



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

MODELS FOR IMMEDIATE SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION IN THE PARISH

INFANT BAPTISM (applicable for infancy – age 7)

One or two catechetical sessions for families may be offered, including some or all of the following elements. It is noted that such sessions are most helpful for parents presenting their first child for Baptism. Godparents are encouraged to participate in these sessions. In situations where older infants/children are preparing for the Sacrament, it is essential that they participate in these sessions in a meaningful way.

The Office for Evangelization and Catechesis can provide assistance in choosing materials and in training parish baptismal preparation volunteers, if needed. For more information, please contact us at: catechesis@hamiltondiocese.com.

Children with special needs may require adapted resources in preparation for the Sacraments. Please reach out to the Office for Evangelization and Catechesis for suggestions of appropriate materials.

Two Session Options for Baptismal Preparation:

1. A meeting for the family to request the sacrament

- This is an opportunity to welcome, encourage, organize and catechize.
- This is most typically a private, in person, one-to-one meeting that takes place with the pastor or other parish staff.
- This is a time to gather necessary information for Baptism, and to help parents to understand what the sacrament demands.
- This is a time to talk about selection of godparents, and to answer any questions.
- It is helpful to distribute some initial literature for parents at this time for their review.

Diocesan Guidelines regarding Baptism of Children can be found [HERE](#).

2. Group catechetical session

- This meeting is an opportunity to prepare the family to celebrate the sacrament.
- This gathering may include a church tour, rehearsal of the liturgy, a digital resource highlighting the rite and its symbols, as well as a review of print resources and literature.
- It is helpful to have lay volunteers involved in this gathering, ideally parents who have witness to share of their own experience of baptizing their children.

Sample outlines of these meetings are found on pages 4-5.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR BAPTISM

Please note, resources for Baptismal Preparation can be sourced independently, or through the Office for Evangelization and Catechesis. Often there are discounts associated with purchasing from the Chancery as purchases are made in bulk. Please reach out to the Diocesan Office to place an order: catechesis@hamiltondiocese.com.

Print Materials for Parents:

Catholic Parent Know How Series – Two booklets are available, [*“Preparing Your Child for Baptism”*](#), and [*“How to be a Godparent”*](#). An 8-page full colour magazine with Scripture, FAQ, and tips to help parents/godparents to be teachers of the faith for their children.

Novalis Publishers – A two booklet series is available, [*“Being a Godparent”*](#), and [*“Your Child’s Baptism”*](#). A smaller publication which may prove useful when parents are having a toddler or older child baptized.

The Faith We Believe: Unpacking the Creed – A diocesan resource offering a rich and comprehensive understanding of the Creed. A helpful tool in having parents prepare for the Baptismal Promises they will make on behalf of their child. This resource is available in digital format as well as printed booklets on order from the Diocesan Office for Evangelization and Catechesis. You can review the material [HERE](#).

[*Welcome to our Church*](#) – A 2-in-1 flip book including a brief introduction to Catholicism, as well as a guide for the Mass, including responses, prayers and commentary. A helpful tool for parents who may be new to the Church, or for a parent who may not be Roman Catholic.

Print Materials for Children:

My Adventure Guide to Baptism – A diocesan resource produced to support the preparations of older children (aged 3-7) preparing for the sacrament. Available in digital format as well as printed booklets on order from the Diocesan Office for Evangelization and Catechesis. You can review the material [HERE](#).

Digital Content for Parents:

Please note, these resources can be used for an in person or virtual preparation session.

[*Baptism Explained*](#) – Sofia Institute for Teachers. Eight short videos are available, including a walk through the Rite of Baptism, a reflection on the symbols used during the Baptismal liturgy, and the role of parents as primary educators of faith. These videos span 4-8 minutes in length, and are intended for parents and godparents.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR BAPTISM CONT'D

[FORMED](#) – For those with membership to this digital platform, the “Reborn” series may prove helpful in your preparations. Specifically, episode two: “Entering the Mystery” provides a comprehensive walk through the Rite of Baptism and the role of parents/godparents within the liturgy. This episode is 24 minutes in length and is available in both English and Spanish.

[Real+True](#) – A series produced by Our Sunday Visitor in conjunction with the Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization. Short, accessible videos explaining the purpose of Baptism and its scriptural roots. Each video has between a 3-6 minute run time and are intended for parents and godparents. These videos would serve as excellent follow up to a group catechetical session, or food for thought after an initial meeting with the pastor.

Digital Content for Children:

Please note, these resources can be used for an in person or virtual preparation session.

[Brother Francis, “Born into the Kingdom”](#) – The Brother Francis Series has a 26-minute episode on the Sacrament of Baptism. The Diocese of Hamilton has partnered with the Brother Francis producers to make this video available to our Diocesan community via an annual license. We encourage you to share the log-in information with families of children aged 3-7 preparing for Baptism. Please reach out to the Office for Evangelization and Catechesis for the log-in details.

OUTLINE OF A GROUP CATECHETICAL SESSION FOR BAPTISMAL PREPARATION

After an initial meeting between parish staff and the family, a group session may be offered that combines catechetical elements as well as a practical rehearsal in preparation for Baptism.

Your meeting can be structured as a 75 – 90 minute session including the following priorities:

- 10 – 15 minutes:** Welcome and opening prayer
- 20 - 30 minutes:** Catechesis on the Sacrament using printed or digital resource
- 10 - 15 minutes:** Reflection time for adults on their own understanding of Baptism
- 20 - 30 minutes:** Rehearsal and important information for Baptism day
- 15 – 20 minutes:** Questions, announcements and closing prayer

Please note, it is recommended to share as much literature as possible with families ahead of this gathering, so that they may come prepared with their questions.

<p>Welcome and Opening Prayer</p>	<p>Choose a welcoming and inviting environment for this gathering.</p> <p>Consider preparation that is necessary for any handouts, AV equipment and training for volunteer leaders.</p> <p>Send regular reminders and updates to families about meeting days and times.</p> <p>Prepare an opening prayer to gather the group and set the tone for the conversation.</p>
<p>Catechesis on the Sacrament using printed or digital resource</p>	<p>Ensure that each family has a copy of the materials you will be referring to. If you are utilizing digital content, sending the links along via email ahead of time is helpful for follow-up.</p> <p>Volunteer leaders should use all printed materials as a reference point only, highlighting important themes or concepts that might be of value to the family.</p> <p>The goal of this presentation is to ensure that parents understand the promises they are making on behalf of their child, and the village of support that accompanies them in their passing on of the faith.</p> <p>It is helpful in this conversation to highlight the supports available in the parish for family life, as well as the importance of Catholic Schools in the work of religious education.</p>

<p>Reflection time for adults on their own understanding of Baptism</p>	<p>Take time for conversation amongst the family. Encourage parents to reflect on a question of importance together, sharing their collective wisdom.</p> <p>Questions for consideration may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At your child’s Baptism, you will be asked the question, “What do you ask of God’s Church?” How do you see the Church as an important support for your child’s journey of faith? • Take time to recall your own baptism – each time you enter the Church and bless yourself with holy water you are invited to remember that you are claimed for Christ. How does your family life demonstrate that truth? How can you share the grace of baptism more deeply in your parish/community/home?
<p>Rehearsal and important information for Baptism day</p>	<p>Bring families right into the Church and take time to walk through the Rite of Baptism with you.</p> <p>This is an excellent time to practice responses, gestures, and participation required from both parents and godparents.</p> <p>For older children (between the ages of 3-7), find good and practical ways of encouraging the child’s participation in the liturgy. For example, handing the child his/her Baptismal candle is a practical way to acknowledge the maturity of the one being baptized.</p> <p>Be sure to clearly express your expectations for arrival, seating, and any other important procedures for Baptism Day so there is no confusion. A handout with these details is helpful.</p>
<p>Questions, announcements and Closing Prayer</p>	<p>Gathering the group back together, take time for questions or concerns for the group, make any necessary announcements and close with prayer.</p> <p>At dismissal, ensure all families have any necessary brochures or handouts to takeaway for future reference.</p>

A Note about Volunteers:

It is helpful to have the involvement of lay volunteers to support these group sessions. Baptismal Preparation Teams should have the inclusion of the parish staff, trained and screened volunteers, and, for older children (ages 3-7), the incorporation of the parish catechist and/or children’s ministry leaders.