



Your Baby's Baptism

LEADER GUIDE

We hope you enjoy these sample pages. For ordering information, visit Liguori.org.

Emily Strand, MA

Contents (Parent Guide content also included)

- 4 How to Use this Guide
- 5 Structuring Participant Meetings
- 6 Tools for Sacramental Formation
- 8 Introduction
- 11 *Imago Dei*
- 12 Original Sin
- 13 Paschal Mystery
- 14 Baptism of Infants
- 16 Baptism: A Short History
- 17 New Life, Renewed Life: the Role of Community
- 18 The Rite of Baptism
- 20 Now What?
- 21 The Church of Home
- 22 Tools for Faithful Families
- 23 Tools for Your Parish
- 24 Family Stewardship



Baptism of Infants

SMALL TALK

The only way parents and godparents *act for* the child in the baptismal process is by requesting baptism. During the liturgy of baptism itself, the parents and godparents do not *speak for* the child; rather, they attest to their own faith and their intention to bring the child up in the faith.

Assure parents they do not have to have all the answers to be good Catholic parents. Their willingness to conscientiously complete the preparation for their child's baptism shows their openness and good intentions. Being a good role model of faith for a child simply means continually learning and growing in one's own faith.



Baptism of Infants

It is important for Catholics to know why we need salvation and how Christ, in his paschal mystery, brings it about. It is the core of our faith that every person seeking baptism should understand and accept. But how do infants grasp such profound spiritual realities? The simple answer is, they don't. Infants cannot understand and accept these realities, so their parents and godparents act for them in requesting baptism.

The baptism of infants, with parents and godparents acting on their behalf, is a well-established and ancient tradition in the Church. Infants receive the same graces from the sacrament as adults who receive it: forgiveness of original sin and entry into the Church, the body of Christ. In fact, the baptism of infants points up an important reality about baptism itself and the grace it imparts. We do nothing to earn our salvation—it is a free, unmerited gift from God through Jesus Christ. The practice of baptizing infants helps us remember that none of us deserves salvation, and yet in baptism we are saved through the gratuitous grace of God.

Another reason infant baptism works theologically is the nature of baptism itself as an entry point into Christian life. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says,



THE CHURCH SAYS

"The practice of infant Baptism is an immemorial tradition of the Church. There is explicit testimony to this practice from the second century on, and it is quite possible that, from the beginning of the apostolic preaching, when whole 'households' received

baptism, infants may also have been baptized" (CCC 1252).

The *Catechism* cites these Scripture passages related to the above quotation: Acts 16:15, 33; 18:8; 1 Corinthians 1:16.

"For all the baptized, children or adults, faith must grow after Baptism (CCC 1254)." It goes on to explain that this is why, each year, all members of the Church renew their baptismal promises at the Easter Vigil. This practice shows that we Catholics know our baptisms were just the beginning of our pilgrimage home to God, and we rely on sacramental nourishment along that journey of faith. Another way Catholics seal their commitment to the faith is through the sacrament of confirmation—for many, around age fourteen. Like baptism, confirmation is a sacrament of initiation, but unlike infant baptism, the person receiving the sacrament does so in his or her own behalf. You can look forward to your child making this adult commitment to the faith, with your support, when he or she reaches confirmation age.

Baptism begins a journey for the baptized person, but it begins a journey for the parents and godparents as well. It is no trifling matter to request baptism on behalf of an infant. The *Catechism* explains that the parents' guidance of the child is important, and so is the assistance of godparents, "who must be firm believers, able and ready to help the newly baptized—child or adult—on the road of Christian life" (CCC 1255). For these reasons, the Church expects parents to be practicing Catholics with an understanding of the faith and to be members of a parish community.

If they are not, how will they teach their child these essential aspects of the faith? Godparents (or at least one of them, if two are chosen) are expected to be confirmed, practicing Catholics who have reached the age of maturity, usually sixteen (*Code of Canon Law* 872). It would be difficult for someone younger than sixteen or not yet fully initiated into the Church to serve as a primary teacher and example of the faith to a godchild. Despite popular practice, in the

The baptism of infants points up an important reality about baptism itself and the grace it imparts. We do nothing to earn our salvation—it is a free, unmerited gift from God through Jesus Christ.

eyes of the Church, the role of godparent is practical rather than honorary; godparents are spiritual and religious mentors to a young Catholic. Indeed, the *Catechism* says the role of godparents "is a truly ecclesial function (*officium*)" (CCC 1255).



THE CHURCH SAYS

"The sheer gratuitousness of the grace of salvation is particularly manifest in infant Baptism" (CCC 1250).

"The Church, 'like a stranger in a foreign land, presses forward amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God,' announcing the cross and death of the Lord until he comes. But by the power of the risen Lord it is given strength to overcome, in patience and in love, its sorrows and its difficulties, both those that are from within and those that are from without, so that it may reveal in the world, faithfully, although with shadows, the mystery of its Lord until, in the end, it shall be manifested in full light" (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church [*Lumen Gentium*], 8).

FROM THE DVD



At **frame 30:25**, Fr. Deiters gives guidance on how to choose godparents for your child's baptism and discusses the canonical regulations.

MORE INFORMATION

Code of Canon Law 873 states, "There is to be only one male sponsor or one female sponsor or one of each." This means parents cannot choose two men or two women to be godparents. They may, however, choose only one person, whether male or female.

Baptism: A Short History

THE CHURCH SAYS

"Where infant Baptism has become the form in which this sacrament is usually celebrated, it has become a single act encapsulating the preparatory stages of Christian initiation in a very abridged way. By its very nature infant Baptism requires a post-baptismal catechumenate. Not only is there a need for instruction after Baptism, but also for the necessary flowering of baptismal grace in personal growth. The catechism has its proper place here" (CCC 1231).

FROM THE DVD



At **frame 4:09**, Fr. Deiters gives additional information about the history of baptismal fonts and how their position at the entrance of the church is symbolic of baptism as the entry point to the faith.

Baptism: A Short History

The sacrament of baptism has a long history in the Church. John was baptizing in the Jordan before Jesus had even begun his earthly ministry! Of course, John's version of baptism was not the same as ours today. But his and the later Christian practice of baptism are both based in part on the tradition of ritual washing for purification found in ancient Judaism. While John's form of baptism was a sign of repentance and the expectation of the kingdom of God, the later Christian baptism was a washing-away of sin and a profound entry point into a new life: the life of Christ.

The earliest Church was by necessity a Church of converts. Although the Christian Scriptures testify to the baptism of whole households together (Acts 16:15), which must have included young children, infant baptism in the earliest Church was not the norm. Much more often, adults who came to the Church as new believers were baptized after a period called the catechumenate. This period of instruction and probation showed the seriousness of the catechumen (the person preparing for baptism) and readied him or her for this important faith commitment, which took place, with few exceptions, at Easter. After their baptism, the neophytes (newly baptized) were often anointed with oil, sometimes twice (once by the bishop, a sort

of early confirmation), and then garbed in white: a sign of their new life in Christ. Then for the first time, these neophytes took part in the eucharistic meal with the rest of the Christian community. In the days following their joyous initiation into the Church, the new members attended instructional sessions with the bishop, which helped them understand and reflect on the rites by which they had been incorporated into the body of Christ.

Due to the rapid growth of Christianity in the third and fourth centuries and, at the same time, the articulation and clarification by the Church of theological concepts such as original sin, the practice of baptizing infants became more common. By the eighth century in the Western world, almost everyone was born into the Catholic Church, and thus the need for adult baptisms (and the catechumenate which preceded them) was nearly extinguished.

Times have changed since the early days of Christendom. We now live in a secular age and in a global Church, and the need for adult baptism is back. The liturgical renewal of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries restored the ancient Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) as well as the catechumenate. Today our process of initiation is much like that of the early Church described above. At the annual Easter Vigil, those wishing to join the Church who have completed the period



MORE INFORMATION

This sort of post-sacramental reflection is called *mystagogy*. It is essential to the sacramental experience even today, as it was in the early Church.

Tools for Faithful Families

To help families stay active in the faith, Liguori offers affordable products that cover topics such as prayer, parenting, and early faith development. Visit Liguori.org/your-baby-s-baptism-7396.html for: A keepsake blessing from the Rite of Baptism; "Our Parish Home," a contact form that can be customized; "Celebrating the Faith": ways for families to rejoice throughout the year.



**Sharing the Faith
With Your Child**
From Birth to Age Four
815232

With practical wisdom, the authors of this handbook show parents how their daily lives, experiences, and relationships reinforce their role as parents. The book includes chapters on Parenting, Being a Family, Being a Catholic Family, and Rearing Children in a Christian Family.



**Introducing Children
to Silence and Prayer**
For Catechists and Parents
#823145

In *Introducing Children to Silence and Prayer*, Luis M. Benavides helps families get to know and communicate with God. Benavides also helps us to reexamine our own attitudes about prayer as he offers a different perspective to help children begin the journey and deepen their relationship with God.



Faith Beginnings
*Family Nurturing From
Birth Through Preschool*
#822315

Faith Beginnings helps parents to form and nurture their pre-school children's faith development, even in the earliest stages of life. The authors provide concrete faith-related activities and suggestions to help parents nurture the faith life of their infant, toddler, and preschool children.

Reading to your child begins early, and these two books by Fr. Joe Kempf and his furry friend, Big Al, will help children—and their parents—to pray the way Jesus taught us to pray... simply and from the heart.

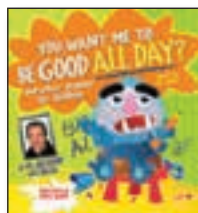


**My Sister Is
Annoying!
And Other Prayers
for Children**

#818271

Audio CD included.

Children say the most wonderful things! This book of prayers, by Fr. Joe Kempf and his furry friend, Big Al, is written the way children talk—and the way they think! *My Sister Is Annoying* is a beautifully illustrated, fun way for children to talk to God about things that are important to them, such as the joy of playing outside, celebrating a birthday, and trying to figure out the right thing to do.



**You Want Me to
Be Good ALL DAY?
And Other Prayers
for Children**

#818431

Audio CD included.

In a delightful combination of events that impact children's lives, Big Al learns lessons about compassion, responsibility, and individuality through prayer. Prayers about Baptism, Communion, and even a wedding make this book perfect for young children.



Just for the holidays, Liguori's beautifully illustrated children's books appeal to children's love of animals and touches their hearts.



Little Lamb Finds Christmas

#824890

One winter night, a little lamb gets lost just outside Bethlehem. While tending the flock, his shepherd receives heavenly messengers and amazing news. This story leads children to Jesus' nativity and helps them relate to events that can change everyone's life.



Easter Bunny's Amazing Day

#823534

Meet the Risen Jesus with an amazing bunny—and his amazing tale—in this beautifully illustrated hardcover children's book. Children will learn about Jesus' friendship and comfort through the eyes of a timid bunny who experiences firsthand the love and joy Jesus brings.





Your Baby's Baptism: Welcome to God's Family

English: #821943
Spanish: #822056



This thirty-minute DVD celebrates and renews faith while strengthening the decision to raise a child as a Catholic. As parents are asked, "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?," they are present to God's word and symbols and experience the fullness of the prayer that happens during the rite of baptism.

Special Feature: A seven-minute message from Lisa Hendley, creator of CatholicMom.com and the Catholic Mom Moments blog and podcast, who explains the importance of parents as the first teachers of the faith.

Segments include:

- Welcome message from Most Reverend Robert J. Carlson, Archbishop of St. Louis
- The Sacrament of Baptism
- Holy Water and the Font
- *Liturgy of the Word*
- Intercessions and the Litany of the Saints
- Anointing With Oil of Catechumens and Exorcism
- Blessing of Water
- Baptismal Promises
- Symbols
- Blessing of the Parents

For this DVD's presenter's guide and discussion questions, as well as other downloadable sacramental-preparation resources, visit Liguori.org/education.

Parent Guide and Leader Guide for *Your Baby's Baptism* are all also available in Spanish. Visit Liguori.org or call 800-325-9521.

El bautismo de su bebe: Guia para los papas



#825101

Baptism represents a moment of immense happiness. That is why we celebrate, and we invite our loved ones so they can join the celebration. But what are we really celebrating? The great love of God.

El bautismo de su bebe: Guia del instructor



#825286

This manual is intended to help parents and godparents experience the baby's baptism with a deep conscience and make the most of it.

Your Guide to Godparenting

English only: #825804

Using practical solutions and simple activities, this booklet outlines the responsibilities of the role and guides godparents on the journey, from the ceremony through the godchild's early life. As part of the *Liguori Sacramental Preparation Series*, this practical formation tool is ideal for first-time or distant godparents.

TOOLS FOR TEACHING CHILDREN



Don't Drink the Holy Water!
Big Al and Annie Go to Mass
Fr. Joe Kempf

English only: # 819483



Don't Drink the Holy Water! explains the Mass with creative, full-color illustrations and simple descriptions that resonate with kids. A special section in the back of the book helps adults answer kids' questions about the Mass. Includes a **fifty-minute DVD** featuring twenty brief segments, perfect for engaging kids and offering opportunities for questions and reflection—parents, grandparents, godparents, and teachers alike will appreciate this lively, versatile teaching tool.



Brother Francis
#501360

Join Brother Francis in these delightfully inspirational and instructive videos that teach children about the sacraments, prayer, and much more! Videos are bilingual, and coloring books for each video in both English and Spanish are also available.

Let's Pray: A Lesson on Prayer
#501360

**The Bread of Life:
Celebrating the Eucharist**
#501391

The Rosary: A Special Way to Pray
#501432

Forgiven: The Blessings of Confession
#501460

**Born Into the Kingdom:
The Miracle of Baptism**
#015064

**The King Is Born:
What Christmas Is About**
015521

The Mass: A Life-Giving Prayer
015514



Imprimi Potest: Harry Grile, CSsR, Provincial, Denver Province, The Redemptorists

Imprimatur: “In accordance with Canon 827, permission to publish has been granted on May 28, 2014, by the Most Reverend Edward M. Rice, Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of St. Louis. Permission to publish is an indication that nothing contrary to Church teaching is contained in this work. It does not imply any endorsement of the opinions expressed in the publication; nor is any liability assumed by this permission.”

Published by Liguori Publications, Liguori, Missouri 63057

To order, visit Liguori.org or call 800-325-9521.

Copyright © 2014 Liguori Publications

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior written permission of Liguori Publications.

Excerpts from *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents*, Revised Translation, copyright 1996 by Reverend Austin Flannery, OP; published by Costello Publishing Company, Inc., Northport, NY, are used by permission of the publisher, all rights reserved.

Excerpts from other Vatican documents are used with permission. Copyright *Libreria Editrice Vaticana* (© *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*)

Excerpts from English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for the United States of America © 1994, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—*Libreria Editrice Vaticana*; English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Modifications from the Editio Typica* © 1997, United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—*Libreria Editrice Vaticana*.

Scripture texts in this work are taken from the *New American Bible*, revised edition © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C., and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the *New American Bible* may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Unless noted otherwise, images herein are from the DVD *Your Baby's Baptism: Welcome to God's Family*, © 2012 Liguori Publications. All rights reserved.

Liguori Publications, a nonprofit corporation, is an apostolate of The Redemptorists.

To learn more about The Redemptorists, visit Redemptorists.com.

Printed in the United States of America

18 17 16 15 14 / 5 4 3 2 1

First Edition

We hope you enjoy these sample pages. For ordering information, visit Liguori.org.