

Baptism is the normal response of faith to the Good News of Jesus.

“And they said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.’... and he was baptized at once, with all his family.” Acts 16: 31-33

“The Lord opened her heart to give heed to what was said by Paul. And... she was baptized, with her household...” Acts 16: 14-15

At Pentecost, Peter preached the gospel of Jesus Christ to the crowds: *“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and they asked Peter and the other apostles, ‘What are we to do, my brothers?’ Peter (said) to them, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the holy Spirit.’”* Acts 2:37-38

“When they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized.” Acts 8: 12

“Those who received his word were baptized.” Acts 2: 41

“Philip... told him the good news of Jesus... and the eunuch said, ‘See, here is water! What is to prevent my being baptized?’ ...and he baptized him.” Acts 8:35-38

“Many... believed & were baptized.” Acts 18: 8

Baptism saves us

“Baptism... now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” 1 Peter 3:18-21

Jesus said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved.” Mk 16:15-16

“He saved us through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the holy Spirit.” Titus 3:5

Jesus says we need to be “born anew” by water and the Spirit (Baptism) to enter the kingdom of God.

“Jesus answered him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’” John 3:3-5

In Baptism we become part of the Body of Christ, the Church

“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.” 1 Corinthians 12:13

Baptism is the rite of initiation for the New Covenant, as circumcision on the eighth day was for the Old Covenant

“In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not administered by hand, by stripping off the carnal body, with the circumcision of Christ. You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.” Colossians 2:11-12 (also see Acts 8:7)

In Baptism we are united with Jesus' death so as to receive his new life in the Resurrection.

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly

be united with him in a resurrection like his.” Romans 6:3-5

“You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.” Colossians 2:12

“If any one is in Christ, he is a new creation.” 2 Corinthians 5:17

In Baptism we become children of God, “put on Christ” and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

“In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Galatians 3:26-7 (also see Romans 8:16)

These Old Testament accounts prefigure Baptism, which cleanses us of sin, renews our hearts, and gives us God's Spirit.

“I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses... I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you, taking from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you natural hearts. I will put my spirit within you and make you live by my statutes, careful to observe my decrees.” Ezekiel 36:25-27

“Our hearts (were) sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water.” Hebrews 10:22

The prophet Elisha commanded Naaman to humble himself by washing in the Jordan River to restore his leprous flesh: *“His servants... said to him, ‘My father, if the prophet had commanded you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much rather, then, when he says to you, “Wash, and be clean”?’ So he went down and dipped himself... according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.”* 2 Kings 5: 10 – 14

Jesus himself was baptized to “fulfill all righteousness.”

“Jesus came... to the Jordan to John, to be baptized... John would have prevented him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?’ But Jesus answered him, ‘Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’” Matthew 3:13-15



From the Catechism of the Catholic Church: What is Baptism?

“Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit... and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission...” CCC par. 1213

Is Baptism Necessary for Salvation?

“The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation. He also commands his disciples to proclaim the Gospel to all nations and to baptize them. Baptism is necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament. The Church does not know of

any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude; this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are "reborn of water and the Spirit." *God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments.*" CCC 1257

"As regards children who have died without Baptism, the Church can only entrust them to the mercy of God, as she does in her funeral rites for them." CCC 1261

Infant Baptism

"Parents are obliged to see that their infants are baptized within the first few weeks." (canon 867.1)

"Any infant in danger of death "is to be baptized without any delay." (canon 867.2)

"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; See Acts 16: 31-33; 1Cor. 1:16

When some tried to keep them from bringing infants to Jesus, he said, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God." Luke 18:16

"Children are baptized in the faith of the Church." CCC 1282

Godparents

Parents should contact their pastor *before* selecting godparents, to find out who can be a godparent. For example: if you have two godparents, they must be of opposite gender.

Choosing a Name

The name you choose for your child should not be "foreign to Christian sensibility." (canon 855) Oftentimes, the name of a saint is chosen for either their first or middle name, so that they will have a model and intercessor for their life. This saint's feast day then becomes a special day for your child to celebrate.

Preparation for your Child's Baptism

"As a rule, and unless a just reason suggests otherwise" infants should be baptized in "the proper parish church of the parents" (canon 857.2)

Parents should contact their pastor (ideally, prior to birth) to sign up for the necessary instruction to prepare for their child's baptism. There is *no* stipend or fee required or expected for the baptism of your child. If you wish to have your child baptized by a priest outside your parish, you should still contact your pastor and follow all of the baptism preparations required by your parish.

"The parents of a child who is to be baptized, and those who are to undertake the office of sponsors (godparents), are to be suitably instructed on the meaning of this sacrament and the obligations attached to it (by their parish priest or those he delegates)." (canon 851.2)

Parents will be expected to give evidence of "a realistic hope that the child will be brought up in the Catholic religion." The primary way for them to do this is by their own active practice of the faith. (canon 868.2)

What about Older Children?

Once a child reaches the age of reason (normally age seven), they are no longer baptized as an infant. Instead, they are initiated through a longer process that follows the pattern of adult initiation, which places greater emphasis on personal conversion. This means that they will participate in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) in a manner that

is adjusted for their age. Then, when their formation is complete, they will receive Baptism, Confirmation and First Holy Communion at the Easter Vigil along with the adult Catechumens.¹ (see can 852.1) If your child is close to age 7, you should contact your pastor without delay.

Jesus commanded the Apostles to make disciples by baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." Matthew 28:19-20

In a similar way, parents are called by God to make disciples of their children, having them baptized, and teaching them to observe all of God's commandments.

When you choose to have your child baptized, you welcome them into the family of God. You are claiming them for Christ as a son or daughter of God.

Those who are baptized receive new life, grace and hope as a member of the Body of Christ, the Church.

Jesus said: "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God." Matthew 10:14

"Baptism is birth into the new life in Christ. In accordance with the Lord's will, it is necessary for salvation, as is the Church herself, which we enter by Baptism." CCC 1277

To learn more about Baptism, please contact your local Catholic Church:

<http://www.masstimes.org>

Why Baptize Your Child?



"Born with a fallen human nature and tainted by original sin, children also have need of the new birth in Baptism to be freed from the power of darkness and brought into the realm of the freedom of the children of God, to which all men are called. The sheer gratuitousness of the grace of salvation is particularly manifest in infant Baptism. The Church and the parents would deny a child the priceless grace of becoming a child of God were they not to confer Baptism shortly after birth."

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1250

Let's look at what the Bible has to say about Baptism...

¹ Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, National Statutes, 18.