was present?
  - In what church were you baptized?
  - Who was the priest or deacon who baptized you?
  - Who are your godparents?
  - If you were baptized in the church you presently attend, show your child the font where you were baptized and let your child know that he or she will be baptized in that same baptismal font.
Family— those who love and care for us

- Who belongs to your family?
  - Look at photos and talk about your immediate family. Or invite your child to draw a picture of the family who loves and cares for him or her.

- Besides the family we live with many of us also have extended family. . . Again find some photos and talk about:
  - Grandparents?
  - Aunts and uncles and cousins?
  - How often do you get to see your “big family”? When does everyone get together? How does it feel to be part of such a “big family”?
A special celebration for this family.
My Family

- Mother ________________________________
- Father ________________________________
- Brothers ______________________________
- Sisters ________________________________

Grandparents ______________________________
Grandparents ______________________________
Aunts and Uncles __________________________

(Please print this page for your child and work as a family to complete it.)
On this page draw a picture of YOUR family or glue a photo here.

(Please print this page for your child and work as a family to complete it.)
What do you enjoy doing with your family?

- When your family is together what is your favorite thing to do as a family? Draw a picture to show it or glue a picture of your family having fun together.

(Please print this page for your child and work as a family to complete it.)
Sharing with your child. . .Naming

- What name have you given your child?
- What is the meaning of your child’s name?
- Is your child named after someone in your family? What can you share with your child about his or her name?

- Any name may be chosen for Baptism so long as it is not incompatible with Christian faith.
At the beginning of Baptism the priest or deacon asks parents “What name do you give your child?”
Sign of the Cross

- In the sacrament of Baptism one of the first signs we experience is the Sign of the Cross.

- The priest or deacon welcomes us into the church and traces a small cross on our forehead and invites our parents and godparents to do the same.

- “The Christian community welcomes you with great joy. In its name I claim you for Christ our Savior by the sign of his cross.”
The Sign of the Cross

- With your pencil or marker draw a cross on a piece of paper. Then decorate it and make it beautiful.

- With your finger or thumb trace a small cross on your forehead and then on each member of your family’s forehead and ask them to do it to you.
The presider makes a sign of the cross on the child to be baptized.
Why are Godparents important?

- Godparents are the people parents choose to help them raise their child in the faith. They must be:
  - sixteen years old
  - fully initiated themselves (have celebrated Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist)
  - be an active and practicing Catholic

At least one godparent must meet this criteria.
A person who is not Catholic may be a Christian witness for Baptism.
My Godparents

- My Godmother is ______________________________
- My Godfather is _______________________________
- Here is a picture of them.

(Please print this page for your child and work as a family to complete it.)
Godparents join parents at the Baptismal font.
Belonging to the Church

- Baptism makes us members of the Church. But even before Baptism, children have the experience of Church in their own homes and families. We call this “the domestic church”. It is as part of the domestic church that your child learns to love, forgive, share, care and pray. Parents are the first and most important teachers of the faith. It is within the family that a child learns what it means to be valued and loved, to sin and be forgiven, to be nurtured and grow.
The presider speaks with the families and godparents of the newly baptized.
Church

- Just as the domestic church is important and necessary for a child to grow up healthy and holy, so the parish Church is necessary for the family to experience the love and concern of a loving community of faith.

- At Baptism the relationship with this larger community of faith is initiated. As the child grows within the parish, the relationship is deepened and strengthened. The Church is present to support and encourage the child but also to accept and forgive.
The Church is the community of Jesus’ followers to which we belong.
What is Baptism?

- Baptism is a sacrament which welcomes us into the Christian community and forgives our sins, especially original sin. Baptism is necessary before we can celebrate any of the other sacraments.

- A sacrament is a sign of God’s special grace and blessing. In the sacrament of Baptism there are several signs to which we want to pay attention. . . sign of the cross, water, sacred chrism, baptismal garment, light (candle).
A child waits patiently for Baptism while the priest blesses the water.
“I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”
Sharing with your child. . .Water

- (Depending upon the age and understanding of your child, you may want to spend some time discussing:)

  - What are some uses of water?
  - Why is water important for us?
  - Ask your child to help you wash the dishes. Where do we put our dirty dishes? What happens to dirty dishes when we wash them? Where do we keep our clean dishes?

  - Help your child find 5 different pictures of water. Try to emphasize the importance and power of water. . . .drinking, bathing, washing clothes or dishes as well as rain, ice, snow, oceans/lakes/rivers and floods.
Water

- Water is necessary for life. We drink it. We wash with it. We water our plants and animals with it. Without water we would die.

- Water is a special sign of Baptism. The priest or deacon pours water over our heads or immerses us in water to show that we want to give up our old ways and become new children of God. We want to follow Jesus and do what he asks us to do. We want to love God, ourselves and others.
Water

• When the priest or deacon pours the water over us he says our name and then “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

• Whenever we enter and leave church we can put our hand into the holy water font and bless ourselves in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This helps us to remember our Baptism.
The priest or deacon blesses the water to be used at Baptism. He asks God to send the Holy Spirit over the water.
“We ask you, Father, with your Son to send the Holy Spirit upon the waters of this font. . . ”
Is it your will that this child should be baptized in the faith of the Church which we have just professed with you?
The presider helps to make children comfortable before the actual Baptism.
Ready and waiting with anticipation.
The ambry is a special box where the Holy Oils are kept. There are three Holy Oils... Sacred Chrism which is used at Baptism, Confirmation and Ordination, the Oil of Catechumens which may be used at Baptism and the Oil of the Sick which is used in the Anointing of the Sick.
Sacred Chrism

Sacred Chrism is a very special oil. It is olive oil mixed with balsam and it smells wonderful! Balsam is a fragrant evergreen tree symbolizing eternal life.

The priest or deacon anoints us on the crown of our head with the Sacred Chrism and reminds us that we are to pray, to do the right thing and follow the way of Jesus.
The newly baptized are anointed on the crown of their heads with the Sacred Chrism.
The priest prays that the child being anointed will be united with the people of God and be a member of Christ who is Priest, Prophet and King.
Sharing with your child. . . Special clothes

• Why do we sometimes get new clothes for special occasions? (Easter? Christmas? School? Uniforms?)

• How do you feel when you get a new or special outfit to wear? What is one of your favorite outfits to wear?

• Why do you think a white shirt or dress might be worn after you are baptized?
Children dressed in their Baptismal garments.
Baptismal Garment

- The Baptismal garment may be a special family heirloom garment which parents, godparents or family provide for the child.

- It is white in color

- It is an outward sign of the child’s new life in Christ.

- After the anointing with Sacred Chrism the child is clothed in this Baptismal garment.
The Baptismal garment is a sign of the child’s new life in Christ.
“You have become a new creation and have clothed yourself in Christ. . . “
A newly baptized child and his family.
Another happy family after celebrating Baptism!
Sharing with your Child. . . .Light

- Depending upon the age and understanding of your child, you may want to spend some time discussing:
  
  - Are you ever afraid in the dark?
  - What helps you not to be afraid?
  - Why is light important to us?
  - When the power goes out what do you use to see?
  - Ask your child to close his or her eyes or turn the lights off in the room. What can you see? What do our eyes need in order to see?
  - Help your child find 5 pictures of different kinds of light.
    - (lamp, flashlight, candle, etc.)
Pictures of different kinds of light

- You may draw or “cut and paste” your light pictures here.

(Please print this page for your child and work as a family to complete it.)
Sharing with your child

• How do you celebrate birthdays?

• What are the essential parts of your birthday celebration? (friends and family, cake with candles, “Happy Birthday” song, gifts, games, etc.)

• Why do we put candles on a birthday cake?

• Look at photos from a past birthday celebration and talk about what happened and how you and your child felt. If you don’t have photos perhaps your child could draw a picture of a birthday celebration that he or she remembers.
Candle

- A candle gives light to everything around it. Toward the end of the Baptism celebration one of our godparents is called forward to receive the Light of Christ from the Easter or Paschal candle. The priest or deacon says, “Receive the Light of Christ!”

We are to let the Light of Jesus shine through us for all to see. “This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine.” We are to be a light for others.
The Paschal Candle is lighted for Baptism. Godparents light a candle for each child from this special light.
Godparents come forward and receive a lighted candle.
“You have been enlightened by Christ. Walk always as children of the light and keep the flame of faith alive in your heart. . .”
Receive the Light of Christ!
Jesus loves me this I know!
Before the celebration ends, the presider gives special blessings to the mother and father of the child who was just baptized.

Parents thank God for the gift of their children.
Order of Baptism

- The presider questions parents:
  - What name do you give your child?
  - What do you ask of God’s Church for N_____?

(The presider then speaks to parents about the responsibility they are assuming in baptizing their child.)

The presider then questions the godparents about their readiness for their role of helping parents raise their child in the faith.

The presider then speaks to the children and then signs them with the Sign of the Cross. He invites parents, godparents and family to do the same.
Order of Baptism

- Liturgy of the Word
  - Scripture is proclaimed
  - A short homily/reflection is given by presider
  - Intercessions are prayed
  - Litany of the saints is prayed
Order of Baptism

- Blessing of Baptismal Water
- Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith
- Questioning of parents
  - “Is it your will that N___ should be baptized in the faith of the Church, which we have all professed with you?”
Order of Baptism

- The presider then pours water three times over the head of the child or immerses the child in the Baptismal water with the words:
  - “N____, I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”
- The presider anoints the crown of the children’s heads with Sacred Chrism.
- The parents clothe their children in their Baptismal clothes.
Order of Baptism

- Presider invites godparents (godfather) to come forward and receive the Baptismal candle which is lighted from the Paschal Candle.

- Baptism concludes with the Lord’s Prayer, Blessings and Dismissal
Proclamation of the Word of God

Whether Baptism is celebrated as part of the Mass or at a separate time, always the Word of God is proclaimed from Sacred Scripture.
The cantor invites the people to join in the Responsorial Psalm.

The Responsorial Psalm is taken from the Book of Psalms in the Bible. The Book of Psalms is in the Old Testament.
At Mass there are usually three readings. The first reading is from the Old Testament or Acts of the Apostles and is followed by a responsorial psalm, a second reading from one of the letters and finally the Gospel.
The Book of the Gospels is raised for all to see while the Gospel Acclamation is sung.
The priest or deacon proclaims the Gospel and delivers the homily.

The homily is a brief reflection on the Word of God which has just been proclaimed.
Usually when Baptism is celebrated during Mass it occurs immediately after the homily.
Pictures help us remember special days!
Family celebrations are happy times!
What do you want to remember about your Baptism?
Reflections AFTER Baptism

- Who was present at your Baptism?
- In what church were you baptized?
- Who was the priest or deacon who baptized you?
- How did you feel when you were baptized?
- Who were my godparents?
Pictures of my Baptism
Pictures of my Baptism