

ABOUT BAPTISM

What Is Baptism?

Baptism is the first sacrament one receives when entering the Catholic Faith. It is a sacrament of **initiation** - once you are baptized, you officially enter into the Body of Christ, the Catholic Church. The recipient receives sanctifying grace when baptized, and the Holy Spirit begins to dwell within them.

Every sacrament requires two things, **form** (the words that are spoken) and **matter** (the physical substance used during the sacrament.)

- For baptism the **form** is, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."
- The **matter** is the water poured over the head of the recipient.

The one being baptized has water poured over them or is fully emerged in water three times.

What does it do?

- * It forgives all sins that were committed before baptism including original, mortal, and venial sin.
- * It makes the baptized a **new creature** (no matter their age!)
- * It turns the baptized into a newly adopted **son or daughter of God** and a **member of the Church**.
- * It brings them to share in the **royal priesthood of Christ**. (1 Peter 2:9)
- * It leaves a **spiritual mark** (or character) of belonging to Christ on the soul of the one baptized. (He "labels" us as His own.)

Additionally, the ceremony includes vows rejecting Satan, vows of the godparents, and the material symbols of the white gown and baptismal candle. These additional aspects are important, but not required for all baptisms, such as those in emergency situations.

Why infant Baptism?

The origin of infant baptism goes back to the Old Testament when God established his covenant with Abraham. Back in those days, male infants would enter covenant with God by being circumcised at just eight days old through their parents faith. St. Paul explains that circumcision is no longer needed since the coming of Christ and the institution of baptism. However, the practice of inviting infants into the Church through the faith of their parents still stands. Baptism is never administered without faith; for children, it is the faith of the parents who will guide the child.

In no way is baptizing a child "imposing" faith upon them....they will always have free will.

Jesus, being God, is perfect and did not need to be baptized to remove any sin or gain a spot in heaven. However, by choosing to be baptized by John the Baptist in the River Jordan, Jesus gave us a model for our own baptisms. It wasn't that *Jesus* needed to be baptized, it was that we need to be.

GROWING CATHOLICS

Leaflet 

The Baptism of the Lord

Sunday Gospel • January 9, 2022 Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

The people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ. John answered them all, saying, "I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

After all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."



EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW

The Gospel of Matthew gives us more details on the Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:13-17), but all the accounts in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke record the first undisputed evidence of the **Holy Trinity** in Sacred Scripture.

- **God the Father:** *the voice of God from heaven proclaiming His pleasure in Jesus the Son*
- **God the Son:** Jesus
- **God the Holy Spirit:** the form of a dove descending upon Jesus



SEEDS FOR CONVERSATION

How does Jesus' baptism show His great humility?
What do you think it might mean that when Jesus was baptized "heaven was opened"?
Why do you think Jesus chose to be baptized when He was already without sin?
How did Jesus' baptism confirm Him as the Son of God?
Brainstorm - how many effects of your having received the Sacrament of Baptism can you name?
Which seem most important?

Celebrating our Baptism Anniversary

We all make a big deal out of our children's birthdays, so why not celebrate their baptism anniversaries, too? Baptism is "spiritual birth" into God's family—it is a life-changing event.

Celebrating the anniversary of baptisms is one way to emphasize its importance and teach our children what it means.

Here's a few ideas:

1. Have a special meal (or even a special dessert) which your child gets to choose.
2. Decorate the table with their Baptismal candle; light it during the meal prayer.
3. Re-tell the story of their baptism, making sure they know where they were baptized, who their godparents are, and who the celebrant was (great time to emphasize that both priests and deacons can baptize.)
4. Make sure your whole family knows (or is learning) about the significance of Baptism. Here's some talking points:
 - Baptism is the "gateway" Sacrament; when Baptized we gain access to further Sacraments.
 - Through the grace of Baptism, all our sins are forgiven—both personal sins and original sin. Babies are not capable of personal sins, but they are marked by original sin. (Makes sure children know that people can be baptized at ANY age! When people have personal sin, Baptism removes it!)
 - At Baptism we are marked as belonging to Christ— nothing can remove this mark—not even our own sin.
 - At Baptism we receive the Holy Spirit in our souls, giving us greater strength to believe in God, and to grow in holiness.
 - When children are baptized parents promise to "raise them in the practice of the faith" - that means Mass, Confession, prayer, service, and whatever else it takes to **Grow Catholics!**



MIGHTY LORD

Johns wants everyone to understand that Jesus is more powerful and of infinitely higher status than himself. John is not worthy to untie his sandals, which was a task so demeaning that Jewish slaves were exempted from performing it (leaving it for non-Jews). Today, John might say, "I am not worthy to carry out his garbage." (and isn't it irony - Jesus would not only carry John's garbage - He carries ours, too.)

