

Rite For The Baptism Of Small Children

The Welcome

This takes place at the Church entrance. After welcoming the parents and child and others gathered the priest will invite them to the Baptismal font. If, however, the ceremony is part of the Mass, the Baptism will proceed after the Liturgy of the Word.

The priest spells out the importance of Baptism...



You have asked to have your child baptised. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training him/her to the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him/her up to keep God's Commandments as Christ taught us...

The priest asks the godparents if they are willing to help the parents do this. The child is then welcomed into the Christian family...



(Name), the Christian Community welcomes you with great joy. In its name I claim you for Christ our Saviour by the Sign of his Cross. I now trace the Sign of the Cross on your forehead, and invite your parents and godparents to do the same...

The Sign of the Cross marks the child with the imprint of Christ and signifies the grace of the redemption he won for us.



The exorcism and anointing

O God, you sent your Son to cast out the power of Satan, set this child free from Original Sin.

Original sin can be understood as that tendency to pride and selfishness, which we all have inherited from our first parents at the Fall. The *exorcism* frees the child from the control of evil but still allows the child free will to choose right and wrong.

The priest anoints the child on the chest with the **oil of catechumens**. Oil is a sign of strength and healing.



After the readings the priest will give a short homily to explain the readings to those gathered. Then follow the *Prayers of the Faithful*, or *Bidding Prayers* as they're often called. These prayers will be for the child, the parents and the godparents.

For the child... so that the new life given in Baptism grows to maturity and bears fruit.

For the parents and godparents... to strengthen them in their responsibilities.

It is appropriate that the child takes a saint's name.



A celebration of the Word of God

An important part of the celebration of every sacrament is a reading of the Bible, the Word of God. Unless the Baptism takes place during a Sunday Mass or an important feast day Mass, the readings may be chosen as appropriate for Baptism, for example:

Romans 6:1-11 *Our share in the Baptism of Jesus* (as a first reading),

John 3:1-8 *Jesus speaks to Nicodemus* (as a gospel reading).



Baptismal promises

This takes place over the font, whose water is blessed by the priest. The priest asks the following questions:

Do you reject sin...? I do.

Do you reject the glamour of evil...? I do.

Do you reject Satan...? I do.

The threefold rejection of evil is followed by a threefold declaration of faith, to which all those present will respond.

Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth? I do.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, ...? I do.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church...? I do.

This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it, in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

The Baptism

The actual Baptism now takes place.

Water is poured *three times* over the forehead while the priest says the words of Baptism.

(Name) I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

In an emergency any lay person, or even an unbaptized person, can, with the Church's intentions in mind, baptize a candidate by pouring clean water over the person's head and saying the words of baptism above.



Lord's Prayer and Blessing

It is appropriate that when a child has been received into the family of God, there should be a prayer to the Father of all.

There are then three blessings to conclude the celebration of Baptism.

May God bless this mother who gives thanks for the gift of her child...

May God bless this father. He and his wife will be the first teachers of the child in the ways of faith...

May God continue to pour out his blessings over all present here. May he make them faithful...

In this way all present at the ceremony receive God's blessing.

Clothing with a white garment and baptismal candle

(Name), you have become a new creation, and have clothed yourself in Christ. See in this white garment the outward sign of your Christian dignity... bring that dignity unstained into the everlasting life in heaven.

Along with the white garment there is another powerful symbol of Baptism in the *Baptismal candle*, which is given to one of the parents, who lights it from the Paschal candle (first lit at the Easter vigil). The Paschal candle represents the light and power of the Risen Lord.

Receive the light of Christ. Parents and godparents, this light is entrusted to you to be kept burning brightly... May he/she keep the flame of faith alive in his/her heart...

Anointing with Chrism

The second anointing is with a different oil called *chrism*. This fragrant oil is a mixture of olive oil and balsam. Chrism is also used during the rite of Confirmation, and of Ordination.

It signifies that the child has been given a special calling in life, sharing in the life of Christ who is **priest, prophet and king**.

A priest offers sacrifice to God for the forgiveness of sins. We share the priesthood of Christ, especially in the Eucharist, which relives the Sacrifice of Christ, the perfect priest.

A prophet speaks out for justice and mercy in a world which all too often cares little for them.

A king shepherds his people safely through difficult paths to the kingdom.

1 Can you match up all three parts of each sentence?

First, the child and its parents	the sign of the cross on top of the child's head	signifying the light of Christ as a guiding flame in the child's life.
Second, the priest will trace	by pouring water three times over its head with	to signify that the child has 'put on' Christ.
Third, there is a suitable	on the forehead with chrism, a mixture of olive oil and balsam,	the mother, the father, and all those attending the baptism.
Fourth, there is the exorcism and anointing	a candle lit from the Paschal candle,	the story of Jesus' baptism, example.
Fifth, the parents and god-parents are invited to renew	clothed with a white garment	to signify that the child has been <i>consecrated</i> , set aside for a sacred purpose.
Sixth, the child is baptised	blesses those present:	to signify that the child has been 'claimed for Christ'.
Seventh, the child is anointed	their baptismal promises,	the words from St. Matthew's Gospel repeated.
Eighth, the child is	reading from the Bible, the Word of God;	in which they reject Satan and proclaim belief in the Trinity.
Ninth, the child receives	with the oil of catechumens	to set the child free from Original Sin and to signify strength and healing.
Finally, the priest	are welcomed by the priest	and taken to the font.

2 The following is an example of a multiple choice question about baptism.

When does a person become a Christian?

A when they first go to Church

B when they are baptised

C when they repent

D when they first pray to God

Design **four** multiple choice questions about the **rite of baptism**.

Try to make sure that the right answer is not obvious from your question.