

Celebrating Baptism

Episode 2: Preparation

Find out how one family's baptism connects them with the surrounding community and why that is good for everyone.

Opening Prayer

After everyone has gathered, begin with the following prayer from St. Augustine's Prayer Book. Consider printing the prayer or projecting it to a screen so all can follow along.

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: *And also with you.*

Leader: Let us pray.

A Thanksgiving for Life within the Church

We give you thanks and praise, Lord Jesus Christ, that you have called us into your fellowship:

For those who first taught us to pray and opened the gospels to us;
we give you thanks.

For those who stood with us at the font;
we give you thanks.

For the abundance of grace of baptism, by which we were granted forgiveness and a place in your kingdom;
we give you thanks.

For the faith we confessed in the Creed and the call we accepted in the Baptismal Covenant;
we give you thanks.

For the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the sign of the cross, marking us as your own;
we give you thanks.

We give you thanks and praise, Lord Jesus Christ, that you have welcomed us at your table;
we give you thanks.

For the joy of worship with brothers and sisters;
we give you thanks.

For the Word proclaimed and heard anew week by week;
we give you thanks.

For hearing our prayers on behalf of the world, for those we love and our own needs;
we give you thanks.

For accepting our gifts and making them part of your eternal offering to the Father;
we give you thanks.

For giving us a place within the awe-filled hymn of all creation;
we give you thanks.

For the regular remembrance of your passion, death, and resurrection;
we give you thanks.

For the outward signs of inward grace you so freely give into our hands;
we give you thanks.

For the peace that passes understanding and the joy of service;
we give you thanks. Amen.

All: Grant us, O Lord, to receive with grateful hearts and with attentive minds all that you would give us. Make us to know your grace and to believe your promises, to offer with generosity all that you ask of us and to follow where you lead, into lives of service and an eternity of joy in your presence. *Amen.*

Reflection

Take a moment to reflect on the prayer we have just prayed.

Ask participants for comments or impressions. Possible prompts: What stood out to you in this prayer? What caught your attention?

Homework Review

At this time, ask for a few volunteers to reflect on their homework assignment from the previous session:

What encouragement or challenges did you find within the Presentation and Examination of the Candidates and the Baptismal Covenant?

Video

Watch *Celebrating Baptism, Episode 1: Community.*

Preface the video by asking participants the following: Think about who was involved in your baptism, or who will be involved in your or your child's upcoming baptism. How have those individuals supported – or how will they support – your or your child's journey in the Christian faith?

Discussion Questions

Discuss the following questions as a group.

1. Name some people who have helped support you in living the Christian way. How have they supported you? What actions or words have they used?
2. Going forward, how do you see community being part of your faith? Is there someone you can help support in living the Christian way – the Way of Love?

Homework

Print or email these questions for participants to prepare for the next session.

1. For those who have already been baptized:
 - a. When and where were you baptized?
 - b. Who baptized you?
 - c. What was going on in your life or your family's life in that season?
 - d. How has your baptism impacted your life?
 - e. Who first taught you to pray and opened the Gospel to you?
2. For those about to be baptized:
 - a. When and where will you be baptized?
 - b. Who will baptize you?
 - c. Why have you chosen to be baptized at this time?
 - d. Who first taught you to pray and opened the Gospel to you?

Closing Prayer

From A Thanksgiving for Life within the Church:

Grant us, O Lord, to receive with grateful hearts and with attentive minds all that you would give us. Make us to know your grace and to believe your promises, to offer with generosity all that you ask of us and to follow where you lead, into lives of service and an eternity of joy in your presence. *Amen.*