

CONTENT OF CATECHESIS

The “Content of Catechesis” includes questions for reflection and discussion within a comprehensive presentation of the rite touching on its theology and history. The curriculum guidelines below take their format from the rite and their content from the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The paragraph numbers are noted in parentheses.

The foundation of the catechetical content for baptism preparation is the rite itself. The Church recognizes that people come with diverse circumstances and cultures seeking the same desire - to have their child baptized. Having the Rite of Baptism of Children as the core of catechesis provides a common starting place that honors individual stories while calling parents and godparents to mature as disciples of Christ at a teachable moment in the life of the domestic church. It also affords the participants the opportunity to reflect on their personal experience of this sacrament of initiation, allowing them to become active subjects, conscious and co-responsible, not merely silent passive recipients. (GDC, #167) It calls the community into partnership with families by offering continual support of family and child and providing life for them at the parish. It provides the Church the instrument to express its story and teachings with regards to this sacrament within the setting of the celebration of the “basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other sacraments.” (CCC, #1213)

Walking through the Rite of Baptism for Children

A. Reception of the Children

1. Parents present child (RBC, #33)
2. Celebrant’s reception in the name of God (RBC, #36)
3. Name of child & request of baptism (RBC, #37)

Content: (CCC, #2156-2159, #1253)

- Reason for choosing a Christian name

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?*

4. Responsibilities of parents and godparents (RBC, #39 & #40)

Content: (CCC, #1255, #1250)

- The faith of the child depends on the faith and responsibility of parents and godparents, and also the community
- Parents’ role as nurturers

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?*
- * *What role will the parish play in helping you nurture the life that God has entrusted to you?*

5. Christian community's sign of welcome (RBC, #41)
Content: (CCC, #2157, #2166, #1235)
 - The Sign of the Cross
 - Marks child with imprint of Christ

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- * *When do you sign yourself with the Sign of the Cross?*
- * *Have you ever signed another with the Sign of the Cross? When?*

B. Liturgy of the Word (RBC, #17)

1. Scripture Readings and Homily (RBC, #44-46)
Content: (CCC, #1236)
 - The Word of God enlightens us, reveals the truth, and is the source of faith

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- * *Which of the suggested Gospel passages "stirs" your faith most about baptism at this time?*
- * *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 persons of enduring faith?*

2. Intercession (Prayer of the Faithful) (RBC, #47-48)
Content:
 - The meaning of prayer (CCC, #2558-2565)
 - Prayer as an essential part of the Christian life (CCC, #2744-2745)
 - Intercessory prayer as praying in petition as Jesus did (CCC, #2634-2636)

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?*

3. Prayer of Exorcism and Anointing before Baptism (RBC, #49-52)

Content:

- Liberation from Original Sin (CCC, #405, #977-978, #1250, #1265)
and personal sin (for adults, CCC, #1262-1263, #2520)
- Rebirth as a child of God (CCC, #683, #1265)
- The beginning of our faith relationship with the Trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (CCC, #1266)
- Rebirth and new life through grace; metanoia, continuing conversion (CCC, #1262)
- Anointing with oil of catechumens

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- * *From what evils do you want to protect this child?*
- * *How will God help you?*
- * *How can the parish community help?*
- * *How does "new life" (divine life) differ from ordinary human life?*

C. Celebration of the Sacrament (RBC, #53)

1. Blessing and Invocation of God over Baptismal Water (RBC, #54-55)

Content:

- Water and its role in salvation history (CCC, #1217-1222)
- Baptismal water consecrated by the power of the Holy Spirit (CCC, #694, #1235, #1238-1239)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- * *How has water helped reveal God's plan for salvation? Give examples.*
- * *When this child is baptized he/she will be "born of water and Spirit." What does this mean to you?*

2. Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith (RBC, #56-59)

Content:

- The Profession of Faith (CCC, #1251, #1253-55, #2340)
- During Baptism, parents renewal of Baptismal Vows
- 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 (CCC, #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 a disciple?*
- * *How will you pass these on to your child?*

3. Baptism (RBC, #60-61)

Content: (CCC, #694, #1266, #1276, and #1278)

- Sacrament of “new birth”
- Pouring of water
- Invocation of the Most Holy Trinity
- Trinitarian relationship

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- * *How would you describe your relationship with each person of the Trinity?*
- * *How do you nurture these relationships?*
- * *How will you help this child nurture a relationship with each person of the Trinity?*
- * *How can the parish community help?*

D. Explanatory Rites

1. Anointing after Baptism (RBC, #62)

Content:

- Anointing signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit (CCC, #695)
- Incorporation into Christ as priest, prophet, king orienting one towards worship of God, proclaiming the Gospel message, and serving one’s brothers and sisters (CCC, #1241-1242)

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?*

2. Clothing with White Garment (RBC, #63)

Content:

- White garment as symbol of
 - being clothed with Christ, so one can live as Christ keeping the garment white throughout our life (CCC, #1243) -
 - dying with Christ, so one can rise with Christ (CCC, #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?*

3. Lighted Candle (RBC, #64)

Content:

- Lighted from the Easter candle
- Signifying that Christ has enlightened the child
- A sign that the child is to be the "light of the world"

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- * *What is the significance of the Easter Candle in celebrating baptism?*
- * *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?*

4. Ephphetha or Prayer over Ears and Mouth (RBC, #65-66)

E. **Conclusion of the Rite (RBC, #67)**

1. Lord's Prayer (RBC, #19, #68-69)

Content: (CCC #2759-2865)

- A summary of the whole Gospel (CCC #2761)
- Signifying new birth into divine life (CCC #2769)
- Giving new forms to our desires which directs our inner lives (CCC, #2764)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- * *Silently pray the Our Father. Why is this the perfect prayer for Christian Baptism?*
- * *How does the reciting of the Lord's Prayer before the altar prefigure the future sharing in the Eucharist for this child?*
- * *What does this action say to you about your role in the faith development of this child?*
- * *How can the parish community be of help?*

2. Blessing and Dismissal (RBC, #70-71)

Content:

- Prayer for parents as they take on their roles as (CCC #1231)
 - Mother and father to the child
 - 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 you have to make in the future?*
- * *How might God be a part of these changes and adjustments?*

This section on “The Content of Catechesis” is adapted from the “Guidelines for the Sacrament of Baptism” from the Diocese of Beaumont.