

◆ Baptism Preparation – Session Three ◆

Living the Grace of Baptism

Raising a Child in Faith

This session is intended to be used gradually over time.

Return to it slowly over the coming days and weeks:

- read one section at a time
- speak honestly together
- pray simply
- revisit the Scripture passages
- reflect upon daily family life

Faith is usually formed not through one moment, but through many small faithful habits lived over time.

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.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,

You give new life through Baptism.

Help us to protect and nourish that life
through prayer, faithfulness, and love.

Guide our family ever closer to You.

Amen.

Baptism Is a Beginning

Baptism is not the end of something.

It is the beginning.

At Baptism, God gives new spiritual life.

But like all life, it must grow.

St Peter writes:

“Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation.”

(1 Peter 2:2)

Grace is given freely by God.

But the life of grace must be nourished through:

- prayer
- worship
- the sacraments
- Christian family life
- perseverance in faith

Baptism calls us not only to believe in Christ, but gradually to become holy and live as His disciples.

The Home Is the First Place of Faith

Long before school, catechism classes, or parish programmes, the home shapes faith.

Children learn from:

- what they see
- what they hear
- what is prioritised
- what is neglected

If prayer is natural in the home, faith often becomes natural.

If Sunday Mass is steady and faithful, children begin to understand that God matters.

If faith is treated as occasional or unimportant, it often fades slowly over time.

Parents are the first and most important teachers of faith.

The Church desires to support and accompany families, but no parish can fully replace the witness of home life.

Children learn deeply through ordinary things:

- seeing prayer
- hearing forgiveness
- watching kindness
- noticing whether faith matters in daily life

Sunday Mass and the Eucharist

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

Jesus teaches:

“Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.”
(John 6:54)

At Mass:

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

The Church asks Catholics to gather for Sunday Mass because the Eucharist nourishes the life of grace and keeps us close to Christ and His Church.

Children who grow up with faithful Sunday Mass gradually learn:

- God is central
- worship matters
- faith belongs to everyday life
- the Church is family

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

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

As children grow, they gradually learn right and wrong.

They will make mistakes.

They will need forgiveness and mercy.

Jesus Christ gave the Church the Sacrament of Reconciliation so that sins committed after Baptism may be forgiven.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.”
(1 John 1:9)

Baptism removes original sin and begins the life of grace.

Confession restores and strengthens that life when it is wounded by sin.

Children who see their parents go to Confession learn:

- humility
- honesty
- responsibility
- trust in God's mercy

They learn that sin does not have the final word.

Preparing for the Other Sacraments

Baptism opens the door to the whole sacramental life of the Church.

As children grow, they will prepare for:

- First Reconciliation
- First Holy Communion
- Confirmation

Each sacrament strengthens the life of grace begun in Baptism.

Preparation for these sacraments does not begin only in the final year before reception.

It begins now through:

- prayer at home
- Sunday Mass
- learning to forgive
- learning reverence
- growing gradually in faith

Habits formed early often remain for life.

Guarding Against Gradual Neglect

The greatest danger to faith is often not hostility.

It is gradual neglect.

Faith rarely disappears suddenly.

It weakens slowly through:

- missed Sundays
- infrequent prayer
- silence about God
- treating faith as unimportant

St Paul writes:

“Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”
(1 Corinthians 15:58)

Steadiness helps faith grow.

The life of grace needs to be nourished and protected.

Serious sin wounds our relationship with God, but God's mercy is always available through repentance and Confession.

No family lives the Christian life perfectly.

There may be periods of struggle, inconsistency, tiredness, or distance from the Church.

Do not become discouraged.

God works patiently within ordinary family life, and the Church is always ready to help families begin again.

The Role of Godparents

Godparents are not simply honorary guests or family titles.

They are spiritual companions who help support the child in the Catholic faith.

Godparents should:

- be practising Catholics
- live consistently with the faith of the Church
- pray for the child
- encourage the child in Christian life over time

Their role continues long after the day of Baptism itself.

Choose carefully and prayerfully.

Small Faithful Habits Matter

Strong faith is usually built through small and steady habits.

Even simple things matter greatly:

- praying before meals
- blessing children before bed
- keeping holy images in the home
- speaking naturally about God
- reading Gospel stories together
- attending Mass faithfully
- returning to prayer after difficult periods

Grace grows quietly through ordinary faithfulness.

Questions for Reflection

Return to these questions gradually over time.

- What habits in our home support faith?
- What habits weaken faith?
- Is Sunday Mass already part of our family routine?
- How natural is prayer within our home?
- What small step could help our family grow closer to God?
- Who supports us in living the faith?

Honesty matters more than perfect answers.

Questions & Answers

Is Baptism enough on its own?

Baptism begins the life of grace, but that life must continue to grow through prayer, the Eucharist, Christian living, and the other sacraments.

What happens if we drift from practice?

Faith can weaken through neglect, but God always invites us to return. The Church is always ready to welcome people back gently and patiently.

When should children begin learning to pray?

Immediately. Even simple daily prayer helps form the heart gradually over time.

Is faith formation mainly the parish's responsibility?

No. Parents remain the primary educators in faith, though the parish seeks to support and accompany families.

Living With This Session

You do not need to change everything immediately.

Faith usually grows slowly through ordinary daily life.

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

- What kind of faith do we hope our child will grow up with?
- What habits already help faith grow in our family?
- Where might God be inviting us to begin again?

- How can prayer become more natural at home?

The Church walks patiently with families as faith grows.

Simple Ways to Live Baptism Daily

Try one or two simple practices together:

- ✓ Pray briefly together each evening
- ✓ Bless your child before bedtime
- ✓ Attend Sunday Mass faithfully
- ✓ Return to Confession regularly
- ✓ Read one Gospel passage together each week
- ✓ Keep a crucifix or holy image visible at home
- ✓ Speak naturally about God in daily life

Small faithful habits shape family life deeply over time.

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.

The Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

A Prayer for the Family

Lord Jesus Christ,

Remain close to our family.

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

Strengthen us when faith feels difficult.

Lead us always closer to You.

Amen.

Scripture to Return To

“Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation.”

(1 Peter 2:2)

“Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.”

(John 6:54)

“Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

(1 Corinthians 15:58)

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.”

(1 John 1:9)