

Baptism

The one or two catechetical sessions for parents may include some or all of the following elements. It may be possible to combine some of these elements. It is noted that such sessions are most helpful for parents presenting their first child for Baptism.

1. **Meeting to request the sacrament** – to welcome, encourage, organize, and catechize
 - private, one-on-one meeting in person
 - may take place with the pastor or other parish staff
 - should be a time of gathering the necessary information
 - should help parents to understand what the sacrament demands, who may be a godparent, and to answer any other questions

2. **Group catechetical session** – to prepare parents for the sacrament
 - May include:
 - i. **church tour** – to familiarize parents with the symbols, art, and architecture of their parish and their meaning
 - ii. **rehearsal** – to prepare for the liturgy itself, for example to organize seating or any other details which could be practised
 - iii. could include **a DVD** (some excellent resources available through the diocesan library) or personal presentation such as a witness talk from other parents
 - iv. **a print resource** giving some explanation about the sacrament and the signs and symbols that will be used

The Catechesis Office can provide assistance in choosing materials and in training parish baptismal preparation volunteers, if needed. For more information, please contact Anne Jamieson at 905-528-7988, ext. 2251.

Recommended Resources:

Print:

"Your Baby's Baptism" – Liguori – a glossy magazine size booklet – the most popular resource used by parishes in our diocese. Our office has developed a facilitator's guide for a 90 minute preparation session using this resource. There is no charge for the guide. Please call us to request a copy.

"Your Child's Baptism" – Novalis – a smaller publication – can be useful when parents are having a toddler baptized

Catholic Parent Know How Series – "How to prepare for Baptism" – an 8-page colour magazine with Scripture, FAQ, and tips to help parents be the teachers of faith for their children

DVD:

"One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism" – Diocese of Rockville Centre – 27 min. Gives a great description of the Sacrament – up-to-date parent talks about their feelings about church and baptism.

"Come and See: Ritual Matters" – Loyola Press – 9 min. A brief segment on this fantastic DVD makes a great introduction to any parent meeting for any Sacramental Prep

There are a variety of other DVD resources available through our diocesan library. For more information, contact the library at 905-528-7988, ext. 2252.

Outline of a Group Session for Baptismal Preparation

After the initial meeting with the priest or other parish staff, parents would normally be invited to a session that would combine catechetical elements as well as practical/rehearsal type elements.

Your meeting could easily be planned in a 90 minute session.

The general breakdown of a 90 minute session is:

15 min. – Welcome and opening prayer

30 min. – catechesis on the Sacrament using a booklet or DVD

10 min. – time for parents to begin to reflect on their understanding of Baptism

20 min. – practical/rehearsal information – where will families sit, how will the Sacrament proceed

15 min. – Questions and closing prayer

Three Options for Baptismal Preparation follow:

A – Using a Print Resource ONLY

B – Using a DVD ONLY

C – Using a DVD WITH a Print Resource

Option A – Using a Print Resource ONLY

Implications

- volunteer/facilitator must be comfortable with presenting the material
- helpful if volunteer/facilitators can speak personally of the experience of Baptism (of one of their own children or a child in their family or in their parish)

To begin

- give every couple a booklet
- explain that you will look at the highlights of this resource today but that parents are meant to keep this booklet and continue to refer to it in the future

For the session itself

- volunteer facilitators should use the booklet as a resource – never read through an entire booklet – instead, point out the most important features and lessons
- be sure parents understand the main elements of the Sacrament itself (ie. meaning of water, oil, white garment, candle)
- be sure parents have an understanding of the commitment and promises they are making
- encourage them to seek help from their parish and the Catholic School System to support them in living out that commitment

For reflection

- try to provide a reflection question or questions and some time for parents to consider this on their own or in brief discussion
- may have them bless themselves at a holy water font in the church and consider how they are always called to recall their own baptism every time they enter the church
- may ask them to reflect on that initial question of the rite “What do you ask of God’s Church?” – they may reflect on this silently in the church

As they go home

- remind parents of the prayers in the booklet or some other important feature that will be valuable for them to look at again at home

Option B – Using a DVD ONLY
Implications <ul style="list-style-type: none">• may be useful where volunteers/facilitators do not feel as comfortable presenting or teaching
To Begin <ul style="list-style-type: none">• give an introduction to the DVD by letting parents know what to look for in particular – for example, tell parents that they should pay particular attention to what is said about the water or oil, etc. – this helps people to focus
For the session itself <ul style="list-style-type: none">• play the DVD• always ensure at the end that parents are clear that Baptism involves a commitment and promise on their part – encourage them to seek help from their parish and the Catholic School System to support them in living out that commitment
For reflection <ul style="list-style-type: none">• follow the reflection suggestions from Option A
As they go home <ul style="list-style-type: none">• remind parents of some important feature from the movie that they can think about again at home

Option C – Using a DVD WITH a Print Resource

Implications

- may make sense to increase the interest in the session
- provides another voice beyond the volunteer/facilitator

To Begin

- Use the DVD as an introduction if it is brief
- Use it as the main session if it is longer

For the session itself

- play the DVD
- give out the print resource – refer directly to at least a few sections as time permits to let parents know why this is valuable to them
- assure them that they will want to consult this resource at home
- always ensure that parents are clear that Baptism involves a commitment and promise on their part – encourage them to seek help from their parish and the Catholic School System to support them in living out that commitment

For reflection

- follow the reflection suggestions from Option A

As they go home

- remind parents of the prayers in the booklet or some other important feature that will be valuable for them to look at again at home