

What Happened at My Baptism?

Greetings!

“One Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all.”

So St. Paul speaks across the centuries to each of us. In the waters of Baptism, we are incorporated into the mystery of the life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. One with him, our sins are forgiven and we receive the Holy Spirit. We become God’s own. We are incorporated into the Church and empowered through grace to share in her mission.

To help your children understand what it means to be baptized, you may want to bring them to a Baptism. At many parishes, people are baptized during the liturgy on the Easter Vigil. Many parishes also schedule Baptism during a monthly Mass throughout the year.

Light your children’s baptismal candle on the anniversary of their Baptism.

Help the children identify the symbols of Baptism. Water is the central symbol. Water symbolizes life and cleansing. What does it feel like after a dip in a lake? What happens when we are deprived of water? How do we feel? Share what you remember of the children’s reaction as the priest or deacon poured the water or submerged them in the font. If you observe an adult immersion, notice that the person goes completely beneath the water. This gesture symbolizes our sharing in the death of Christ on the Cross. We have died to sin, and are raised to new life, in Baptism.

Your child was anointed with chrism at Baptism. Chrism has a beautiful fragrance. It is fine to ask your deacon, priest, or liturgy director to allow your children to smell the chrism, which is in a vessel cabinet called an ambry.

After the anointing with chrism, a white garment is given to the individual, showing that they have become a new creation. If you have the white garment the children were given, or a family christening gown, show it to your children.



Bring your children to a Baptism to help them understand the sacrament.

White is a symbol of purity. Have they ever seen the world covered with a fresh coat of snow? What does it look like? Feel like? Imagine that freshness being even greater. Share photos of family members in their baptismal garments.

The baptized receive a lighted candle as part of the rite. This candle is held by the godparents and represents the light that Christ Jesus has brought into the world. Light your children’s baptismal candle during dinner on the anniversary of their Baptism. The start of a relationship with Jesus Christ is worthy of commemoration!

Finally, help your children notice that many people make promises at Baptism. The baptized (if they are children or adults), the parents, the godparents, and the community make promises. Baptism is not just about the child. It is about the commitment to share our faith and support each other in growing into the likeness of Christ and carrying his message of love and freedom to everyone we meet.