

# ◆ Baptism Preparation – Session One ◆

## Baptism: The Beginning of New Life

This session is intended to be used gradually over time.

You are not expected to read everything at once or understand everything immediately.

Return to it slowly over the coming days and weeks:

- read a section at a time
- speak honestly together
- pray simply
- reflect quietly
- return to the Scripture passages

Faith usually grows slowly and gently through ordinary daily life.

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## Begin Together

Make the Sign of the Cross together.

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

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## Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the gift of our child.

As we prepare for Baptism,  
help us to understand more deeply  
what You are offering through this sacrament.

Draw our family closer to You  
through prayer, faith, and love.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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## What Is Baptism?

Baptism is the beginning of the Christian life.

It is the first sacrament of the Church and the doorway into life with Christ.

A sacrament is a visible action through which God gives invisible grace.

This means that in Baptism:

- we see water outwardly
- but God is also working inwardly and spiritually

Baptism is not simply:

- a naming ceremony
- a family tradition
- a cultural custom
- a celebration for photographs

Baptism is an action of Jesus Christ through His Church.

When someone is baptised, Christ Himself acts.

Jesus says:

“Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”  
*(John 3:5)*

Baptism begins a new spiritual life within the soul.

The change is invisible, but real.

## What Does Baptism Do?

Through Baptism:

- original sin is removed
- sanctifying grace is given
- the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us
- we become children of God
- we become members of the Church
- the soul receives a permanent spiritual mark

Baptism truly changes the soul.

It is the beginning of a lifelong relationship with Jesus Christ.

## What Is Original Sin?

Original sin does not mean that a baby has committed personal wrongdoing.

A baby has done nothing personally wrong.

Original sin means that humanity is born needing healing and salvation because sin entered the world.

Human life is beautiful and good, but also wounded.

We experience:

- selfishness
- suffering
- fear
- division
- death

Humanity needs saving.

Jesus Christ came to restore what sin damaged.

St Paul writes:

“For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.”  
(1 Corinthians 15:22)

Without Baptism, a person does not yet share fully in the life of sanctifying grace.

Baptism restores the life of grace that humanity lost.

That is why the Church baptises even infants.

Grace is a gift.

God acts first.

## What Is Grace?

Grace means the free gift of God’s life and help within us.

Grace cannot be earned.

It is given freely because God loves us.

The most important grace received in Baptism is called sanctifying grace.

Sanctifying grace means:

- friendship with God restored
- sharing in the life of Christ
- God dwelling within the soul

Through sanctifying grace we become:

- children of God
- heirs of heaven
- capable of sharing eternal life

Grace helps us:

- pray
- love
- forgive
- resist sin
- grow in holiness

Grace is deeper than feelings.

Sometimes we feel close to God and sometimes we do not.

But God can still be quietly working within us.

This life of grace can:

- grow through prayer and the sacraments
- be weakened through sin
- be restored through Confession

Baptism plants this life within the soul.

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## Why Does the Church Baptise Children?

Some people ask:

“Shouldn’t someone choose Baptism later for themselves?”

Adults who become Christians do freely choose Baptism.

But children receive many important gifts before they fully understand them:

- life
- love
- language
- care
- education

Parents naturally desire what is good for their child.

The Church believes the grace of Baptism is also a gift worth giving early.

Faith can then grow gradually throughout life.

Baptism plants the seed of faith.

Parents, godparents, and the Church help that faith grow.

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## The Role of Parents

At the Baptism, parents are asked:

“Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?”

Parents answer:

“I do.”

Parents promise to help their child grow in the Catholic faith through:

- prayer
- Sunday Mass
- Christian example
- the sacraments
- life within the Church

Parents are the first and most important teachers of faith.

Children learn faith most deeply through ordinary family life.

Faith becomes natural when:

- prayer is visible
- forgiveness is practised
- God is spoken about naturally
- Sunday Mass matters
- faith is lived calmly and faithfully at home

The Church desires to support and accompany families, but parents remain the primary witnesses of faith for their children.

Many families come to Baptism carrying questions, struggles, or periods of distance from the Church.

Preparation is not about pretending to have everything figured out.

It is about allowing God to begin working more deeply within family life, one step at a time.

## Why Sunday Mass Matters

Sunday Mass is at the centre of Catholic life.

At Mass:

- we worship God together
- hear His Word
- pray as the Church
- receive Holy Communion

Holy Communion is the Body and Blood of Christ given to strengthen us spiritually.

The Eucharist strengthens the life of grace first given in Baptism.

For this reason, the Church asks Catholics to gather for Mass every Sunday and Holy Day whenever reasonably possible.

This does not simply mean:

- “when convenient”
- “when nothing else is happening”
- “when we feel like it”

It means situations such as:

- serious illness
- caring responsibilities
- unavoidable work obligations
- genuine impossibility

The greatest danger to faith is often not hostility, but gradual neglect:

- irregular Mass
- infrequent prayer
- silence about God in the home

Grace grows through consistency.

Children learn what matters most by what they see lived faithfully.

Even when family life is busy or children are restless, simply remaining faithful to Sunday Mass helps faith grow slowly and deeply over time.

## Catholic Summary

Today we have reflected upon how Baptism:

- begins the Christian life
- removes original sin
- gives sanctifying grace
- makes us children of God
- joins us to the Church
- begins a lifelong journey with Christ

The life of faith grows gradually through:

- prayer
- Sunday Mass
- the sacraments
- Christian family life
- the support of the Church community

This life of grace must be nourished and protected.

## Questions for Reflection

Return to these questions gradually over time.

You do not need perfect answers.

- Why do we want our child baptised?
- What kind of faith do we hope our child will grow up with?
- Is prayer part of our family life at the moment?
- Is Sunday Mass already part of our routine?
- What small step could help our family grow closer to God?

Honesty matters more than perfect answers.

Silence is not failure.

## Questions & Answers

### **Is Baptism only symbolic?**

No. The Church believes God truly gives grace through Baptism. Scripture speaks of Baptism as rebirth and washing in Christ.

### **Can Baptism be repeated?**

No. Baptism is received only once and marks the soul permanently.

### **What if someone later rejects the faith?**

The mark of Baptism remains, but the life of grace can be weakened or lost through serious sin.

### **What if we are not fully practising Catholics right now?**

This preparation can be a peaceful opportunity to begin again gradually.

### **What if we still have questions?**

That is completely alright. Faith grows through prayer, learning, and experience over time.

## Living With This Session

You do not need to understand everything immediately.

Faith usually grows slowly through small and faithful steps.

Over the coming days and weeks, simply return to some of the ideas from this session:

- What does Baptism truly mean?
- What kind of faith do we hope to pass on?
- How can prayer become more natural in our home?
- What small step might God be inviting our family to take now?

The Church walks patiently with families as faith grows.

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## Simple Ways to Pray

Try one or two simple practices together:

- ✓ Make the Sign of the Cross together each evening
- ✓ Pray one Our Father slowly together
- ✓ Bless your child before bedtime
- ✓ Spend a quiet moment before a crucifix or candle
- ✓ Read one Gospel story together
- ✓ Attend Sunday Mass prayerfully

Faith grows through small faithful habits.

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## Prayers to Keep Returning To

### The Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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### The Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
 hallowed be thy name;  
 thy kingdom come;  
 thy will be done  
 on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,  
 and forgive us our trespasses,  
 as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
 and lead us not into temptation,  
 but deliver us from evil. Amen.

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## A Simple Prayer for Your Child

Lord Jesus,

Watch over our child and keep them close to You.

Help our home to grow in faith, prayer, peace, and love.

Guide our family always in Your grace.

Amen.

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## Scripture to Return To

“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.”

*(Matthew 19:14)*

“Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”

*(John 3:5)*

“I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

*(Matthew 28:20)*