

Sacrament Guidelines
Archdiocese of Newark



Order of Baptism of Children

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Archdiocese of Newark

OFFICE OF THE VICAR GENERAL

MEMORANDUM

TO: Pastors/Administrators and Parish Staff
FROM: Very Rev. John J. Chadwick, S.T.D.
DATE: October 22, 2024
RE: Revised Guidelines for the Baptism of Children

Attached please find the Revised Guidelines for the Baptism of Children.

The ritual for the baptism of children (originally published in 1970) is now in its second edition (2020). Its publication offers an opportunity for a renewal and updating of the original guidelines for the celebration of the baptism of infants here in the Archdiocese of Newark.

Sacramental rituals are truly appreciated when there is solid catechetical preparation and pastoral follow-up. The People of God, that is the Church, have a responsibility to support and nurture the faith development of those who become baptized.

Gratitude is extended to the members of the Liturgical Commission, Worship Office and Catechetical Office for preparing these guidelines, and to the various Archdiocesan consultative bodies which reviewed them. May they be of service in enriching the faith life of our parish communities throughout the Archdiocese.

Be assured of my prayers for you and all in our Family of Faith.

ARCHDIOCESAN CENTER

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Cardinal Joseph William Tobin, C.Ss.R.
By the Grace of God and the Favor of the Apostolic See
Archbishop of Newark

DECREE

Whereas, among the major liturgical achievements of the Second Vatican Council was the restoration of the Rites of Initiation among which was the development of a rite for the baptism of children elucidating that children are baptized into the faith of the Church professed by parents and godparents, and,

Whereas, the ritual for the baptism of children, originally published in 1970 and now in its second, 2020 edition, has prompted revision of the original Guidelines for the celebration of the baptism of children in the Archdiocese of Newark,

Therefore, I am pleased to promulgate the attached revised Guidelines for the baptism of children in the Archdiocese of Newark, which are to be fully implemented beginning January 12, 2025, the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, and,

Therefore, preparation and catechesis for these changes is to begin immediately so that ministers, parents, and godparents may enter fully and consciously into the baptismal ritual, thus enriching the faith life of our parish communities throughout the Archdiocese.

Given at my Chancery in Newark on the 1st day of November, in the year of Our Lord 2024, the Solemnity of All Saints.

Joseph William Cardinal Tobin, C. Ss. R.
Archbishop

Sr. Donna Ciangio
Chancellor

Order of Baptism of Children

Part I – Guidelines for Liturgical Celebration

*One never goes alone to the baptismal font,
but is accompanied by the prayers of the entire Church.*

– Pope Francis

General Audience, April 25, 2018

A. The Importance of Baptism

1. Baptism is the foundation of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit and the door which gives access to the other Sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as children of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission.¹ A person who has not received Baptism cannot be admitted validly to the other Sacraments.²
2. The fruit of Baptism, or baptismal grace, is a rich reality that includes forgiveness of original sin and all personal sins, birth into the new life by which a person becomes an adoptive child of the Father, a member of Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit. By this very fact the person baptized is incorporated into the Church, the Body of Christ, and made a sharer in the priesthood of Christ.³
3. The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation.⁴ "No one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit."⁵ Through Baptism, an individual is configured to Christ. Baptism seals the Christian with the indelible spiritual mark or character of belonging to Christ.⁶ No sin can erase this mark; therefore, Baptism cannot be repeated or undone.⁷
4. From the earliest times, the Church has baptized not only adults but children as well. There is explicit testimony to this practice from the second century on, when whole "households" received Baptism.⁸ The Church has always understood that children are not to be deprived of Baptism, for it is a grace and gift of God that does not presuppose any human merit. Such children are baptized in the faith of the Church herself, which is proclaimed by the parents and godparents, who represent both the local Church and the whole company of Saints and faithful.⁹
5. Pope Francis addressed the question of those who ask if it would not be better for children to grow up and then request Baptism for themselves. The Holy Father responded that, "this means not having confidence in the Holy Spirit, because when we baptize a child, the Holy Spirit enters that child, and the Holy Spirit cultivates in that child, from childhood, Christian values that will then flourish. This opportunity must always be given to everyone, to all children, to have within them the Holy Spirit who guides them during life. Do not forget to baptize your children!"¹⁰
6. Parents desiring Baptism for their child who receive a prenatal diagnosis of a life-threatening condition should receive the support they need to assure that their child will be baptized "without delay."¹¹
7. To bring to completion the reality of the Sacrament, children should afterwards be formed in the faith in which they have been baptized.¹²



8. As regards children who have died without Baptism, the Church can only entrust them to the mercy of God, as she does in her funeral rites for them. Indeed, the great mercy of God who desires that all people should be saved, and Jesus' tenderness toward children allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without baptism. All the more urgent is the Church's call not to prevent little children coming to Christ through the gift of Baptism.¹³

B. The One to Be Baptized

9. Since God's very nature is to share himself and his love, the Church rejoices with the presence of new life and desires that infants be brought to the Sacrament of Baptism in the first few weeks after birth.¹⁴ With regard to infant Baptism, the terms "infants" or "children" refer to those who have not yet reached the age of discretion (age seven), and therefore cannot profess the faith for themselves.¹⁵
10. Minors who attain the age of discretion and the use of reason are to be initiated through the "Christian Initiation of Children Who Have Reached Catechetical Age."¹⁶ Their formation should follow the general pattern of the ordinary catechumenate as far as possible, with the appropriate adaptations permitted by the ritual.
11. Disability is never a reason for deferring Baptism. Catholics with disabilities have a right to participate in the Sacraments as fully as other members of the parish community. Persons who lack the use of reason are to be baptized provided at least one parent or guardian consents to it.¹⁷ Such persons are considered infants regarding the age requirements for Baptism.¹⁸
12. Only those alive can be baptized.¹⁹ A child born after an abortion, if alive, is to be baptized insofar as possible.



C. Parents

13. The Sacraments are efficacious signs of grace and bear fruit in those who receive them.²⁰
14. For the grace of Baptism to unfold, the parents' help is important.²¹ In fact, it is the duty of Christian parents to bring children up in the practice of the Catholic faith, "so that this divine life may be preserved from the contagion of sin, and may grow in them day by day."²² Because parents have the primary responsibility for the Christian formation of their children, they are to be equipped for this task through suitable preparation. The requirements for parental preparation are found in "I. Catechetical Formation and Preparation."
15. The act of requesting Baptism for a child is itself a sign of faith. As soon as possible, even before the birth, parents should approach their pastor or his delegate to request Baptism for their child.²³
16. At least one parent or legal guardian should be a baptized Catholic in making the request for the Baptism of a child.²⁴ The non-Catholic parent should be willing to have the child baptized in the Catholic faith. Every effort should be made to achieve the consent of both custodial parents; however, the consent of only one parent is necessary.²⁵
17. Parents requesting Baptism of their child should ordinarily be members of the parish. As a rule, infants are to be baptized in the parish church proper to their parents, unless a just cause suggests otherwise.²⁶ If the parents are members of another parish, it is customary to notify the pastor of the parents' parish that the Baptism took place. Although a person may be encouraged to become more actively involved in the parish, registration and/or financial contributions may not be used

as a prerequisite for sacramental preparation or reception if the person lives within the parish boundaries.

18. Parents and guardians in particular circumstances, such as those who are migrants of whatever status, families under stress, single parents or guardians, or those without a permanent domicile, should expect and receive pastoral care when they approach a parish for the Baptism of a child. Such cases should be considered on an individual basis.
19. There should be a “founded hope” that the child to be baptized will be brought up in the Catholic faith. Great pastoral sensitivity must be part of this process of discernment on the part of the pastor and Baptismal Team. When it is not possible to find this hope in the parents, it might be found in others close to the child. If this hope is utterly lacking, the Baptism may be delayed, not denied, with an explanation to the parents about the reason,²⁷ noting that Baptism could be celebrated at a later date after further catechesis. Baptism should not be postponed without providing the means to properly prepare the parents in the faith within a clearly defined period of time.
20. Although we share a common Baptism with other Christian communities who baptize with water and a Trinitarian formula, the understanding of Baptism differs among the various Christian denominations. It is therefore appropriate to encourage a non-Catholic Christian parent to participate in the baptismal preparation program so that they may have a better understanding of what will be celebrated with their child. However, participation is not required of the non-Catholic Christian parent; nevertheless, that parent should be invited to attend and fully participate in the baptismal preparation.
21. In the celebration of the Sacrament, the non-Catholic Christian parent should be encouraged to participate fully, inclusive of renewing his/her baptismal promises. However, it is sufficient for only the Catholic parent to respond to the various questions.²⁸
22. In the case of a Catholic married to a non-Christian, the non-Christian spouse similarly does not have the obligation of raising their child in the Catholic faith. However, while not being obligated to participate, this parent should also be invited and welcomed to the baptismal preparation so that they may better understand what is being celebrated. Whether they attend the program or not, the non-Christian parent should be encouraged to attend the celebration of the rite and participate.²⁹ It is sufficient for the Catholic parent to respond to the various questions.
23. Baptism is never “non-denominational.” Thus, a priest or deacon may not baptize a child when the parents’ intention is to raise the child as a “Christian” and not as a Catholic. See no. 19 above.
24. There is nothing that prevents a child born to parents who are not validly married in the Church from being baptized, provided that the parents of the child are properly disposed, have been prepared and understand their responsibilities. The Baptismal Team should see this as an evangelizing moment for the family and explore with them the possibility of validating the marriage.
25. Unmarried and same-sex couples can have their children baptized in the Church, so long as they comply with the same requirements as other parents.³⁰



26. The preparation process for single parents is particularly significant because of the greater difficulties they face. The importance of support from other members of the Catholic community should be emphasized.
27. Legal guardians may bring their child for Baptism as long as the parental obligations mentioned above are met.³¹
28. The ministry and duty of parents in the Baptism of children and upbringing in the faith carry a far greater weight than the duty of godparents.³²
29. All children, regardless of the status of their parents, may be baptized at regular, parish celebrations of the Sacrament.

D. Godparents

30. Godparents are to be firm believers, able and ready to help the parents of the newly baptized to profess the faith and express it in a Christian life.³³
31. Godparents, together with the parents, present an infant for Baptism and profess the Church's faith, and help the baptized person to lead a Christian life in harmony with baptismal faith, and help the baptized fulfill the obligations inherent in it.³⁴
32. Each child may have one godfather or one godmother or one of each. Only one godparent is necessary.³⁵
33. Godparents must be fully initiated Catholics (having received Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist), must be at least 16 years of age, must lead a sacramental life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken, must not be the father or mother of the one to be baptized, and must not be bound by any canonical penalty.³⁶ If a godparent is married, the marriage should be recognized by the Catholic Church. A stepparent should not serve as godparent for their stepchild. Brothers or sisters of a child to be baptized may serve as godparents providing that they meet all of the requirements.
34. The law does not require so-called "sponsor letters" or "sponsor certificates." What is necessary is that the pastor is assured that the sponsor chosen meets the requirements required by the law of the Church. The parish may still need to issue a "sponsor letter" or "sponsor certificate" for parishioners who will serve as sponsors for baptisms or confirmations taking place in other dioceses.
35. A baptized non-Catholic Christian may participate as a Christian witness of the Baptism only together with a Catholic godparent.³⁷
36. A Catholic may not participate as a Christian witness.
37. A member of an Eastern Orthodox Church may be accepted as a godparent along with a Catholic godparent at the Baptism of a Catholic as long as the Catholic upbringing of the one being baptized is provided for and there is assurance that the person is fit to be a godparent.³⁸
38. Any person may serve as a proxy if a godparent cannot be physically present at the Baptism. The Church requires no specific stipulations regarding who may serve as a proxy. The proxy name(s) are to be entered into the baptism register only in the Notation column with their name and "proxy" written afterward. The proxy names are not placed on the Baptismal Certificate, only those of the godparents.
39. In all, godparents serve a special role in the life of the baptized child. Therefore, parents should choose a godparent not simply because of a blood relationship or friendship. A godparent can even be chosen from among the parish community. The inability to choose a godparent should in no way hinder the decision to baptize the child.

E. The Parish

40. A child, both before and after the celebration of Baptism, has the right to the love and support of the community. The community exercises its function when, together with the celebrant, it expresses its consent after the profession of faith by the parents and godparents. In this way, it becomes apparent that the faith in which a child is being baptized is a treasure not belonging to the family alone, but to the whole Church of Christ.³⁹
41. The whole ecclesial community plays a significant role in the development and safeguarding of the grace given at Baptism. For all the baptized, children or adults, faith must continue to grow *after* Baptism. For this reason, the Church celebrates the renewal of baptismal promises each year at the Easter Vigil.⁴⁰ The community works through its own witness of Christian life and by its participation in various catechetical activities.⁴¹
42. The parish may create a Baptismal Team under the guidance of the pastor which can assist with the preparation of parents and serve at the Baptism liturgy.
43. The pastor of the place where the Baptism is celebrated must carefully and immediately record in the baptismal register the names of the baptized, minister, parents, sponsors, Christian witnesses (if any) and proxies (if any), the date and place of the conferral of the Baptism and the date and place of birth.⁴²



F. Liturgical Celebration

44. In all celebrations of infant Baptism, the ritual book *Order of Baptism of Children, Second Typical Edition* (2020) is to be used.⁴³ Older editions are not to be used.
45. Water used in Baptism is to be natural and clean, for hygienic reasons and so that the truth of the sign may be apparent.⁴⁴ Apart from a case of necessity, the water to be used in conferring Baptism must be blessed according to the prescripts of the liturgical books.⁴⁵
46. If the consecration of the water has taken place at the Easter Vigil, this should, insofar as possible, be kept and used throughout Easter Time to signify more clearly the relationship between the Sacrament and the Paschal Mystery.⁴⁶ This already blessed water is not “re-blessed.” Rather, the “Invocation of God over the Water” takes place in accordance with the formulas found in the *Order of Baptism of Children* at nos. 223-224.⁴⁷
47. Outside Easter Time, it is desirable that the water be blessed for each celebration, so that the mystery of salvation that the Church remembers and proclaims may be clearly expressed in the words of consecration themselves.⁴⁸
48. Both the rite of immersion, which more suitably signifies participation in the Death and Resurrection of Christ, and the rite of pouring can lawfully be used.⁴⁹
49. The essential rite of Baptism consists in immersing the candidate three times in water or pouring water over his or her head three times, while pronouncing the invocation of the Most Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.⁵⁰ One and the same minister (celebrant) must both immerse or pour the water AND pronounce the formula, otherwise the Baptism is invalid.⁵¹

50. **The words with which Baptism is conferred in the Latin Church are “N., I BAPTIZE YOU IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.”⁵² For the assurance of validity, the formula for Baptism must remain unaltered.⁵³**



*I baptize you in the name
of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit*

51. Minister

- a. The ordinary minister of Baptism is a Bishop, Priest, or Deacon.⁵⁴ If Baptism is celebrated during Mass, the presiding Priest or Bishop ordinarily confers the Sacrament.⁵⁵ In every celebration of this Sacrament ministers should be mindful that they act in the Church in the name of Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit. They should therefore be diligent in the ministry of the word of God and in the celebration of the Sacrament.⁵⁶ Any action that the faithful could rightly regard as favoritism should be avoided.⁵⁷
- b. Except in a case of necessity, no one is permitted to confer Baptism in the territory of another without the required permission, not even upon his own parishioners.⁵⁸ Permission to baptize in another parish must be obtained from the pastor of that parish or from the local Ordinary. **This requirement stresses the significance of Baptism as entrance into the local community as well as ensures the proper recording of the Baptism.**

52. When Baptism Is to Occur

- a. To illustrate the paschal character of Baptism, it is recommended that the Sacrament be celebrated ordinarily on a Sunday, when the Christian community commemorates the Resurrection of the Lord.⁵⁹
- b. Baptism may be celebrated during a Sunday Mass so that the whole community may be able to take part in the rite and so that the connection between Baptism and the Most Holy Eucharist may stand out more clearly. **However, this should not happen too often.**⁶⁰
- c. For pastoral reasons, a parish may need to limit the number of infants to be baptized during a particular Mass, as well as how frequently Baptisms are celebrated during a Sunday Mass.
- d. Even outside of Mass, every Baptism is to follow the principles for good liturgical celebrations, including the assistance of the necessary ministers (readers, servers, music ministers, etc.), the presence of representatives of the faith community, and the full use of symbols associated with the Sacrament.
- e. As far as possible, there should be a common celebration of Baptism on the same day for all newborn babies. Except for a just cause, Baptism should not be celebrated more than once on the same day in the same church.⁶¹ Individual baptisms are to be discouraged.
- f. Sacraments are by their very nature public and communal.⁶² Thus, when a Baptism takes place, the whole Church celebrates and rejoices. Baptism should be celebrated in a common celebration with the attendance of a large number of the faithful.⁶³

- g. Lent is a time of preparation for Baptism; therefore, it is preferred to refrain from Baptism during Lent. Although discouraged, it is not forbidden to baptize during Lent, especially in cases of emergency and other exceptional circumstances.
53. Where Baptism Is to Occur
- a. Baptism should normally take place in a parish church, which is to have a baptismal font.⁶⁴ The font in the baptistery, or, as circumstances suggest, the vessel in which water is prepared for the celebration in the sanctuary, should be notable for its cleanliness and beauty.⁶⁵
 - b. An infant is to be baptized in the parish of the parents unless a just cause suggests otherwise.⁶⁶
 - c. The rite calls for extensive use of the worship space outside the baptistry where different parts should take place in the different areas of the church that best suit both the number of those present and the various parts of the baptismal liturgy.⁶⁷
 - d. When celebrated during Mass, insofar as possible, the rites should be arranged so that they may be seen and heard by all the faithful. Therefore, it is also permitted to choose other suitable locations within the church for those parts that are normally celebrated inside the baptistry.⁶⁸
 - i. Rite of Receiving the Children (at the door of the church)
 - ii. Sacred Celebration of the Word of God (near the ambo)
 - iii. Celebration of Baptism (in the baptistery / near the font)
 - iv. Explanatory Rites (in an appropriate place)
 - v. Conclusion of the Rite (near the altar)
54. “Chapter VI, Order of Bringing a Baptized Child to the Church” of the *Order of Baptism* is used after a child is baptized in an emergency situation, thus solemnizing the Sacrament and providing for a proper record of the Baptism. The ritual is celebrated as in nos. 165-185. **During the ritual, there is no immersing of or pouring water on the child; instead, a prayer (no. 177) is said.**
55. The “Appendix” of the *Order of Baptism of Children* contains the “Order of Baptism of Children within Mass” beginning at number 250. It includes separate sections for several children (nos. 257-297) and for one child (nos. 296-331). These are to be followed by all ministers of Baptism, notwithstanding any previous customs or ritual practices within Mass.
56. Which Mass Is Celebrated
- a. When ritual Masses are not permitted (see Ordo), the Mass of the day is to be celebrated.
 - b. When Baptism is conferred during a regularly scheduled, parish Sunday Mass, the Mass of the day is celebrated.
 - c. When Baptism is conferred during non-regularly scheduled, parish Masses on the Sundays of Christmas Time and of Ordinary time and on weekdays, the Ritual Mass may be celebrated. The Ritual Mass “I. For the Conferral of the Sacraments of Initiation, 3. For the Conferral of Baptism” (*Roman Missal*) is used together with the readings “I. Christian Initiation, 2. Conferral of Infant Baptism” (*Lectionary for Mass, Vol. 4*).

G. Emergency Baptism

57. An emergency Baptism is appropriate when a child is in danger of death. This does not necessarily mean that death is imminent and inevitable, but that the child is seriously ill or in need of surgery or other medical procedure that could put the life of the child at risk. An infant in danger of death is to be baptized without delay.⁶⁹

58. The proper place for Baptism is a church or oratory; however, in a case of urgent necessity, Baptism may be celebrated in a hospital or other location. When a priest is not available for an emergency Baptism, a Deacon, catechist or other trained layperson is to baptize immediately.⁷⁰
59. When an emergency Baptism is administered, the minister of Baptism must inform the pastor of the parish in whose territory the Baptism was administered as soon as possible.⁷¹
60. All emergency Baptisms are to be recorded in the baptismal register **of the territorial parish in which the Baptism took place**. The pastor must carefully and immediately record in the baptismal register the names of the baptized, minister, parents, sponsors, Christian witnesses (if any) and proxies (if any), the date and place of the conferral of the Baptism and the date and place of birth. (See 41 above.)
61. Following the norm of law, hospitals and other institutions are not to maintain a sacramental register for Baptism or other sacraments that take place in their facilities and do not have the authority to issue sacramental certificates intended to establish the reception of Sacraments.
62. If a child who has been baptized in danger of death recovers his or her health, then the “Order of Bringing a Baptized Child to the Church” (Chapter VI of the *Order of Baptism of Children*) is celebrated. **During the ritual, there is no immersing of or pouring water on the child; instead, a prayer (no. 177) is said.** Neither “re-baptism” nor conditional Baptism is to take place. The date of the emergency Baptism is the date of Baptism. The date of the “rites supplied” should be sent to the parish where the emergency Baptism is recorded in order to complete the record. It is essential that parents of children baptized in an emergency receive a certificate so they know where their child’s Baptism is recorded.

H. Baptismal Register

63. The pastor of the place where the Baptism is celebrated must carefully and immediately record in the baptismal register the names of the baptized, minister, parents, sponsors, Christian witnesses (if any) and proxies (if any), the date and place of the conferral of the Baptism and the date and place of birth.⁷²
 - a. The parish priest must record in the baptismal register the name of the natural or adoptive father and mother (man and woman).⁷³
 - b. It is not possible to register two mothers or two fathers in the Parent column of the register. If one of the partners is the child’s natural father or mother, he or she must be recorded in the Parent column. The other partner can be annotated in the Notation column only if they have legally adopted the child.⁷⁴ If neither of the partners is the natural parent of the child to be baptized, only one of the adoptive parents may be recorded in the Parent column. The other adoptive parent can be listed in the Notation column. These situations require pastoral sensitivity.
 - c. If there is only one natural or adoptive parent or only one natural or adoptive parent is known, his or her name is recorded in the Parent column.
 - d. For more information, please see “Recording the Sacraments of Initiation.”⁷⁵



Part II – Catechetical Formation and Preparation

I. Catechetical Formation and Preparation

64. The intent of the preparation process is to prepare the parents and godparents for the celebration of Baptism and accompany them, offering insights and deepening their dispositions so that the celebration will be a truly meaningful commitment on their part to raise their child in the Catholic faith.
65. Information on the importance of infant Baptism and the preparation process should be placed in the parish bulletin, website, etc.
66. The pastor or his delegate is to take care that the parents are instructed through both pastoral advice and common prayer.⁷⁶
67. The formation of parents (and godparents) should be comprehensive, addressing their spiritual, intellectual, human and pastoral needs.
68. The formation should be regarded as an opportunity for evangelization and special attention should be given to welcome and hospitality.
69. Formation as the Responsibility of the Parish Community
 - a. The pastor is primarily responsible to ensure that catechesis occurs and is carried out in such a way that affirms the parents in their role as primary educators of their child. The pastor must also ensure that anyone from the parish community who assists in this process is capable of passing on the faith.
 - b. The community participates in the formation process by witnessing to the faith, accompaniment, and mentorship in the Christian life. The witness of Christians, whose lives are filled with the hope of Christ, opens the hearts and minds of those around them to Christ.⁷⁷
 - c. The occasional celebration of Baptism within the Sunday liturgy serves as an opportunity to catechize the faithful, as well as to invite reflection on their own life as a baptized Catholic.
70. The Importance of Evangelizing Catechesis
 - a. Effective sacramental preparation encourages parents and godparents to be informed and committed to a lifelong process of growing in faith – both for themselves and the child to be baptized. Sacramental preparation is an evangelizing opportunity to inspire and uplift the People of God in their calling to follow Christ and the living out of their own baptismal vows.
 - b. In order to properly meet the formation needs of the parents requesting baptism, it is important that the parish take time to better understand, or at minimum acknowledge, the faith journey of the parents/family of the child to be baptized.
 - c. Typically, there are three areas where individuals may find themselves in relation to their faith journey and connection to the parish, and therefore where evangelization takes shape:
 - i. Strong spiritual life / connected to the life of the parish community
 - ii. baptized, but not living the demands of baptism (disaffiliated)
 - iii. those who do not know Jesus.⁷⁸This awareness aids in the approach to be taken in evangelization and formation as well as the kind of accompaniment necessary for families.
 - d. The demand to which the Church must respond at the present time brings into focus the need for a catechesis that in a consistent way can be called kerygmatic, meaning a catechesis that is "entering more deeply into the kerygma."⁷⁹ The proclamation can therefore no longer be considered simply the first stage of faith, preliminary to catechesis, but rather the essential dimension of every moment of catechesis.⁸⁰

71. The Process of Catechetical Formation

- a. Attention should be given to the various needs of a family. Formation should in some way address the spiritual, intellectual, human, and pastoral aspects of the sacrament of Baptism. This will ensure that the formation process is comprehensive and not limited to only the intellectual, or doctrinal, aspect of catechesis.
- b. While the formation process is meant to be comprehensive, it is not expected to be exhaustive, given the time constraints.
- c. Baptismal preparation should not only be aimed at preparation for the celebration of Baptism, but should emphasize a life faith conversion even after Baptism.
- d. Baptismal preparation should occur before the Sacrament is celebrated, even if it requires a delay before the celebration of Baptism.
- e. One or more catechetical sessions should be offered for parents and godparents. If the parents or godparents are not able to take part in the parish baptismal preparation, they should attend at another parish.

72. The Initial Contact

- a. An initial contact with the pastor or his delegate to congratulate and welcome the new parents is a critical moment and could include:
 - i. An opportunity for the parents to complete their request for the sacrament of Baptism if necessary and have their questions answered.
 - ii. An opportunity for the pastor or his delegate to explain the catechetical session(s) that follow(s) the initial contact and review the requisites for godparents before they are chosen.
- b. Should logistical challenges be presented that may delay the preparation for the sacrament, care should be taken to address these issues in a way that does not diminish the welcoming nature of this first contact. “The practice of mercy is already itself an authentic catechesis; it is catechesis in action, an eloquent testimony for believers and nonbelievers alike.”⁸¹

73. Catechetical Session(s)

- a. The catechetical session(s) should include spiritual, intellectual, human and pastoral formation. These topics are to all be incorporated into the session(s). There should not be an entire session solely on each of the topics.
- b. The parents of an infant to be baptized and those who are to undertake the function of godparent are to be instructed on the meaning of this Sacrament and the obligations attached to it.
- c. Formation of the parents of the child to be baptized is essential because it leads them to understand and therefore be supported in their role as the “first witnesses of the faith to their child.”⁸²
- d. Every session incorporates prayer and opportunity for encounter with Jesus.
- e. Besides the “instruction,” it is important to remember the evangelizing nature of these sessions.
- f. A personal witness and reflection by parents who have had their children baptized may be included.
- g. Spiritual Formation
 - i. Evangelizing catechesis
 - ii. The environment
 - iii. Quality of the prayer experiences
 - iv. Faith sharing among those gathered

- h. Intellectual Formation
 - i. A basic theology of sacraments in general and Baptism in particular.
 - ii. A short history of Baptism to include Scriptural foundations.
 - iii. Explanation of the expectation that there must be a "founded hope"⁸³ that the child will be brought up in the Catholic faith.
 - iv. Participation in the faith community that accompanies them and are (or will be) a part of and the need for regular attendance at Sunday Mass.
 - v. An overview of the ritual of infant Baptism with particular emphasis on the symbolism within the Sacrament
 - vi. An overview of the promises made by the parents and godparents and their corresponding obligations.
- i. Human Formation
 - i. Parental love as the first experience / expression of God's love.
 - ii. The experience of parenting
 - iii. Christian parenting
 - iv. Introduction to Christian parenting resources and support
- j. Pastoral Formation
 - i. Vocation of marriage (with special sensitivity to the diverse family circumstances)
 - ii. Christian parenting as a vocation / calling to embrace
 - iii. The domestic church
 - iv. The missionary aspect of this vocation
 - v. Families are called to carry out the mission of the Church in the world
- k. Resources and Catechetical Materials
 - i. Each parish will provide baptismal preparation for their parishioners.
 - ii. A parish could create their own according to the criteria above or use a prepared program bearing an imprimatur.
 - iii. For some suggested parish baptismal preparation programs, please contact the Catechetical Office. These preparation programs can always be supplemented if one or more of the elements mentioned in no. 73a are missing.

74. Ongoing Formation

- a. After the conferral of Baptism, the parents, grateful to God and faithful to the duty they have undertaken, are bound to guide their child to a knowledge of God, now his child by adoption. They are also bound to prepare the child to receive Confirmation and to participate in the Most Holy Eucharist.⁸⁴
- b. To bring to completion the reality of the Sacrament, children should afterwards be formed in the faith in which they have been baptized. The foundation of this formation will be the Sacrament itself which they have already received. Christian formation, which by right is owed to the children, has no other purpose than to lead them little by little to discern God's plan in Christ, so that ultimately, they may be able to ratify the faith in which they have been baptized.⁸⁵
- c. To assist parents in their post-baptismal responsibilities, parishes should keep in touch and continue to accompany families with young children through pastoral and spiritual programming adapted to their needs and interests.

Part III – Baptism Resources

J. Baptism Resources

- The Order of Baptism of Children, Second Edition.* 2020.
- United State Conference of Catholic Bishops. *Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities.* Rev. ed. June 15, 2017.
(<https://www.usccb.org/committees/divine-worship/policies/guidelines-sacraments-persons-with-disabilities>)
- . *Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination: Guidelines for Pastoral Care.* November 14, 2006. (https://www.usccb.org/resources/ministry-to-persons-of-homosexual-inclination_0.pdf)
- Book of Blessings*, Chapters VII-X. 1989.
- Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Responsa ad dubia*, October 31, 2023.
(https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_dcf_20231031_documento-mons-negri_en.html)
- Worship Office, Archdiocese of Newark. *Baptism Fonts*, <https://rcan.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/18-Style-and-location-of-baptismal-fonts.pdf>, 2018.
- . *Recording the Sacraments of Initiation*, <https://rcan.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/RecorSac.pdf>
- Johnston, Timothy A., Paul Tuner and Paul Radkowski, *Guide for Celebrating Infant Baptism*, 2nd ed. Chicago: Liturgical Training Publications, 2020.

¹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), Second Edition, 1213.

² *Code of Canon Law* (CIC), can. 842 §1.

³ CCC 1279.

⁴ CCC 1257.

⁵ John 3:5

⁶ CCC 1121, 1272.

⁷ CIC, cann. 845 §1 and 864. For additional information about unbaptized persons, see CCC, 1258-1261.

⁸ CCC 1252.

⁹ *Order of Baptism of Children* (OBC), 2.

¹⁰ Pope Francis, General Audience, St. Peter's Square, April 11, 2018.

¹¹ CIC, can. 867 §2.

¹² OBC, 3

¹³ CCC, 1261.

¹⁴ CIC, can. 867; CCC 1250.

¹⁵ OBC, 1; CIC, can. 97 §2.

¹⁶ *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA), 252ff.

¹⁷ USCCB, *Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities*, Revised Edition; CIC, can. 868 §1 1°.

¹⁸ CIC, can. 852, §2.

¹⁹ CIC, cann. 864 and 871; *Pastoral Care of the Sick*, 224.

²⁰ CCC, 1131.

²¹ CCC, 1255.

²² OBC, 56.

²³ CIC, can. 867, OBC, 8.

²⁴ While a child of non-Catholic parents could be baptized, there must be a clear indication that the child will be brought up in the Catholic faith.

²⁵ CIC, can. 868 §1 1°; Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on Infant Baptism, Pastoralis actio*, 15.

²⁶ CIC, can. 857 §2.

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- ²⁷ CIC, can. 868.; OBC, 8.3.
- ²⁸ OBC, 5.4.
- ²⁹ OBC, 5.2.
- ³⁰ USCCB, *Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination: Guidelines for Pastoral Care*, November 14, 2006.
- ³¹ CIC, can. 868 §1 1°
- ³² OBC, 5.
- ³³ CIC, can. 872, *Christian Initiation (CI)*, General Introduction, 8; CCC 1255.
- ³⁴ CIC, can. 872; OBC, 9.
- ³⁵ CIC, can. 873, OBC, 6.
- ³⁶ CIC, can. 874.
- ³⁷ CIC, 874 §2; Secretariat for Christian Unity, *Ad totam Ecclesiam*, 57; Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms of Ecumenism (ED)*, 98a; CI, General Introduction, 10.6.
- ³⁸ ED, 98b.
- ³⁹ OBC, 4.
- ⁴⁰ CCC, 1254, 1255 (emphasis original).
- ⁴¹ Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction on Infant Baptism, *Pastoralis actio*, no. 33.
- ⁴² CIC, can. 877 §1; CI, General Introduction, 29.
- ⁴³ CIC, can. 850; OBC, Decree of Publication.
- ⁴⁴ CI, General Introduction, 18-19.
- ⁴⁵ CIC, can. 853.
- ⁴⁶ CI, General Introduction, 21.
- ⁴⁷ OBC, 92.
- ⁴⁸ CI, General Introduction, 21.
- ⁴⁹ CIC, can. 854; CI, General Introduction, 22.
- ⁵⁰ CCC, 1278
- ⁵¹ Sacred Congregation of the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Validitatis Baptismatis*, Acta Apostolicae Sedis (AAS) 8 (1916) pp. 478-480; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III p., q. 67, a. 6 ad 3; CI, General Introduction, 23; OBC, 97.
- ⁵² CI, General Introduction, 23; OBC, 60; RCIA, 226.
- ⁵³ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Responsa ad dubia*, February 1, 2008 and June 24, 2020.
- ⁵⁴ CIC, can. 861 §1; CI, General Introduction, 11.
- ⁵⁵ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 108-109
- ⁵⁶ CI, General Introduction, 11.1.
- ⁵⁷ Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium (SC)*, 32; Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, 29; CI, General Introduction, 11.2.
- ⁵⁸ CIC, can. 862.
- ⁵⁹ CIC, can. 856; OBC, 9.
- ⁶⁰ OBC, 9.
- ⁶¹ CI, General Introduction, 27.
- ⁶² SC, 26, 27.
- ⁶³ OBC, 32.
- ⁶⁴ CIC, can. 857 §1, 858 §1; OBC, 10.
- ⁶⁵ OBC, 19.
- ⁶⁶ CIC, can. 857 §2.
- ⁶⁷ CI, General Introduction, 26.
- ⁶⁸ CI, General Introduction, 26.
- ⁶⁹ CIC, can. 867 §2.
- ⁷⁰ OBC, 157ff.
- ⁷¹ CIC, can. 861.
- ⁷² CIC, can. 877 §1; CI, General Introduction, 29.
- ⁷³ CIC, can. 877; Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts, Prot. N. 15986/2017.
- ⁷⁴ Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts, Prot. N. 15986/2017.
- ⁷⁵ Worship Office, Archdiocese of Newark, *Recording the Sacraments of Initiation*, <https://rcan.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/RecorSac.pdf>.
- ⁷⁶ CIC, can. 851 §2
- ⁷⁷ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, *Disciples Called to Witness: The New Evangelization*, Part IV: Culture of Witness.

⁷⁸ Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, *Directory for Catechesis* (DC), 41

⁷⁹ Francis, Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World, *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG), 165.

⁸⁰ DC, 57.

⁸¹ DC, 51.

⁸² OBC, 105.

⁸³ CIC, can. 868, OBC, 8.3.

⁸⁴ OBC, 5.5.

⁸⁵ OBC, 3.

