

Diocese of Leeds

## **The Sacraments of Initiation**

### **Baptism of Infants and Young Children**

# **Resource Pack for Parishes**

Amended 2005



*I Have Come That You May Have Life,  
And Have It To The Full*

*[John 10, 10]*

## **Section One: Checklist for a programme of Baptism Preparation.**

A parish Baptism preparation team is formed. This can include the parish priest/assistant priest/deacon and lay catechists.

- When a family requests Baptism for their child/children they are asked to complete an application form (see Your Child and Baptism, pages 3 &4) and an arrangement is made for them to meet a member of the parish clergy.
- A home visit by a Baptism team member can next be arranged.
- At the home visit the team member can discuss the practical details of the Baptism and explain what Baptism is about. The family can then be invited to join the parish Baptism preparation meetings.
- The preparation meetings are held. There are a number of resources to help with these meetings listed in this pack.
- A Rite of Welcome (see pages 9-12) can be celebrated during Mass as part of the preparation period.
- Prayer sponsors can be enlisted to pray for the families and the children. The elderly and the housebound can be asked to do this and would find great joy in being able to feel of use and value in the parish community.
- As the date for Baptism draws near the families involved can be included in the bidding prayers and mentioned in the bulletin.
- Baptism certificates can be delivered shortly after the Baptism by a team member and the children can be sent a card on the anniversary of the Baptism for the next five years.



- Your child and Baptism

To be a godparent

- To be a *Godparent*

## Section Two

# Welcome for Baptism

### A Simple Liturgy

There are several reasons for using a simple rite of welcome during the Sunday Mass to recognise the request of family for their child to be baptised and to begin the period of preparation for the sacrament itself.

Although baptism sometimes takes place during Mass it does not always do so. A public rite of welcome is a way of helping the family concerned be aware that Baptism is not a private family event but a celebration that relates to whole Christian community. It helps the parish community be aware of children being put forward for baptism and offers them an opportunity to pray for them and their families.

Since there will be a time of preparation for the sacrament, a rite of welcome can be helpful in marking the beginning of the preparation. It reinforces for the family the importance of what they are requesting for their child and the need for their commitment. It invites the parish community to give families preparing for the sacrament their support and prayers.

What follows is a possible Rite of Welcome based upon the *Reception of the Children* in the Rite of Baptism for Several Children.



# Rite of Welcome For One Child

*At one or more of the Sunday Masses, about the time that Baptism preparation meetings are to resume in the parish, families with children for baptism are invited to a simple rite of presentation and welcome.*

*After the greeting, the congregation is invited to sit, and parents are asked to come forward with their child. If possible the Godparents should also be present. (Different family circumstances need to be respected when asking for the child to be presented in this way).*

## Rite of Welcome One Child

*After the greeting, the congregation is invited to sit, and parents are asked to come forward with their child. If possible the Godparents should also be present. (Different family circumstances need to be respected when asking for the child to be presented in this way).*

*The Celebrant first converses with the parents. He should be pastorally aware of their circumstances. He may adapt the words to a more personal style.*

**Celebrant**

May I ask you first of all what name you have given to your child.

**Parents** .....

**Celebrant**

What are you asking of the Church for.....

**Parents**

*We are asking for .....to be baptised*

**Celebrant**

By asking for .....to be baptised, you are taking on a responsibility to bring.....up in the Catholic faith. At the heart of this will be your teaching .... to love God with all your heart and mind and strength and to love your neighbour as yourself. Jesus taught us that this is the greatest of all the commandments. Do you understand what you are undertaking ?

**Parents**

Yes, we do

**Celebrant**

*Will you use the time between now and the baptism to prepare carefully for the celebration of this sacrament for your child?*

**Parents**

We will.

**Celebrant**

Godparents, are you ready to help.....and.....in their duty as Christian parents?

**Godparents**

We are

**Celebrant**

*Addressing the congregation*

As this family prepares for the baptism of their child, do you promise to pray for them, and renew your commitment to being a loving and supportive community in which these parents can bring up their child?

**All**

We do

**The Celebrant will now trace a sign of the cross on the child's forehead while saying:**

**Celebrant**

.....this Christian community welcomes you with great joy. In its name I claim you for Christ our Saviour by the sign of the cross. I now trace the cross on your forehead and invite your parents and godparents to do the same.

*The Mass now continues as normal. The family concerned may be invited to bring up the bread and wine for the preparation of the gifts. A bidding prayer for them can be included. When the Sacrament is celebrated, the opening rite should be adapted to take account that this rite of welcome has been celebrated.*

## **Rite of Welcome For Several Children**

*At one or more of the Sunday Masses, about the time that Baptism preparation meetings are to resume in the parish, families with children for baptism are invited to a simple rite of presentation and welcome.*

*After the greeting, the congregation is invited to sit, and parents are asked to come forward with their children. If possible the Godparents should also be present. (Different family circumstances need to be respected when asking for the child to be presented in this way).*

## Rite of Welcome several children

*The Celebrant first converses with the parents. He should be pastorally aware of their circumstances. He may adapt the words to a more personal style.*

**Celebrant**

May I ask you first of all what names you have given to your children.

**Parents**

.....

**Celebrant**

What are you asking of the Church for your children  
(.....)

**Parents**

*We are asking for them to be baptised*

**Celebrant**

By asking for your children to be baptised, you are taking on a responsibility to bring them up in the Catholic faith. At the heart of this will be your teaching them to love God with all your heart and mind and strength and to love your neighbour as yourself. Jesus taught us that this is the greatest of all the commandments. Do you understand what you are undertaking ?

**Parents**

Yes, we do

**Celebrant**

*Will you use the time between now and the baptism to prepare carefully for the celebration of this sacrament for your children?*

**Parents**

We will.

**Celebrant**

Godparents, are you ready to help these parents in their duty as Christian parents?

**Godparents**

We are

**Celebrant**

*Addressing the congregation*

As these families prepare for the baptism of their children, do you promise to pray for them, and renew your commitment to being a loving and supportive community in which these parents can bring up their children?

**All**

We do

*The Celebrant prepares to sign the child with the sign of the cross while saying:*

**Celebrant**

.....this Christian community welcomes you with great joy. In its name I claim you for Christ our Saviour by the sign of the cross. I now trace the cross on your foreheads and invite your parents and godparents to do the same.

*The Mass now continues as normal. The family concerned may be invited to bring up the bread and wine for the preparation of the gifts. A bidding prayer for them can be included. When the Sacrament is celebrated, the opening rite should be adapted to take account that this rite of welcome has been celebrated.*

### **Section Three: Next Steps**

Following the preparation period and the Baptism itself the parish can develop ways to support the parents and offer them practical help in nurturing their children's faith journey.

Some suggestions are:

- regular contact with the families after Baptism, perhaps by members of the Baptism team or by other parishioners who undertake this as their parish ministry
- sending cards at the anniversary of the Baptism (see page 15), on the child's birthday and at Christmas
- after the Baptism a letter (see page 14) can be sent to the headteacher of the local Catholic school so that the school community can extend a welcome to the family. The wording of this letter can be amended to ensure that it does not imply a guaranteed place in the school
- an annual Mass and social for families who have had a Baptism in the previous year
- a parish parent and toddler group
- support through Family Life Ministry. This could include parenting programmes for the families of all newly baptised children. The programmes for children of all ages are run by parents and are a good way of maintaining parish links with families.

## Headteacher's Letter

## Anniversary Card

## Section Four: Recommended Resources for Home, School and Parish from Baptism onwards:

### A. Baptism Resources

**The Rite of Baptism for Children**  
Geoffrey Chapman, London

**The Baptism Book, Rite of Infant Baptism**  
Redemptorist Publications, ISBN 0 85231 164 8, £3.99  
Contents: The Rite of Baptism during Mass  
The Rite of Baptism for One Child  
The Rite of Baptism for Several Children

### Practical guidelines for catechists and parents

**Welcome New Life**  
Sr Mary Bernard Potter SP and Nigel Bavidge  
Geoffrey Chapman, Leader's Guide, ISBN 0 225 66745 2  
Continuum, Parents' Book, ISBN 0 225 66747 9

*This resource was developed by the Diocese of Leeds RE Centre and extensively piloted throughout the diocese. It provides material for preparing families for the Baptism of their babies in four meetings; there is a book for parents in addition to this guide.*

**Baptism, The Most Precious Gift, Complete Manual for Parent Preparation**  
Beth Branigan McNamara  
Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, ISBN 0 87973 366 7 £14:99

*Includes plans for three sessions of parents' meetings with some useful practical information and ideas*

**New Life, Preparing for your Baby's Baptism,**  
Redemptorist Publications, £9:95

*This is a useful pack for clergy and catechists running Baptism preparation sessions. It accompanies Your Baby's Baptism (below) and contains ten copies each of Your Faith and Your Child's Faith*

## For parents and godparents

### **Your Baby's Baptism**

Redemptorist Publications, ISBN0 85231 082 X, £2:95

*This is a colourful and popular booklet which outlines the meaning of Baptism and the Baptism service and answers many of the questions which parents may ask.*

### **Your Child's Baptism, Carol Luebering**

Handing on the Faith

St Anthony Messenger Press, ISBN 0 86716 343 7, £2:50

This is a small booklet to help parents prepare for their child's Baptism.

### **"Will Our Children Believe?"**

Michael Paul Gallagher SJ, Veritas, ISBN 1 85390 369 8

*Many parents who want to pass on the faith to their children feel insecure in their own believing and belonging. Michael Paul Gallagher believes that parents can serve their children best by nourishing the roots of their own faith - 'faith is caught, not taught' - and children will 'catch' the faith if they see it lived and living around them.*

*Fr Gallagher encourages parents not to be neutral in passing on the faith. He cites the current interest in spirituality and the inner self as evidence of young people's search for faith, and says that if young people are given the basis - security and trust - at home, they will be well prepared to live the faith throughout their lives.*

**When You Are a Godparent, Elizabeth Bookser Barkley**

Handing on the Faith

St Anthony Messenger Press, ISBN 0 86716 447 6, £2:95

This booklet reflects on the role of the godparent and on the responsibility and significance of being chosen to share your faith and personal experience with a child

**NEW**

**Baptism, Helping your child get the most from life.**

**A CAFÉ resource**

A flexible and enjoyable short course designed to inform, inspire and stir discussion amongst parents. It is easy to use and includes 2 sessions on video or DVD, a leader's guide, 6 parent booklets and 6 godparent booklets (extra booklets can be ordered)

Contact: Catholic Evangelisation Services, Westminster Pastoral Centre, PO Box 333, St Albans, Herts AL2 1EL

Phone: 01727 823803

[www.faithcafe.org](http://www.faithcafe.org)

## B. Next Steps: General Home, School, Parish Reference

### Books

**Passing On Our Faith** - to Children in their early years  
Jenny Pate, McCrimmons, ISBN 0 85597632-2

*This book offers some thoughts and suggests some practical ways for parents and others to nurture their child's faith during their early years. It is primarily a resource for parents and the child's wider family but will also be of interest to parish catechists and teachers of young children.*

**Jesus, Our Light** - The early life of Jesus  
McCrimmons, ISBN 0 85597 611 X

**Jesus, Our Hope** - The ministry of our Lord  
McCrimmons, ISBN 0 85597 612 8

**Jesus, Our Way** - The final events in the life of Jesus  
McCrimmons, ISBN 0 85597 613 6

*A series of books with accompanying posters.*

*The use of traditional meditation techniques with children can provide an important opportunity for spiritual development. The images in the books, and the associated posters, can be used as the stimulus for reflection. The books are designed to help parents, catechists, teachers and RE co-ordinators to make the most of the beautiful images.*

**Journeying Together - Home, School & Parish**

Frank McDermott & Chris Cahill, Matthew James Publishing

*A resource that provides an exciting and realistic framework for Church, schools and parishes to support parents in their task as the first and foremost educators of their children. It seeks to strengthen and develop links between home, school and parish*

## **God's Story**

Anne White, Chris Malone & Ann Byrne SND, Rejoice Publications

**God's Story** presents the Scriptures to children through the eyes and words of the people who believe in God; the people of the first covenant and the people of the new covenant. **God's Story** is a major scriptural resource that can be used:

- **In the Home** to introduce children to the people, prayers, stories and teachings of the Scriptures.
- **At School** alongside Religious Education programmes such as Here I Am, as a resource for Literary Schemes and as a source book for classroom prayer and school worship.
- **In the Parish** where it will be useful for catechists preparing children for the sacraments and for those providing Liturgy of the Word for Children.

The three books offer progression in language, style of presentation and choice of texts. The Notes for Adults will help adults to deepen their own understanding and love of the Scriptures and to encourage children in their learning and understanding.

The Scripture texts, based on the *Good News Bible*, the *Jerusalem Bible* and the *New Jerusalem Bible*, are the work of the diocesan primary advisers of England and Wales.

God's Story 1 is for the very youngest children ISBN 1-899481-16-8

God's Story 2 is for ages 5-7 ISBN 1-899481-17-6

God's Story 3 is for ages 7-11 and beyond ISBN 1-899471-18-4

## Videos

### **Stories Jesus Told - Parables for Kids**

St. Paul Multimedia Productions 5 031446 725573

*An adaptation of the Parables of the Sower, the Good Samaritan, the Lost Sheep, the Prodigal Son and the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. These four minute stories, on video, are ideal for home, parish and classroom use.*

### **Guilt-Free Parenting, David Wells**

Catholic Evangelisation Services

*This series of videos provides an opportunity to bring parents together and to give them a chance to explore with each other their parenting, their lives and their faith and so to affirm one another. Topics covered include Baptism, Confession and the Mass.*

### **Knowing God Better, David Payne**

A series of seven talks by the Director of the Catholic Evangelisation Services

*In these talks adults are invited to consider God's love, grace and forgiveness. They include mime, testimonies, music and opportunities for prayerful reflection*

### **Exploring the Catholic Church, Marcellino D'Ambrosio**

Catholic Evangelisation Services

*A video resource that gives adults the opportunity to explore together such topics as the Catholic Church, Sacraments, Mary and the Saints.*

## Websites

*The following are websites that may be of interest to parents with young children, as well as catechists and teachers working with children aged 3-11 years.*

[www.homefaith.com](http://www.homefaith.com)

[www.catholic-family.org](http://www.catholic-family.org)

[talktogod@catholicireland.net](mailto:talktogod@catholicireland.net)

## General reference

### **The Rites of the Catholic Church**

*See especially the general introduction to Christian Initiation*

### **Catechism of the Catholic Church, Geoffrey Chapman**

ISBN 0-225-66704-5

### **General Directory for Catechesis, Catholic Truth Society**

ISBN 1-86082-026-3

*This is a vital working tool for all those involved in the Church's mission to announce the Gospel. The Directory seeks to incorporate all the developments which have contributed to catechetical work since 1971, including the large body of writing by Pope John Paul II.*

### **The General Directory for Catechesis in Plain English, Bill Huebsch, Twenty-Third Publications, ISBN 1 58595 133 1**

*This book is a summary and commentary on the GDC in clear, concise and fluid prose. Catechists, teachers and parish leaders will find it an indispensable aid for studying the GDC.*

**Code of Canon Law**

Collins Liturgical Publications, ISBN 0 00 599750 x

*Canon Law touches on every aspect of the life of the Church and affects pastoral work at all levels*

**On the Threshold, Bishop's Conference of England and Wales**

Matthew James Publishing, ISBN 1 898 366 66 7

*This Report has been written for local use, whether at parish, deanery or diocesan level. It has been designed to be used especially by catechists, teachers, priests and those concerned with meeting people as they stand on the threshold seeking initiation for themselves or their children.*

**Suggested reading**

**The Book of Sacramental Basics, Tad Guzie**

Paulist Press, ISBN 0 8091 2411 4

*In a concise and readable way Tad Guzie offers a modern understanding of the sacraments, not as encounters that 'give grace' but as opportunities for people already in God's grace to celebrate that fact.*

**Rethinking Sacraments, Bill Huebsch**

Twenty-Third Publications ISBN 0 89622 393 0

*Bill Huebsch has looked long and hard at the changes brought about by Vatican II. He has come up with a redefining, a refinement, of what it's like to experience the sacraments today.*

## C. Family Life Ministry Resources

For those with children under five there are three 'parenting' programmes:

- ❖ **From Pram to Primary** (birth to five years)
- ❖ **Assertiveness for Parents** (how to say 'no' and maintain good relationships)
- ❖ **Parenting and Sex** (how to talk to children of all ages about sex)

For parents of older children:

- ❖ **What can a parent do?** (from 5 years to early teens)
- ❖ **What can the parent of a Teenager do?** (for parents of teens from 12 onwards)

Two 'faith formation' programmes:

- ❖ **I Have a Million Things To Do** (how we give 'signs of faith' at home)
- ❖ **Faith in Our Family** (clear guidance on essential Catholic beliefs for parents)

As well as:

- ❖ **Learning to Step Together** (building and strengthening stepfamilies)

And, for couples:

- ❖ **Couple Alive** (making time to treasure *each other*)
- ❖ Most of the programmes are clearly organised into chapters on different themes in a *handbook*. Over *four, six or eight weeks*, they look at important skills like listening and learning to acknowledge feelings as well as the tricky issues of discipline and rights.
- ❖ All are designed to be used in small groups, in informal settings such as the home or parish meeting room. Many have *video* input for each session so access to a TV and video is necessary.
- ❖ All support community development by bringing people together for friendship and sharing. Someone to organise the room, run the video and make tea while everyone is chatting about the theme is all that is needed to get a group going. (Many programmes have a very detailed '*facilitators' guide*' to help the organiser week by week.)

For further details:

**Contact: FLM Hinsley Hall, 62 Headingley Lane, Leeds LS6 2BX on 0113 261 8050 or 0773 44 11 282 or flm@flm.org.uk**

## **Section Five: Diocese of Leeds Catechesis and Religious Education Service**

Members of the Diocesan Catechesis and Religious Education Service are available for general help and advice. Information on how they can be contacted is below.

RE Centre, Hinsley Hall, 62 Headingley Lane, Leeds, LS6 2BX  
Tel: 0113 261 8040      Fax: 0113 261 8044

### Telephone numbers & Emails

Rev John Wilson    Tel: 0113 261 8081  
[john.wilson@hinsley-hall.co.uk](mailto:john.wilson@hinsley-hall.co.uk)

Nigel Bavidge      Tel: 0113 261 8041  
[nigelbavidge@hinsley-hall.co.uk](mailto:nigelbavidge@hinsley-hall.co.uk)

Theresa Laverick    Tel: 0113 261 8042  
[theresalaverick@hinsley-hall.co.uk](mailto:theresalaverick@hinsley-hall.co.uk)

Linda Pennington    Tel: 0113 261 8043  
[linda.pennington@hinsley-hall.co.uk](mailto:linda.pennington@hinsley-hall.co.uk)

Wendy Hamilton    Tel: 0113 261 8040  
[wendy.hamilton@leeds-diocese.org.uk](mailto:wendy.hamilton@leeds-diocese.org.uk)

### **For specific advice and training for Baptism preparation please contact**

Linda Pennington    Tel: 0113 261 8043  
[linda.pennington@hinsley-hall.co.uk](mailto:linda.pennington@hinsley-hall.co.uk)

- Training and support for clergy and catechists can be arranged for individual parishes, groups of parishes or whole deaneries.

## **Acknowledgements**

**Journeying Together - Home, School & Parish**

Frank McDermott & Chris Cahill, Matthew James Publishing

**Communities of Hope**

Christine Dodd and Frank McDermott

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**Ann Jones from St Joseph's, Pudsey**

**All clergy and catechists who offered ideas and advice**