

BAPTISM

ACTIVITY & CONVERSATION COMPANION

For parents, godparents, mentors and priests

THIS IS NOT ANOTHER PREPARATION BOOK

Use this beside My Child's Baptism. The preparation book supplies the Catholic teaching. This companion helps you bring it to life through simple activities, objects, discussion and prayer.

Three conversations. No lesson planning. No classroom atmosphere.

CONVERSATION FIRST • SUNDAY MASS • TEACHING • PRAYER • FAMILY LIFE

Most activities use things already at home or in church: a bowl of water, a candle, a white cloth, a Bible, a crucifix, the family calendar and the baptismal promises.

THE BASIC RULE

Do the activity, let people speak, open the preparation book for the teaching, then return to real family life. The activity serves the sacrament; it never replaces the teaching.

New life in Christ begins here

HOW TO USE THIS COMPANION

This is designed for an ordinary parish conversation at home, after Mass, or with a mentor. You do not need to perform every activity. Choose what helps the people in front of you.

1 Begin with them

Ask what they already think Baptism is, what brought them to ask for it, and what questions they have. Listen before teaching.

2 Do one simple activity

Use the activity to make one truth visible or concrete. Keep it brief. Avoid turning the conversation into a game for its own sake.

3 Open My Child's Baptism

Read the relevant conversation together. Pause where something needs explaining. The preparation book remains the doctrinal foundation.

4 Talk honestly

Use the prompts in this companion. Parents and godparents do not need polished answers. Real questions are better than rehearsed ones.

5 Pray and choose one next step

End with the prayer from the preparation book and one practical action. Small faithful habits matter more than finishing quickly.

MENTOR, NOT LECTURER

A mentor walks alongside: listens, asks, clarifies, prays and knows when to say, "That is a good question - let us ask Father."

A SMALL ACTIVITY TOOLKIT

You will not need a bag of resources. These ordinary items cover almost everything in the three conversations.

1 A bowl or jug of clean water

For talking about washing, new birth and the visible sign of Baptism. Do not imitate the sacramental washing.

2 A white cloth or garment

For the new dignity of being clothed in Christ.

3 A candle

For Christ the Light and the responsibility to keep the flame of faith alive. Keep it unlit unless safe and appropriate.

4 A crucifix and Bible

For connecting Baptism with Christ, the Gospel and the life of the Church.

5 A weekly calendar

For making Sunday Mass and family prayer concrete rather than vague.

6 The Apostles' Creed / baptismal promises

For an honest conversation about what “I do” means.

AVOID PRETEND SACRAMENTS

Do not “practise” Baptism by pouring water over a person or inventing sacramental words. Rehearse responses and movements; explain the signs; leave the sacramental action to the actual rite.

CONVERSATION 1

Baptism: New Life in Christ

Use with Conversation 1 of My Child's Baptism

AIM

Help parents and godparents see Baptism as something Christ truly does, not simply a naming ceremony, family tradition or welcome party.

ACTIVITY 1 - A GIFT BEFORE CHOICE

Place a small wrapped gift, baby blanket or another obvious gift on the table.

- Ask: "Did this child have to understand this gift before receiving it?"
- Ask: "What important things has this child already received without first choosing them - life, family, language, care, love?"
- Then ask: "Could God also give grace before a child is old enough to explain it?"

DRAW OUT

Grace is gift. Infant Baptism is not pretending that the child has adult understanding. The Church asks God to give the child a real gift of new life, while adults undertake to nurture what has been given.

ACTIVITY 2 - WATER: WHAT CAN IT SHOW?

Place a bowl of clean water where everyone can see it. Do not perform a mock Baptism.

- What can water do in ordinary life? Clean, refresh, give life, rescue from thirst.
- Now open the preparation book and read the teaching on rebirth by water and the Holy Spirit.
- Ask: "Which parts are visible in Baptism, and which gifts can only God give?"

CONVERSATION 1

Talk it through

From symbol to sacramental reality

CONVERSATION PROMPTS

- What are you asking God to give this child that you cannot give by yourselves?
- What is the difference between saying “Baptism shows that we love this child” and saying “Christ gives this child new life”?
- Why might the Church baptise an infant rather than wait until the child can make every decision personally?
- If Baptism really incorporates the child into the Church, what will belonging to the Church need to look like afterwards?

OPEN THE PREPARATION BOOK

Read Conversation 1, especially the REMEMBER paragraph and THE ESSENTIALS. Let the parents or godparents explain the meaning back in ordinary words before reading the concise answers.

OPTIONAL 2-MINUTE CHECK

Finish each sentence aloud:

- “Baptism is more than a family ceremony because ...”
- “In Baptism God gives ...”
- “We baptise infants because grace is ...”

FOR THE ADULT ALONGSIDE

Do not make original sin the whole lesson. The centre is Christ giving new life, grace, adoption, the Holy Spirit and membership in his Church. If a difficult question arises, note it and bring it to the priest.

PRAY AND ACT

Use the prayer and THIS WEEK action in Conversation 1: pray for the child at Sunday Mass and make the Sign of the Cross over the child at home.

CONVERSATION 2

The Rite: Water, Faith and the Signs

Use with Conversation 2 of My Child's Baptism

AIM

Help adults understand what will happen in church and, above all, what their spoken “I do” means.

ACTIVITY 1 - READ THE SIGNS

Place these four things in front of you if possible: water, a white cloth, a candle and a crucifix.

- Water: ask first, “What might this sign be saying?” Then read the explanation in the book: new birth, cleansing, life - and the sacramental washing Christ uses in Baptism.
- Chrism: ask first, “What might this sign be saying?” Then read the explanation in the book: consecration and sharing in Christ's mission; explain rather than imitate the anointing.
- White garment: ask first, “What might this sign be saying?” Then read the explanation in the book: new dignity and being clothed in Christ.
- Candle: ask first, “What might this sign be saying?” Then read the explanation in the book: the light of the risen Christ entrusted to the family.

DO NOT RUSH TO GIVE THE ANSWER

Let the parent or godparent notice the sign first. Then connect their answer with the Church's meaning.

ACTIVITY 2 - WHAT DOES “I DO” COST?

Read the baptismal renunciations and profession of faith slowly, or use the Apostles' Creed.

- After each section ask: “If I really mean this, what might it change in ordinary life?”
- Do not debate every doctrine. The point is sincerity: the child is being baptised into the faith and life of the Church.

CONVERSATION 2

Walk through the celebration

Make the rite familiar without turning it into a performance

A SIMPLE WALK-THROUGH

1 Reception

The child is welcomed by name; parents ask for Baptism and accept the responsibility of Christian upbringing.

2 Cross and Word

The child is marked with the Cross; Scripture is proclaimed and the Church prays.

3 Renunciation and faith

Parents and godparents reject sin and profess the Catholic faith.

4 Baptism with water

This is the central sacramental action. Explain it; do not imitate it.

5 Chrism, garment and candle

Receive the signs and connect each one with the Christian life that now begins.

6 Blessing and sending

The family leaves with a vocation, not simply with photographs.

REHEARSE, PRAY AND ACT

Practise the real responses - especially “I do” and “Amen” - but do not stage a pretend Baptism. Then use the prayer and THIS WEEK action in Conversation 2: read the Creed and agree one practical way parents and godparents will help one another live it.

CONVERSATION 3

Living Baptism: Raising a Child in Faith

Use with Conversation 3 of My Child's Baptism

AIM

Move from “the Baptism day” to the ordinary Catholic life in which baptismal grace is meant to grow.

ACTIVITY 1 - IF THE CHILD COPIED US

Ask the central question from the preparation book and give it time:

IMAGINE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW

If this child learnt what Catholic life means only by watching the adults around them, what would they have learnt?

- What would they see on Sundays?
- Would prayer feel normal or unusual?
- Would they hear adults ask forgiveness and begin again?
- Would Jesus and the Church be spoken about as real and loved?
- Would the godparent still be recognisably present in the child's Christian life?

ACTIVITY 2 - PUT FAITH ON THE CALENDAR

Take an ordinary weekly calendar. Mark what is already there - work, school, shopping, clubs, family commitments. Then add just two realistic Catholic habits.

- Sunday Mass - identify the Mass the family can ordinarily attend.
- One small home habit - bedtime blessing, grace before meals, short Gospel story or family prayer.

KEEP IT REALISTIC

Two habits that actually happen are better than ten intentions that disappear after the Baptism.

CONVERSATION 3

Parents, godparents and parish

Who will help the child keep walking?

THE THREE CIRCLES

On a sheet of paper draw three overlapping circles labelled HOME, GODPARENTS and PARISH. In each circle write one or two concrete things that belong there.

- HOME: Sunday Mass, prayer, Christian example, forgiveness, teaching the faith.
- GODPARENTS: prayer, visible Catholic example, encouragement, remembering baptismal anniversaries, support through later sacraments.
- PARISH: worship, sacraments, catechesis, friendship, pastoral help and belonging.

THE POINT

No one circle replaces the others. Parents remain the first educators in faith; godparents support rather than replace them; the parish receives the family into a real worshipping community.

CONVERSATION PROMPTS

- Which part of Catholic family life already feels natural?
- Which part will need to begin again?
- What could make Sunday Mass difficult, and what practical solution might help?
- What should the godparent still be doing in five years?
- When would you want to ask the parish for help?

PRAY AND ACT

Use the prayer and THIS WEEK action in Conversation 3. Choose two habits now; do not wait until after the Baptism.

A PRACTICAL RITE REHEARSAL

Use this shortly before the Baptism so the adults know what they are doing and can pray rather than worry about logistics.

1 Find your places

Know where parents, child and godparents will stand or sit. Ask about any local arrangements.

2 Say the request clearly

Be ready to ask the Church for Baptism and accept the responsibility of Christian upbringing.

3 Practise the profession of faith

Read the renunciations and profession slowly. Answer “I do” as a real act of faith, not as stage directions.

4 Know the signs

Be ready for the Cross, water, chrism, garment and candle. The priest or deacon will guide you.

5 Prepare practical items

Bring only what the parish has asked you to bring. Arrive in good time.

6 Plan one quiet moment afterwards

After the celebration, before the reception takes over, thank God for the grace given to the child.

ONE SENTENCE TO REMEMBER

The minister will lead the rite. What matters most is understanding what you are asking for and making the profession of faith sincerely.

A GODPARENT CONVERSATION

A godparent is not an honorary title. Use these prompts with the chosen sponsor before the Baptism.

- Why have you agreed to be this child's godparent?
- What part of your own Catholic life would you most want this child to learn from you?
- How will you pray for the child regularly?
- How will you remain present when the child reaches First Confession, First Holy Communion and Confirmation?
- If the family's practice becomes difficult or irregular, how can you encourage without becoming intrusive?
- What will you do on the child's baptismal anniversary?

A GOOD CHOICE

Choose a godparent for the Christian life you hope the child will see, not simply for closeness, honour or family expectation.

CHECK THE REQUIREMENTS

Use Appendix B of My Child's Baptism for the canonical requirements and ask the priest about any uncertain situation.

A SIMPLE FAMILY RULE OF LIFE

Use the preparation book's family rule as a menu, not a burden. Circle or choose only what you can genuinely begin.

Daily	Sign of the Cross; bless the child; one short prayer.
Meals	Say grace naturally.
Weekly	Sunday Mass; mention one thing heard, seen or prayed about.
At home	Keep a crucifix, Bible or holy image visible.
Regularly	Parents receive the sacraments faithfully, including Confession.
As the child grows	Teach prayers, tell Gospel stories, practise forgiveness and prepare for later sacraments.
With godparents	Pray for the child, mark the baptismal anniversary and remain a recognisable Catholic support.
When things go wrong	Begin again. Return to prayer, Mass and Confession rather than allowing a difficult season to become permanent distance.

CHOOSE TWO NOW

Write them into the actual family calendar before the Baptism. Baptism begins a life; it is not the finish line.

BEFORE THE FINAL PARISH CONVERSATION

This is not a test. Use it to notice what is clear and what still needs an honest conversation.

- ☐ We can explain in ordinary words what Baptism gives.
- ☐ We understand that Baptism is more than a family ceremony or naming day.
- ☐ We are willing to make the renunciations and profession of faith sincerely.
- ☐ We have a real intention to raise the child in the Catholic faith.
- ☐ We have chosen at least one concrete Sunday Mass / prayer habit to begin or continue.
- ☐ We understand the role of the godparent and have checked any uncertainty about eligibility.
- ☐ We know the basic shape of the rite and what the main signs mean.
- ☐ We have raised any family, canonical, access, language or practical difficulty rather than hiding it.
- ☐ We know whom to ask for help after the Baptism.

FINISH WITH ONE QUESTION

“What are you most grateful for as you prepare to ask the Church for this child's Baptism?” Then pray for the child by name.

KEEP USING THE PREPARATION BOOK

The rite guide, parent and godparent requirements, twelve essentials, readiness review, family rule, day-of-Baptism page and emergency guidance remain in My Child's Baptism. This companion is only the pedagogical aid.