

Baptism

Dear Parent(s),

During the Lenten season, we will be focusing on different aspects of Lent: its meaning, its symbols, its customs, and its traditions. Each week, your child will bring home Family Take-Home Pages, which are filled with activities that reinforce what we are discussing and learning in class. These Take-Home Pages are theme based and divided into three sections: Warm-Up Exercises, Getting Started, and Putting It into Practice. The theme for this week of Lent is Baptism.

During Lent adults who are interested in joining the faith are busy preparing to receive the sacraments of initiation, which include Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. For those who have already been baptized, Lent is a time when we prepare to renew our baptismal promises on Easter. It is a time when we recommit to those promises of faith. May the activities suggested in these pages provide you with additional tools for nurturing your child's faith.

Warm-Up Exercises...

Gather the family around the Lenten candle. Have one member of the family light the candle and another read from Scripture. Then follow with a family discussion.

A reading from John 3:1-6

There was a man named Nicodemus who was a Pharisee and a Jewish leader. One night he went to Jesus and said, "Sir, we know that God has sent you to teach us. You could not work these miracles, unless God were with you."

Jesus replied, "I tell you for certain that you must be born from above before you can see God's kingdom!"

Nicodemus asked, "How can a grown man ever be born a second time?"

Jesus answered, "I tell you for certain that before you can get into God's kingdom, you must be born not only by water, but by the Spirit. Humans give life to their children. Yet only God's Spirit can change you into a child of God."



Follow with a discussion about the Baptism of each family member. Invite family members to share their memories of those special days. Try to remember as many of the details as you can. Were different members of the family baptized in different parishes? Recall the name(s) of the priest(s) who baptized the different members of your family. Why did you choose the godparents you chose? Who celebrated these special days with your family? Were any family members baptized as adults? If so, share their conversion story with your children. Why is Baptism such a wonderful gift? Pull out any photos or videos of your children's Baptisms.

Family Take-Home Pages

Say a prayer of thanks for the gift of Baptism. And say a special prayer for the priest(s), godparents, family, and friends who celebrated the sacrament of Baptism with you.

Getting Started...

During Lent we prepare to renew our Baptismal promises; we examine how well we are upholding the promises we made, or the promises our godparents made for us. As we grow in faith, we continually renew these commitments to our faith. Take a few moments now to renew those promises as a family baptized in faith. Have different members of the family take turns asking the questions. The rest of the family responds: I do.

Do you reject Satan and all his works and all his empty promises?

Do you believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and Son?

Do you believe in the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

After renewing your baptismal promises, hold hands and thank God for the gift of faith.

Putting It into Practice...

Does your family know someone who will be baptized soon? This person could be a rela-

tive, a personal friend, or one of the candidates in your parish's RCIA or RCIC program. How will your family welcome this person into the Church? How will your family continue to support him/her in faith? Brainstorm about ways your family can support this person, and then put those ideas into action. Here are some suggestions to get you started:

Make and send bookmarks that can be used in a Bible. Include verses from Scripture that relate to Baptism (John 3:5, Luke 3:16, Titus 3:5, Romans 6:3-7, Acts 2: 38).

Make and send letters of welcome and congratulations.

Make and send cards of encouragement.

Pray for that person.

Invite that person for supper.

Send notes telling that person that your family is praying for him/her.

Invite that person and his/her family to go to Mass with yours.

Invite that person and his/her family to attend other church functions with your family.

"You must encourage one another each day"
(Hebrews 3:13).



Traditions create memories. Memories enrich our lives. Traditions also help us pass on valuable lessons to our children.

During Lent, we reflect on our baptismal promises. At the Easter Mass, we will renew the commitment we made at our Baptism.

For candidates of the RCIA and RCIC programs, Lent provides a time of final preparation for receiving the sacraments of initiation. The Church community will soon be celebrating with great joy these new members of the Church at the Easter Vigil Mass.

Many Catholic families celebrate the day of a child's Baptism with great gusto. Family members, neighbors, and friends help the family celebrate this special occasion. The baby, all adorned in white, is the center of attention. White is the customary color for the baptismal outfit. Baptism purifies us from all sins—original and personal—and makes the baptized person a new creature, an adopted child of God, who is a partaker of the divine nature, a member of the Body of Christ, and a temple of the Holy Spirit. The baptized person becomes a member of the Church and belongs forever to Jesus, who died and rose for us.

As a symbol of new life through Baptism, some families (and parishes) make simple white garments for the "newly baptized" member of the Church. This garment slips over the baby's head. There are no seams. They're easy to make.* Their hems can be machine or hand-stitched. Non-sewers and non-crafters can make these garments from felt, so there's no need to stitch hems. The

* The supplies call for felt rather than fabric so that the project is easier to do.

only embellishments on the garment are a tiny cross, embroidered near the neckline, and the child's name and date of Baptism embroidered near the hemline.

These white garments make perfect keepsakes of your child's Baptism. And they make thoughtful gifts from godparents to godchild. You could make several outfits as gifts for babies who will be baptized in the near future in your parish. If possible take your children to attend these baptismal celebrations.

The pattern is on pages 72–73.

Supplies needed:

- 1/3 yard of 45"-wide white felt
- straight pins (for pinning pattern to felt)
- embroidery needle (wide-eye)
- embroidery floss (suggested colors:
red for cross; blue for boy's names;
pink for girl's names)
- fabric pinking shears or scissors

Directions:

1. Trace and cut out pattern on pages 72–73.
2. Lay felt flat on table. It should measure 12 by 45 inches. Pin pattern to felt and cut.
3. Cut slit in neckline as shown on pattern to allow garment to fit over baby's head.
4. Embroider a small cross near the front neckline, using 3 strands of embroidery floss (see diagram).
5. Embroider the child's name and baptismal date on the front, near hemline of gown, using 3 strands of embroidery floss.

▼ FOLD ▼

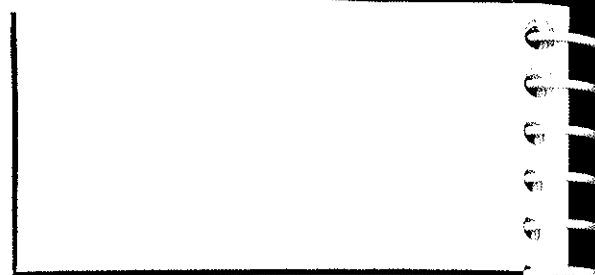
▼ FOLD ▼

▲ Cut out the neckline along this line



Use this pattern for the cross on the garment

▼ Cut garment along this line



Pattern for white garment

