

REALIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RITES

The four symbols of baptism are the water, the Chrism, the robe, and the candle. Each of these four ancient rites teach us what it means to fully live out our Catholic Christian life in preparation for being with Jesus forever in heaven. When we realize the importance of the symbols, they inspire us!

- **Water:** We are spiritually washed clean of all our sins in Baptism. Throughout our lives, we need the sacrament of Confession to renew the grace of our baptism after we commit further sins.
- **Chrism:** We are anointed with Holy Oil to be more like Christ in all our thoughts, words, and actions. When we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus every day, we behold Christ in others as well.
- **Robe:** We are clothed in the holiness of Christ to remind us to think as Jesus thought, to love as Jesus loved, and to act as Jesus did, as we make our way through this life to heaven.
- **Candle:** We are enlightened by the teachings and the example of Christ as our guiding light in life. He will lead us beyond the trials and disappointments of this world to eternal life with him.

Do you know the date of your own Baptism? It is something worth knowing and recalling each year. You may not remember the date of your First Confession, but when exactly was your last Confession, and how soon should you be making another one to restore the grace of your Baptism?

When was the date of your First Holy Communion? Once we start receiving Holy Communion, we should continue to worthily receive Holy Communion each Sunday and Holy Day throughout our lives.

When was the date of your Confirmation? That is an important milestone in your faith journey as well. And how could you forget your wedding anniversary for the sacrament of Matrimony? Some events in our lives are so important that they should never be forgotten! So, celebrate them!



BAPTISMAL PREPARATION

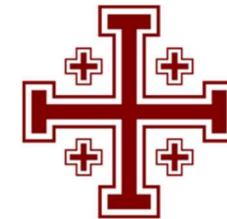
Thank you for coming to our baptismal preparation program! We are here to spiritually prepare for the baptism of your child. Here are three important points that we want to explore with you today.

- **Renew** and deepen your own faith commitment to Jesus Christ in the community of his Church and your parish.
- **Review** and commit yourself to your parental responsibilities for effectively raising your child in the faith of the Church.
- **Realize** how the four sacred symbols of the Baptismal liturgy can inspire and guide our own growth in faith for many years to come.

Before we fill out any baptismal information forms or set any dates and times for baptisms, let us explore these three spiritual points more fully. But, since you are most probably wondering about other details, here is a spoiler alert to what we will discuss at the end of the baptism meeting.

- Baptisms are celebrated in conjunction with most Sunday Masses, but with only one family scheduled for each individual Mass.
- The family is seated in the front pew for the three rituals that occur at the beginning, at the middle, and at the end of the Mass.
- The requirements for selecting godparents are explained when the information is gathered by the priest for scheduling the baptism.

Now that we have all that out of the way, let us return to our main focus for this meeting, the spiritual aspects of Baptism as a sacrament of faith. Here again are the three steps of preparing for Baptism at our church: our own faith, our parental responsibilities, and the blessings of our Baptism.



RENEW THE FAITH OF YOUR OWN BAPTISM

Baptism is the first sacrament of our salvation. Since all have sinned, all need to be saved in order to obtain eternal life in Jesus Christ. Salvation comes to us in the person of Jesus Christ, who died for our sins and who rose for our salvation. He also commanded us to make new disciples and to baptize. After his Ascension into heaven, the saving works of Jesus Christ continued on in the sacraments of his Church.

Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism initiates us into the life of Christ. Later, in Confirmation, we are sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit, and in Communion, we receive the Body and Blood of Christ for our salvation.

Sacraments of Healing: In Confession, we are forgiven of the sins that we have committed after Baptism. In the Anointing of the Sick, we join our sufferings with the redemptive sufferings of Christ on the cross for us.

Sacraments of Community: In Ordination, church leaders are blessed to celebrate the sacraments for us. In Matrimony, God blesses traditional family life as the heart and soul not only of the Church, but of all society.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle once said that only the examined life is a life worth living. How much more is it true that the Sacramental Life is the only life worth living now, insofar as it prepares us for Eternal Life!

Here are some spiritual resources to help you follow through on the promises of your own baptism, in which you made a commitment to stand with and by Jesus Christ as a faithful Catholic Christian believer.

- CatholicsComeHome.org
- ForYourMarriage.org
- MyCatholic.Life
- Catholic.com
- CatholicChristian.org



Please contact your priest for advice, confession, and for referrals to Spiritual Directors who can answer your faith questions, address your personal spiritual needs, and guide you on the path of personal holiness.

The best thing that a loving parent could ever do for their own children is to show them the way that leads to eternal life. Otherwise, the natural life that you gave them will never find its supernatural fulfillment in heaven.

REVIEW YOUR PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

There are three essential parental responsibilities for training children in the ways of our Catholic Christian faith. All three are very important.

First, bring your children with you to Mass each Sunday and Holy Day. Let their first memories be the sounds and sights of God's holy house.

Second, give your children the good example of being a faithful Catholic Christian in all aspects of your daily life, especially your prayer life.

Third, enroll your children in the complete eight-year religious education program of faith formation for the rest of your child's sacraments.

As we grow in faith, hope, and love, there are three ways in which we mature as disciples of Jesus Christ. These three blessings build upon each other to build us up in faith, hope, and love, as followers of Jesus Christ.

Commandments: The commandments teach us what is wrong and sinful. The first challenge of discipleship is to clean up our lives from sin.

Virtues: The virtues teach us what we should be doing instead of sinning. With God's grace to assist us, we can avoid sin and practice virtue instead.

Sacraments: The sacraments keep us connected to Jesus Christ so we can die to sin and rise to a new virtuous life in Christ.

There is an old saying: "You cannot give what you do not have." Unless we are living the faith ourselves, we cannot impart that faith to our children. Often, our children's growth in faith helps us to also grow in faith as well.

How can we as a parish community help you continue to mature in faith? First of all, there are the Mass and the sacraments. Second, there are adult formation programs in our parish. And third, there is parish community life.

Religious education is a life-long event of learning something new and valuable every day. Like learning a foreign language or another skill, if you don't use it, you lose it. Don't become lost. Move forward in faith each day!

By faithfully attending Mass each week, participating in parish activities, and supporting the needs of the parish community, you can be "living the life" that will bring you peace of mind now and everlasting happiness later.