

# **GUIDELINES FOR THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM**

Office of Lifelong Catholic Formation/Education  
Diocese of Beaumont

**(Effective May 14, 1999)**

**APPROVED FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN THE DIOCESE OF BEAUMONT**

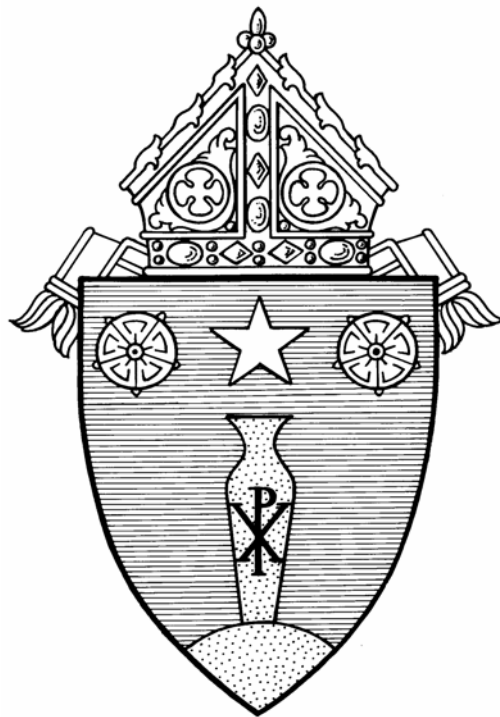
**May 14, 1999**

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# DIOCESE OF BEAUMONT

## Office of Lifelong Catholic Formation/Education



## Guidelines for the Sacrament of Baptism

# Preface

In the United States today we are ministering to Catholics whose practice of the Catholic faith ranges from minimal to maximum. This is very different from our pre-Conciliar experience of parish life. Some Catholic parents come forward seeking the sacraments for their children at the appropriate time, but do not connect either themselves or their children with the Church during the intervening years. In many ways, we as a Church, have successfully sacramentalized our people, but have not fully catechized them concerning what it means to be an initiated member of the Catholic Church.

These guidelines address this situation by providing parishes with a strong curriculum of catechesis on the Sacrament of Baptism and a variety of approaches and models to use. While they aim towards the ideal of incorporating families into Church, it is understood that each pastor will have to apply them to his particular parish and to those who come forth seeking Baptism.

I want to thank the following members of the committee for their faithful attendance and hard work at the meetings to develop these guidelines:

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# The Sacrament of Baptism

Baptism, as the first of the sacraments of initiation "is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to the life in the Spirit, and the doorway which gives access to the other sacraments." Through Baptism a person is freed from sin and begins a faith relationship with the Triune God, being reborn as a child of God. One becomes a member of the Body of Christ - the Church, so that he or she can take on the mission of Christ and the Church to spread the Good News of the Kingdom. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1213.)

## **The Goals of Infant/Children Baptismal Preparation are:**

1. To provide catechesis based on the above understanding of Baptism, and also an understanding of the Baptismal Rite and its symbols. (See Curriculum, pages 2-5)
2. To provide a positive experience of the parish community for the parents.
3. To provide teaching and witness by lay catechists on the duties and opportunities in Catholic parenting.
4. To connect the family with the parish community by explaining and inviting participation in ongoing parish services and activities, e.g., schedule of liturgical worship, adult education, nursery services, Religious Education/Catholic Schools, possibilities of annulments and marriage validations where needed, etc.
5. To provide young candidates ages 3 - 6 with age appropriate catechesis. (See Appendix, pages 10-13)

## **Requirements for participation in Baptismal Preparation:**

1. The infant is unbaptised. (*The Code of Canon Law*, Can. 864. See Appendix, page 16 for full quote of the canons indicated.)
2. The consent of the parents, or at least one of the parents, is required. (Can. 868. paragraph 1, #1)
3. "Parents are obliged to see that their infants are baptised within the first few weeks. As soon as possible after the birth, even indeed before it, they are to approach the parish priest to ask for the sacrament for their child, and to be themselves duly prepared for it." (Can. 867)
4. In view of the above stated canon it is suggested that parents contact the parish prior to the anticipated birth, or at least early enough to participate in the Baptismal Preparation Program.
5. A "well-founded hope that the child will be brought up in the catholic religion." (Can. 868. paragraph 1, #2)
6. Registered as members of the parish. If unregistered, registration at the time of catechesis (for territorial parishes), or if members of another parish, a letter from the pastor of their proper parish granting permission.

## **Participants:**

Required:

1. Parent(s) or guardians
2. Lay Catechists
3. Priest/deacon

Encouraged:

1. Godparents (Cans. 873, 874 contain requirements for role of godparent.)
2. Grandparents

If parents have participated in Baptismal Preparation within the last three years and are active Catholics, they are not required to attend again, but may do so if they wish.

# Catechesis for the Sacrament of Baptism

Since catechesis for this sacrament is for parents, it requires a good process of adult faith formation. Such a process would include a comprehensive presentation on the meaning of the sacrament with the opportunity for participants to reflect and discuss. The curriculum for catechesis (below) is divided into three parts, accompanied by sample questions. You are invited to develop other questions. The doctrinal elements are referenced to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*; the paragraph numbers are noted in parentheses.

## The Meaning of the Sacrament of Baptism

### A. Baptism as the first of the three Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist)

Content:

1. The meaning of sacrament; God's communication of life and grace (1113-34)
2. Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist as the way a person becomes a full member of the Body of Christ, the Christian community (1212)
3. The Sacraments of Initiation originally celebrated in one Rite at Easter Vigil for adults (1229-33); today separated with infant Baptism (1250-52)
4. The Sacraments of Initiation are the foundations of the Christian life, a sharing in divine nature through grace, which enable us to grow in Christian love (1212)
5. Baptism as the door and gateway to Christian life in the Spirit (1213)
6. Baptism is received only once and seals the child with an indelible spiritual mark (1272-74)

### B. Baptism as the beginning of initiation into individual faith

Content:

1. Liberation from Original Sin (405, 977-78, 1250, 1265) and personal sin (for adults, 1262-63, 2520)
2. Rebirth as a child of God (683, 1265)
3. The beginning of our faith relationship with the Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (1266)
4. Rebirth and new life through grace; metanoia, continuing conversion (1262)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- When have you made a significant "change" or turnaround in your life? Who or what empowered you?
- Have any family members made notable or drastic changes in their lives? How did you respond? How did others respond?
- Has your continuing conversion exposed or redeemed any character flaw? How has your continuing conversion affected your marriage?
- How does "new life" (divine life) differ from ordinary human life?

### C. Baptism as the beginning of initiation into communal faith (1253-55)

Content: The beginning of our faith relationship with and incorporation into the Church through

1. The family as the "domestic church" (Pope Pius VI)
2. The parish and diocese as the Body of Christ, People and Family of God (1267-70)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- What was your first memory of God?
- Growing up in your home, what was your image of God? Loving? Judgmental? Friendly? Punishing?
- What does it mean to be a domestic church?
- How is your Christianity reflected in relationships at home?
- What signs, symbols, rituals, practices, and traditions will be based on this Christian relationship?

**D. If the couple is not registered in the parish they are invited to register at this time.**

## **Explanation of the Rite of Baptism: Part I**

### **A. Reception and Name of the Child**

Content: (2156-2159, 2165)

1. Reason for choosing a Christian name
2. The Sign of the Cross, marking the child with the "imprint of Christ"

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- How did you choose your child's name?
- What hopes and expectations does it symbolize?
- How do you connect this name with our Christian tradition?

### **B. Request for Baptism and Promise of Parents**

Content: The faith of child depends on the faith and responsibility of parents and godparents, and also of the community (1253-55)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- What are you asking of God's Church for your child?
- What is Baptism to you?
- What responsibilities are you assuming in asking your child to be baptized? Are you ready and willing to take them on?
- What resources in family and parish will assist you in this undertaking?

### **C. Blessing of Water**

Content:

1. Water and its role in Salvation History (1217-22)
2. Baptismal water is consecrated by the power of the Holy Spirit (694, 1238-39)

### **D. Renewal of Vows of Baptism by Parents**

Content: The Profession of Faith (1251, 1253-55, 2340)

1. During Baptism it is parents who renew their Baptismal Vows
2. The role and responsibility of parents/guardians and godparents that comes with the Baptism of a child

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- What does your Baptism mean to you?
- What constitutes "your constant care to bring your child up in the practice of the faith"?
  - In your marriage/family relationships?
  - In your household?
  - In your community and parish?
- What is the difference between a "source of faith" and a "resource for faith"?
- What is the inter-relationship of and responsibilities of parents, godparents, family, and parish community in forming a child in faith?

Content: Discipleship as connected with Baptism (425, 618, 1816)

- With Baptism we become disciples of Jesus with the task of:
  - Modeling our life on Jesus
  - Proclaiming the message of Jesus through word and action
  - Taking up our cross and following Jesus

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- Is there a difference between membership and discipleship?
- What basic beliefs guide your life?
- What values, beliefs and skills will your child need to be disciples?
- How will you pass these on to your child?

### **E. Celebration of God's Word**

Content: The Word of God (1236)

1. Enlightens us
2. Reveals the truth
3. Is the source of faith

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- What does your favorite Scripture teach you and how will it help you raise your child?
- How does your family story of faith affect you now? Positively? Negatively?
- From your memory who emerges as the strongest person of enduring faith?

### **F. Intercessory Prayer**

Content:

1. The meaning of prayer (2558-65)
2. Prayer as an essential part of the Christian life (2744-45)
3. Intercessory prayer is praying in petition as Jesus did (2634-36)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- Do you pray? Frequently? Sometimes? Not at all?
- Do you and your spouse pray together? Frequently? Sometimes? Not at all?
- What is your prayer for your child?

## **Explanation of the Rite of Baptism: Part II**

### **A. Baptism with Water**

Content: Your child will be baptized into a God of Trinitarian relationship of (1276)

1. Father
2. Son
3. Holy Spirit

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- How is that mystery which we call God your Father (or "Mother" 370, Is. 49:15; Is. 66:13, Matt. 23:37)? Jesus your brother? The Holy Spirit your advocate?
- How will you help your child grow in this relationship?

### **B. Anointing with Chrism**

Content:

1. Anointing signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit (695)
2. Through the anointing the child is incorporated into Christ as priest, prophet, king which orients one towards worship of God, proclaiming the Gospel message, and serving one's brothers and sisters (1241-42)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- How are you living the priesthood of Christ?
- How are you living the prophetic ministry of Christ?
- How are you living the kingly ministry of Christ?
- How will you teach your child to live as "priest, prophet, and king" and to take on the mission of Jesus and the Church?

### **C. Clothing with White Garment**

Content: The white garment symbolizes that the child has

1. Been clothed with Christ, so one can live as Christ keeping the garment white throughout our life (1243)
2. Died with Christ, so one can rise with Christ (1220)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- What are the visible results of invisible grace (the putting on of Christ at Baptism)?
- How will you help your child to "put on Christ" and his values?
- What is the connection between the white garment we are clothed with at Baptism and the white pall used at funerals?

#### **D. Lighted Candle**

Content: The candle (1243)

1. Is lit from the Easter candle
2. Signifies that Christ has enlightened the child
3. Is a sign that the child is to be the "light of the world"

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- Why is it necessary to bring the Easter Candle into the darkness of the church?
- How will you be the "light of Christ" for your child?
- How will you help your child keep the "light of Christ" burning in his or her life?

#### **E. Lord's Prayer**

Content: (2759-2865)

1. A summary of the whole Gospel (2761)
2. In Baptism signifies new birth into divine life (2769)
3. Contains seven petitions reflecting our dependence on God (2803-06)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- What is the "will" of God, which we ask to come to pass?
- In what ways will your child depend on you for daily bread?
- On whom do you depend for yours?
- How is the remembrance of our forgiveness by God connected with the command to forgive others?

#### **F. Blessing of Parents**

Content: Prayer for parents as they take on their role as (1231)

1. Mother and father to the child
2. Teachers and witnesses of the faith to their child

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- What changes has/will your child bring into your lives?
- What adjustments have you made so far and will have to make in the future?
- How might God be a part of these changes and adjustments?

#### **G. After Baptism, in your home and in our parish - an introduction to the liturgical, formational, social and service life of the parish, its organizations and ministries.**

## **Evaluation and Development of Parish Programs**

Each parish should examine and evaluate its program to see if it meets the goals for Baptismal Preparation, by answering the following questions:

1. Are we presently providing a comprehensive catechesis on Baptism that explains the sacrament and the Rite and enables parents to connect it with their lives; a catechesis that helps them to reflect on what it means to live out their baptismal promises as Catholics and how to pass this understanding onto their children?
2. Does our preparation incorporate parents and their children into the parish community and through that community into the local Church?

Several ways of answering these questions and achieving these goals are indicated in the Appendix. It is encouraged that you implement one of the options offered. Even if you do not fully implement one of these approaches, it is hoped that you will find elements from several of the approaches that might be combined or added to your present program. Parishes may consider joining with another parish to develop and offer a joint Baptismal Preparation Program.

# Appendix

# **Approaches and Models of Baptismal Preparation**

## **Mentor Couple Model**

The home is the environment in which a child first experiences and learns what it means to live the Catholic faith. Therefore, it is important that parents are ready to provide or desire to develop a Christian environment, so that the seed of faith of their child will grow.

Often, another person is needed to act as a gateway or door to invite parents and their children into the Christian community. Families need to be part of the parish community, and it is the responsibility of the parish to invite them in. But, because some families may have been away from the Church, for one reason or another, they may be hesitant to reenter the faith community. An invitation can be extended by many members of the parish - priest, deacon, and lay catechists, and in a special way by a mentor couple.

Trained mentor couples, similar to mentor couples in marriage preparation, would walk through the process of Baptismal Preparation with the parent(s) seeking Baptism. They would:

1. Facilitate the Baptismal catechesis in a parish or home setting.
2. Give practical ideas on how to nurture the faith of the child after Baptism.
3. Extend a very personal and non-threatening invitation to couples to become part of the Christian community by acting as a connection with and guide into the life of the parish.
4. Encourage parents to continue to develop their own faith and the faith of their child by taking advantage of formal parish sponsored programs of religious education/formation, and those offered by the diocesan Offices of Lifelong Catholic Formation/Education and Family Life.

Summary of Mentor Couple Program:

1. Parent(s) seek Baptism
2. Parent(s) are matched with trained Mentor Couple
3. Catechesis on Baptism
4. Celebration of the Sacrament
5. On-going support by Mentor Couple through Parish and Diocesan Programs

## **Baptism Preparation - A Welcoming Process**

The foundational, guiding principles of the following models are:

1. Grace builds on the natural tasks of marriage and family life, which is the primary place of a child's personal and spiritual development.
2. Parents, as primary educators, need to be evangelized about how discipleship is fostered in a faith partnership in and between the "domestic church" (the family) and the "gathered church" (parish community).
3. The Church intersects with families at key transition periods and has the spiritual and human resources to support and strengthen families.

What follows is a description of how the above content of catechesis would be taught in three sessions. Some of the content will be part of the teaching; whether written or spoken; other parts call for written reflection, couple and/or small group discussion. Prayer will begin and end each session.

## **Steps in the Baptismal Preparation Process**

1. Parents contact the parish requesting Baptism for their child.
2. Initial meeting with the pastor explaining the Baptismal Preparation Process.  
(Godparents and grandparents are also invited to be part of the process and attend some or all of the sessions.)
3. Catechesis on the Sacrament and Rite of Baptism.
4. Baptism, preferably at a Sunday/Weekend Liturgy. (If the sacrament take place outside of the Liturgy, parishes are encouraged to include music as part of the celebration. This would necessitate advanced planning with the parish Music Ministry, and could be included as part of the preparation.)

## **Alternative Approaches and Models**

The Baptismal Preparation Process can take place over a four or six-week period with the sessions occurring as indicated below. They can take place either during the week or on Sunday. It is proper that Baptism occur at Sunday Liturgy, since that is when the community is gathered. If a parish chooses to include the Blessing, it is suggested that the time of the Mass during which the Blessing occurs be the time of the Mass for Baptism, so that the same "community" experiences the completion of the process of welcoming.

(At an initial meeting with the parent(s) the priest explains the Welcoming Process and informs parent(s) of date for Session I.)

### **A Four Week Process**

This format would complete the process of baptismal catechesis over the period of a month using the following format and teaching what is contained above (pages 2-4):

<b>Week 1</b>	Session I - The Meaning of the Sacrament of Baptism
<b>Week 2</b>	Session II - Explanation of the Rite of Baptism: Part I
<b>Week 3</b>	Session III - Explanation of the Rite of Baptism: Part II
<b>Week 4</b>	Baptism at Sunday Liturgy

Since weekends are the busiest time for pastors, trained lay catechists could form a team to help shoulder the responsibilities of planning, advertising in the bulletin, and teaching. If there are enough team members for several groups, the monthly duties could be arranged so that a different group could oversee alternating months.

The role of the Parish Baptismal Lay Catechists in this and the following model is twofold:

1. To teach Sessions II and III.
2. To invite those parents who are not presently attending Mass to join them, or other couples seeking Baptism for their child, at liturgy the following weekend and in the weeks to come during the time of Baptismal Preparation. Hopefully they can act as a bridge to the community, in a similar way that the mentor couple does in the program described above.

Although the process would follow a four-week path, participants do not necessarily have to attend consecutive weeks. As an ongoing process occurring every month, missed sessions would be easier to "make-up," allowing some flexibility for busy families. Parents may attend Baptismal Preparation sessions prior to the birth of the child.

Conducting the sessions on Sunday and including participation in liturgy would foster a relationship between the new families and the faith community, and create a renewed sense of interest in the growth of the parish family. The celebration of Baptism can become a wonderful opportunity to let both active Catholics and those seeking Baptism for their child feel the embrace of Christ's family. It can also be an excellent reminder to Catholics of their responsibility as members of this family.

### **A Six Week Process**

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>Week 1</b> | Session I - The Meaning of the Sacrament of Baptism - taught by Priest/Deacon. Parent(s) are introduced to Parish Baptismal Lay Catechists who will teach the remaining two sessions.                           |
| <b>Week 2</b> | Parent(s) attend Mass   |
| <b>Week 3</b> | Ceremony of Blessing during Sunday Eucharist for Parent(s). (Blessing of Parents can be either pre-birth or after birth.)<br>Session II - Explanation of the Rite of Baptism: Part I - taught by Lay Catechists |
| <b>Week 4</b> | Parent(s) attend Mass   |
| <b>Week 5</b> | Parent(s) attend Mass<br>Session III - Explanation of the Rite of Baptism: Part II - taught by Lay Catechists   |
| <b>Week 6</b> | Baptism at Sunday Liturgy   |

### **Recommended Resources and Publications For Baptismal Preparation**

#### **Videos:**

*Baptism, Celebrating Life* (17 minutes -Twenty-third Publications, 1997)

*Lord of Life: Baptism* (18 minutes - Brown-Roa, 1990)

*Your Baby's Baptism* - Revised Edition (20 minutes - Liguori Publications, 1990)

*Your Baby's Baptism* - African-American Edition (20 minutes - Liguori Publications, 1990)

*El Bautismo de Su Bebé* - Hispanic Edition (20 minutes - Liguori Publications, 1990)

#### **Booklets:**

*Your Baby's Baptism* (Liguori Publications, 1985)

*El Bautismo de Su Bebé* (Liguori Publications, 1985)

### **Post-Baptismal Follow-up and Contact**

The following are suggestions on ways to continue extending an invitation to families after the baptism of an infant or young child:

- Send a follow-up letter on the one-year anniversary of the Baptism, commemorating the date and reminding the parents of the parish's continued interest.
- Hold a special ceremony during Sunday Mass on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (or on the closest Sunday), to bless parents and the children who were baptized during the previous year. Refreshments for those families and other parishioners can follow.
- Send *Parent Letters From Your Parish* (Our Sunday Visitor). *Parent Letters* consists of seven fact-filled, inspiring sets of colorful newsletters to assist first-time Catholic parents in learning more about the Faith and how to share it with their new child.

#### **Material for Parents/Guardians:**

Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, *Growing in Wisdom, Age and Grace: A Guide for Parents in the Religious Education of Their Children*, (William J. Sadler, 1997)

Phyllis Chandler and Joan Burney, *Sharing the Faith with Your Child - From Birth to Age Six: A Handbook for Catholic Parents*, (Liguori Press, 1984). A comprehensive handbook that addresses a wide range of topics from day care to family prayer for parents of children under six.

## **Sample Baptismal Preparation Program For Small Children (Ages 3 - 6)**

Three 45-minute sessions can be held on consecutive Sundays for parent(s) and child.

#### **Session One**

- A. As children and parents arrived, each child received a copy of *About the Sacrament of Baptism* coloring book. The children were encouraged to look through the book and color, while a short interview took place with each parent to gain background information (parents had filled out registration forms prior to attendance at this class).
- B. Pages 42-43 from the teacher guide of *I Am Special, Kindergarten Third Edition* provided information for a talk to the children/parents.
- C. The story, "Two Families" from pp. 43-45 in the teacher guide of *I Am Special* is read to the children and number five on page 46 done, which explains the meaning of symbols used in Baptism, the water, candle, and white clothing.
- D. Several pages from *I Am Special Fun Book* (Our Sunday Visitor) is used to reinforce for the children that God loves them and each one is special and unique (pages 1-3, 5, 9-20, 24- 25, & 33).

#### **Session Two**

- A. As children arrive, they can either work in their coloring book or *I Am Special Fun Book*.
- B. Read the book, *The World God Made: The Story of Creation*, to the children about how God created the world (taken from Genesis 1 and 2).
  - Day 1 -- light (day and night)
  - Day 2 -- skies, sea, lakes, rivers, dry land
  - Day 3 -- plants and trees
  - Day 4 -- stars, moon, sun
  - Day 5 -- birds, fishes
  - Day 6 -- animals and man
  - Day 7 -- God rested
- C. Discuss with the children how we are all special, unique, one-of-a-kind creatures created by God. Use the book *Before You Were Born*. It is too long to read in its entirety, therefore, paraphrase part of it.
- D. Read "A Big Day for Jesus." to the children from *The ABC's of the Sacraments...for children*, pages 4-5. A flannel board with cutouts can be used to depict the story as it is told.
- E. Read "Welcome to God's Family." to the children from *The ABC's of the Sacraments...for children*, (pages 6-7).

### **Session Three**

- A. As children arrive, they can either work in the coloring book or *I Am Special Fun Book*.
- B. Distribute pages 11 & 12 from *I Am Special Kindergarten Third Edition* student activity book and help the children follow along as it is read.
- C. Distribute page 13 from *I Am Special Kindergarten Third Edition* student activity book and help the children match the pictures.
- D. It is suggested that the priest or deacon, who will do the baptisms, speak to the children about what to expect on their Baptism Day.
- E. Read *God Makes Me His Child in Baptism*. This book is written for children ages 2-5. It is a story of an actual baptism.

If time permits or you wish to extend the number of sessions to four, you can use *Somebody Lives Inside: The Holy Spirit*. This book is geared for children ages 6 and older, therefore, if the group has a majority of 3-5 year olds, it would not be a good resource. Worksheets 19 and 28 are good to use with older children.

## **Resources used in Baptismal Preparation For Small Children (Ages 3-6)**

## 2003-2004

New books or resources added this year are thus marked: .

*About the Sacrament of Baptism* (Channing L. Bete).

*The World God Made: The Story of Creation* (ARCH Books).

Joan Lowery Nixon. *Before You Were Born* (Our Sunday Visitor).

Francine M. O'Connor. *The ABC's of the Sacraments...for children* (Liguori Publications).

Joan Ensor Plum. *I Am Special, Kindergarten Third Edition* teacher guide (Our Sunday Visitor).

Joan Ensor Plum. *I Am Special Fun Book* (Our Sunday Visitor)

Sharon Lee Roberts. *Somebody Lives Inside: The Holy Spirit* (Concordia Publishing House).

Janet Wittenback. *God Makes Me His Child In Baptism* (Concordia Publishing House).

## Additional Resources

*Walking by Faith* (Brown-Roa)

Kindergarten Textbook Chapter 22 - "God Created Water"

*Faith First* (Resources for Christian Living)

First Grade Textbook Chapter 11 - "The Church's Celebrations"

*Coming to God's World* (Sadlier)

Kindergarten Textbook Chapter 22 - "We Belong to God's Family"

*Discovering God's Love* (Sadlier)

Five Year Old Program Lesson 25 - "Loving God"

*Discovering God's Love* (Sadlier)

Four Year Old Program Lesson 25 - "Belonging to God's Special Family"

*Our Catholic Faith* (Sadlier)

A Summary of Basic Beliefs Chapter 7 - "Becoming Catholic"

*This Is Our Faith* (Silver Burdett & Ginn)

Heritage Program I - Baptism - Pages 72-75

## Resources for Parents/Guardians

*About the Sacrament of Baptism* (Channing L. Bete)

Sandra DeGidio, O.S.M. "The Sacrament of Baptism - Celebrating the Embrace of God" Catholic Update (St. Anthony Messenger Press)

- Handing on the Faith, Your Child's Baptism* Saint Anthony Messenger Press, 2000. (A series of handbooks for parents to use in helping prepare themselves for their child's reception of the sacraments), 2000.

**The following is an example of an evaluation that you can adapt to fit your Baptismal Preparation Program.**

# Baptismal Preparation Evaluation

Please take time to fill in this evaluation. It will be very helpful to us, and to future families who participate in this program. Thank you.

1. One thing I found most helpful during this program...

2. I feel this process was...(Check one)

- Very helpful     Somewhat helpful     Not very helpful     Not at all helpful

3. I was pleased by/with...

4. I was disappointed by/with...

5. I learned...

6. Please rate your overall feeling after participating in this program...  
(Check the one(s) that most apply)

- Enthused     Satisfied     Dissatisfied     Indifferent     Discouraged

7. How do you feel about the amount of presentations/activities/discussions in this process?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too Much Presentation   | <input type="checkbox"/> Too Much Discussion   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not Enough Presentation | <input type="checkbox"/> Not Enough Discussion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too Much Activities     | <input type="checkbox"/> Good Mixture          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not Enough Activities   |  |

8. Please rate how effective this process is in addressing the needs and interests of young families...

Ineffective    1    2    3    4    5    Very Effective

Suggestion(s) for improvement:

9. Please rate how effective this process is in welcoming young families and incorporating them into the parish community...

Ineffective 1 2 3 4 5 Very Effective

Suggestion(s) for improvement:

10. Please rate how effective this process is in involving young families in the life and ministries of the parish community...

Ineffective 1 2 3 4 5 Very Effective

Suggestion for improvement:

11. Please rate the length of the process...

Fine  Good  Okay  Poor

12. Please rate the scheduling (time, date, month) of process...

Fine  Good  Okay  Poor

**If Mentor Couple was used, please answer the following:**

13. How effective was your Mentor Couple in preparing you for your child's baptism?

14. Would you consider being a Mentor Couple for future couples preparing for their child's baptism?

Yes Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Not at this time



# ***The Code of Canon Law, 1983***

## **Selected Canons on the Sacrament of Baptism**

- Can. 851** The celebration of baptism should be properly prepared. Accordingly:
- #2** the parents of a child who is to be baptised, and those who are to undertake the office of sponsors,\* are to be suitably instructed on the meaning of this sacrament and the obligations attaching to it. The parish priest is to see to it that either he or others duly prepare the parents, by means of pastoral advice and indeed by prayer together; a number of families might be brought together for this purpose and, where possible, each family visited.
- Can. 864** Every unbaptised person, and only such a person, can be baptised.
- Can. 867** Parents are obliged to see that their infants are baptised within the first few weeks. As soon as possible after the birth, indeed even before it, they are to approach the parish priest to ask for the sacrament for their child, and to be themselves duly prepared for it.
- Can. 868. paragraph 1** For an infant to be baptised lawfully it is required:
- #1** that the parents, or at least one of them, or the person who lawfully holds their place, give their consent;
  - #2** that there be a well-founded hope that the child will be brought up in the catholic religion. If such a hope is truly lacking, the baptism is, in accordance with the provisions of particular law, to be deferred and the parents advised of the reason for this.
- Can. 873** One sponsor, male or female, is sufficient; but there may be two, one of each sex.
- Can. 874. paragraph 1** To be admitted to undertake the office of sponsor, a person must:
- #1** be appointed by the candidate for baptism, or by the parents or whoever stands in their place, or failing these, by the parish priest or the minister; to be appointed the person must be suitable for this role and have the intention of fulfilling it;
  - #2** be not less than sixteen years of age, unless a different age has been stipulated by the diocesan Bishop, or unless the parish priest or the minister considers that there is a just reason for an exception to be made;
  - #3** be a catholic who has been confirmed and has received the blessed Eucharist, and who lives a life of faith which befits the role to be undertaken;
  - #4** not labour under a canonical penalty, whether imposed or declared;
  - #5** not be either the father or the mother of the person to be baptised.
- Can. 874. paragraph 2** A baptised person who belongs to a non-catholic ecclesial community may be admitted only in company with a catholic sponsor, and then simply as a witness to the baptism.

\* *The Code of Canon Law* uses the word "sponsor" to refer to what is commonly called the "godparent" for baptism.