



PREPARING *for*
BAPTISM

BAPTISM

beginning the spiritual journey

Congratulations! If you are reading this, your family was recently blessed with a new baby. As a church, we are excited to partner with you for the spiritual formation of your family!

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

Baptism is a sacrament. In fact, it is the first sacrament of the Christian life. A sacrament is an outward and visible *sign* of an inward and spiritual *grace* (Book of Common Prayer, p. 857). Baptism is the sacrament by which God adopts us as his children and makes us members of Christ's Body, the Church. The sacrament of baptism is found throughout the New Testament (Luke 3:16, Acts 10:48, Gal 3:27, 1 Peter 3:21). It has been practiced by Christians since the earliest centuries of the Church.

The “outward and visible sign” of baptism is the water. During your child's baptism the priest will say a prayer of “Thanksgiving over the Water”, referencing significant moments from the Bible in which water was an important part of God's story, like Noah's flood and the Exodus of the Israelites with Moses through the Red Sea (Gen 1:2, Ex 14:29–31, Mark 1:9–11, Book of Common Prayer pg. 306).

The “inward and spiritual grace” is union with Christ in his death and resurrection, birth into God's family the Church, forgiveness of sins, and new life in the Holy Spirit (Book of Common Prayer, 858). In other words, baptism is an incredible gift from God!

THE CHURCH'S COMMITMENT

During the baptismal service you will be asked to make a public pledge before God and the congregation that you *will* raise your child to know, love, and follow Jesus Christ. The primary context for this faith formation is not actually the church building, but your own home. God designed the home as the primary place for the seed of baptism to be nurtured and to grow. But fear not! We will be with you every step of the way. See our FaithPath Overview for more information about how. Our motto is the same as Home Depot: You can do it! We can help. We can do it together.

IDEAS FOR CELEBRATING YOUR CHILD'S BAPTISM

- Have a celebration with family and friends after the weekend service.
- On the anniversary of your child's baptism, light the baptismal candle (that you will receive during the service) and pray through the Celebration of the Anniversary of Baptism. You will receive an outline of this special service when you take the Baptismal Preparation class.
- Share funny memories from the day with your child.
- Record a video message for your child to view in the future. Speak words of affirmation and love, sharing how you are praying for their spiritual journey and how you desire to point them toward Christ. You can also write a letter if that works better for you.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO HAVE MY CHILD BAPTIZED AT INCARNATION?

1. Review the baptism information and guidelines at incarnation.org/grow/baptisms.
2. Sign up for the Baptismal Preparation class by contacting Catie Donaghy at cfm@incarnation.org.
3. Choose a date for your child's baptism. Baptisms in our church take place on certain special feast days. You can reserve your date by contacting Catie Donaghy at cfm@incarnation.org. Do so soon because they do fill up.
4. Attend the Baptismal Preparation class.
5. If the child to be baptized is five or older, they should receive special instruction from a priest before their baptism, in addition to the parents taking the baptism class. Contact cfm@incarnation.org to set up that meeting.

INTENTIONAL FAITHPATH PLAN

CHILD'S NAME _____

How will you be intentional this next year?

- Plan my child's baptism.
- _____

The next step on the FaithPath is *Praying for Your Child*, recommended at age one. You will receive an email during the month of your child's birthday, and the resource will be available for you with your child's name on it at the Bringing Faith Home Center, right outside the Incarnation Bookstore.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- The Service of Baptism can be found on page 299 of *The Book of Common Prayer*, 1979.
- *Being Christian*, by Rowan Williams. This short book has a great chapter on baptism.
- *Raising Them Right: A Saint's Advice on Raising Children*, by Theophan the Recluse. This small book also has a great little chapter on baptism.
- *The Mystery of Baptism in the Anglican Tradition*, by Kenneth Stevenson. This book is a deeper dive into the history and theology of baptism from an Anglican perspective.
- See incarnation.org/faithpath for more resources.

INCARNATION'S CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRY

Bringing Faith Home: incarnation.org/bringing-faith-home
Children & Family Ministry: incarnation.org/grow/children