

**Leader's Guide for**  
***BABY'S BAPTISM: SACRAMENT OF WELCOME***  
**Session One: Faith Journey**

**Welcome!**

You are a very special person! You have volunteered or been chosen to host a select group of people—those parents who are considering Baptism for their children. (Notice, I said considering, because some of these parents are coming to decide if they are, indeed, ready to make this important commitment. Ideally, someone from your parish staff has interviewed these parents and helped them with a discernment process to determine their readiness to baptize their child at this time. This course is designed to continue that process of discernment.)

You represent the face of the Catholic Church to them. You represent the entire parish community. Your welcoming presence invites them to look closely and warmly at Baptism. It is important that you are at all times open and non-judgmental. Thank you for your commitment and witnessing.

**Now, let's look at the content of this Baptism program.**

This program is unique. It is designed for presentation by lay parishioners without a great deal of formal theological training required. The three video programs provide the correct theology, freeing you to be a good host. The sessions can be held in a home or in a parish facility. The program combines the use of three video presentations, a PARENT PACKET and group participation. Let's look at the reasons for these three elements.

The three video presentations provide the latest theologically correct Baptism catechesis, presented clearly and sensitively by Fr. Anthony Scannell, Capuchin. Fr. Tony uses dramatic presentations to emphasize the doctrinal aspects of Baptism.

- **Part One: Faith Journey** is concerned with the concept of belonging, of welcome, of community. It includes the historical development of the Rite of Baptism.
- **Part Two: Symbols and the Rite of Baptism** talks about symbolism and focuses on important symbols used in the Baptism rite. It also includes a dramatic presentation of the beautiful rite with a Baptism by immersion.
- **Part Three: Christian Parenting** focuses on the Christian family. It offers helpful supports for and insights into Christian parenting.

The **PARENT PACKET** contains four items. The PARENT BOOKLET, *Baby's Baptism, Sacrament of Welcome*, provides the parent/couple with complementary articles which highlight the content of the video. The book is divided into three parts to mirror each video presentation. The book also contains special pages which allow the parents to personalize this preparation process. In addition, the PARENT PACKET contains a BAPTISM CERTIFICATE, a PARENT MEMORY FOLDER and two GODPARENT MEMORY CARDS.

The group participation element provides an opportunity for the parents to interact with each other, to begin to experience community, to share their own insights and stories.

### **What do you need to start?**

#### *Materials*

A television set or video monitor, a DVD player, the *Baby's Baptism DVD, Part One: Faith Journey*, for Session One, name tags and markers, coffee and/or refreshments if possible, PARENT PACKETS (to be handed out at a specific time during the presentation). If you use the optional prayer service at the conclusion, a large open Bible on a simply decorated coffee table or small parish table should be prominent throughout the session. The table should be large enough to hold a lighted candle and bread and wine for the succeeding sessions.

### **Background and Goals**

This session invites the parents to look at their own faith journeys and to see God's invitation to journey through life as parents supported by a community of faith. The session explains both historical and contemporary views of the celebration of infant Baptism.

### **To Begin**

Prepare the room so that it is comfortable. If using a parish facility rather than a home setting, avoid tables or desks which act as barriers. Make sure your television screen is visible from every seat and that all equipment is working properly.

As parents arrive, introduce yourself and invite them to sign in and complete a name tag. Be particularly sensitive to parents without partners, since they frequently need to be put at their ease. Coffee, tea or other beverages usually help people to relax. (Be sure everyone knows where the restrooms are located.)

When all the parents have arrived, introduce yourself once again. Welcome them to this introductory session. Congratulate them on their new or soon-to-be-born baby.

Explain that this session will be a combination of video presentation and group interaction. Some parents may be uneasy at the idea of group participation. Assure them that everyone has different life experiences to share and that we can all learn from each other's experiences. Assure them that they are not asked to be experts in theology, but only experts on their own experiences.

Invite them now to relax and to spend a minute or two thinking about why they are here. Ask them to say a silent prayer asking God, our loving parent, to bless our time together.

### **Video Presentation**

*Turn on the video.*

*At first discussion break in video:*

Distribute the PARENT PACKETS. Give the parents a minute or two to glance through them. Spend a few moments together looking at the contents of the booklet on pages 2, 14 and 24. Show them that the book is divided into three parts to mirror the contents of the three video sessions. Look at the places for personal reflections at the end of each part (pages 13, 23, 31).

After they have looked through the books, if the group is too large for comfortable interaction, divide them into groups of six or eight. Ask them to introduce themselves and share something about their child or children. Keep the sharing at this point brief and friendly.

*Return to the video.*

*At second discussion break in video:*

This follows Alfredo's story. Ask the parents to return to their small groups. Give them a moment to think about Alfredo's story. Ask them now to share the question asked by Fr. Tony in the video:

*"What moment in the story touched you the most?"*

Invite them to share any personal experience of belonging which that story might have brought to mind. (You might want to begin the sharing with your impressions to get them started.) Gently encourage everyone to share impressions briefly. Allow about 10 minutes.

*Return to the video.*

*At third discussion break in video:*

The parents have been sitting for quite a while. Encourage them to get up and stretch a little.

Then invite them to return to their small groups and share one fact from the history of Baptism that they might have found surprising.

Remind them that there is a history in their books on pages 6 and 7. Allow about 10 minutes.

*Return to the video.*

*At the conclusion of the video:*

This time has been set aside for you the host to explain any of the procedures or expectations your particular parish has for Baptism: when, where, who, fees, etc. After everyone has had a chance to get all the information and answers to their questions, schedule the next meeting.

The following prayer service may conclude the first session. (Note that there is a choice of readings in the prayer service. Select the one that you find most appropriate for this group.)

You might prefer to conclude with the simple recitation of the PARENT PRAYER found on the back cover of the booklet.

### **Optional Closing Prayer Service**

The host begins with an invitation to prayer spoken in a slow and meditative manner.

#### *Opening Reflection*

“I invite all of us now to join together in a few minutes of reflection and prayer. Let us first take some time to pause in silence, acknowledging deep within our hearts that God is here with us during this time together, that God desires to speak to our hearts. Remember that Jesus said, “Where two or more are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst” (Mt 18:20).

#### *Silent Reflection (Pause)*

“Let us recall silently one important idea that has been offered in the video presentation or has been shared in the small group discussions. Offer a silent prayer of thanksgiving for anything that has helped you to appreciate a little more fully the presence of God in our lives or the meaning of infant Baptism.”

#### *Silent Reflection (Pause)*

#### *Scriptural Meditation (Select One)*

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah

“Fear not for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the water, I will be with you; in the rivers you shall not drown. Were you to walk through fire, you shall not be burned; the flames shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior: (Is 43:3-4).

OR

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah

“God indeed is my savior: I am confident and unafraid. My strength and my courage is the Lord, and he has been my savior. With joy you will draw water at the fountain of salvation, and say on that day: give thanks to the Lord, acclaim his name: among the nations make known his deeds, proclaim how exalted is his name. Sing praise to the Lord for his glorious achievement: let this be known throughout all the earth” (Is 12:2-5).

OR

A reading from the Gospel of Mark

“People were bringing their little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples were scolding them for this. Jesus became indignant when he noticed it and said to them: ‘Let the children come to me and do not hinder them. It is just such as these that the reign of God belongs. I assure you that whoever does not accept the reign of God like a little child shall not enter into it.’ Then Jesus embraced them and blessed them, placing his hands on them” (Mk 10:13-16).

*Silent Reflection (Pause)*

*Participant Response*

“I invite you at this time to turn to one other person and briefly express in your own words how you believe belonging to the Christian community will help you and your child.”

*Community Prayer*

“Let us now close our reflection and prayer by joining our voices in offering the PARENT PRAYER printed on the back of your PARENT BOOKLET, *Baby’s Baptism: Sacrament of Welcome*.”

At the conclusion of the prayer, bid the participants a warm farewell until next time. Remind them to bring their PARENT PACKETS to each session.

N.B.

For information regarding *New Life, New Creation*, the music used in *Baby’s Baptism, Sacrament of Welcome* video, please contact

Michael Lynch/C and M Productions  
10532 242<sup>nd</sup> Place SW  
Edmonds, Washington 98020  
(206) 542-1297

Guide written by Elizabeth Montes and Rev. C. Vincent Peterson

© MCMXC St. Anthony Messenger Press. All rights reserved.

NOTE: This guide can be printed and cut down in size to be stored with the DVD version of this video program. Simply cut ¾ inch from each side of the page for a guide that, when folded, can be placed inside of the DVD case or attached to the DVD or VHS case.

For use with: *Baby’s Baptism: Sacrament of Welcome* on VHS (V7283A) and DVD (D7283)

St. Anthony Messenger Press  
28 W. Liberty St.  
Cincinnati, OH 45202-6498  
800-488-0488  
[www.AmericanCatholic.org](http://www.AmericanCatholic.org)

**Leader's Guide for**  
***BABY'S BAPTISM: SACRAMENT OF WELCOME***  
**Session Two: Symbols and the Rite of Baptism**

**Welcome!**

Thank you for hosting this very important session. The people you will be hosting have reached a more decisive stage on their journey toward the Baptism of their children. They still need a lot of positive reinforcement and encouragement. You continue to represent the welcoming community of the Catholic Church. You, by your gracious presence, reinforce the concept of a supporting Christian community.

Let's take a moment now to review the content of the program. It will help you to put today's session into context. If you were the facilitator in Session One, you may remember the following italicized context paragraphs and may move ahead to the remainder of the guide.

*This program is unique. It is designed for presentation by lay parishioners without a great deal of formal theological training required. The videos provide the correct theology, freeing you to be a good host. The sessions can be held very comfortably in a home or in a parish facility. The program combines the use of three VIDEO PRESENTATIONS, a PARENT PACKET and group participation. Let's look at the reasons for these three elements.*

*The three VIDEO PRESENTATIONS provide the latest theologically correct Baptism catechesis, presented clearly and sensitively by Fr. Anthony Scannell, Capuchin. Fr. Tony uses dramatic presentations to emphasize the doctrinal aspects of Baptism.*

- ***Part One: Faith Journey** was concerned with the concept of belonging, of welcome, of community. It includes the historical development of the Rite of Baptism.*
- ***Part Two: Symbols and the Rite of Baptism** talks about symbolism and focuses on the important symbols used in the Baptism rite. It also includes a dramatic presentation of the beautiful rite with a Baptism by immersion.*
- ***Part Three: Christian Parenting** will focus on the Christian family. It offers helpful supports for and insights into Christian parenting.*

*The PARENT PACKET contains four items.*

*The PARENT BOOKLET, **Baby's Baptism, Sacrament of Welcome**, provides the parent/couple with complementary articles which highlight the content of the video. The book is divided into three parts to*

*mirror each video presentation. The book also contains special pages which allow the parents to personalize this preparation process. In addition, the PARENT PACKET contains a BAPTISM CERTIFICATE, a PARENT MEMORY FOLDER and two GODPARENT MEMORY CARDS.*

*The group participation element provides an opportunity for the parents to interact with each other, to begin to experience community, to share their own insights and stories.*

### **What do you need to start?**

#### *Materials*

A television set or video monitor, a DVD player, the *Baby's Baptism DVD, Part Two: Symbols and the Rite of Baptism*, for Session Two, name tags and markers, coffee and/or refreshments if possible. If you use the optional prayer service at the conclusion, a large open Bible on a simply decorated coffee table or small parish table should be prominent throughout the session. Individual tapers or candles are needed for each participant. The table should be large enough to hold a lighted candle and bread and wine for the third session.

### **Background and Goals**

This session invites the parents to discover the role and beauty of symbols in their lives. It encourages the parents to “symbol see” as they explore the richness of the symbols used in the baptismal ceremony. This session also features a Baptism by immersion, highlighting the various steps in the ceremony.

### **Preparation**

Once again prepare the room so that it is comfortable. If using a parish facility rather than a home setting, avoid tables or desks which act as barriers. Make sure your television screen is visible from every seat and that all equipment is working properly.

### **Welcoming**

As the parents arrive, welcome them back to Session Two. Ask them to again sign in and complete a name tag. Invite them to make themselves comfortable until everyone has arrived. Encourage conversation with questions about their baby, preparations for the new arrival, family excitement or whatever seems relevant. You are nurturing a sense of support and community among the group.

### **To Begin**

When everyone has arrived and is settled, reintroduce yourself and welcome them back in the name of the parish community. Tell them that this session will talk about symbols and will give them a preview of the baptismal rite.

## **Video Presentation**

*Turn on the video.*

Invite them now to relax, and if they are comfortable, join hands in prayer. Ask them to pray the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray to our parent in heaven: the Our Father.

*At discussion break in video:*

If the group of parents is too large for comfortable interaction, divide them into groups of six or eight. On the video Father Tony will ask the parents to now share the name they have selected for their child; how they selected that name and what they hope that name will signify for their child. Allow about 10 minutes.

*Return to the video.*

*At the conclusion of the video:*

Again divide the parents into small groups. On the video Father Tony will ask them to share: *What can you do to make your child's baptismal day something to be remembered?* (You might refer the parents to page 22 of the parent book.) Allow about 10 minutes.

After the discussion has concluded, give the parents directions about the protocol in your parish for scheduling baptismal appointments.

Take the time now to strongly encourage the parents to return for Session Three which deals with their roles as Christian parents. Assure them that you want to hear about their special days. Encourage them to bring pictures to Session Three to share. Make it a reunion celebration! Schedule Session Three allowing enough time for the Baptisms to have taken place.

You may prefer to conclude by simply praying the GODPARENT PRAYER on the GODPARENT MEMORY CARD and the PARENT PRAYER in the PARENT MEMORY FOLDER.

## **Optional Closing Prayer Service**

*Preparation*

Ask the parents to remove the PARENT MEMORY FOLDER and the GODPARENT MEMORY CARD from their PARENT PACKET. Ask the parents to give GODPARENT CARDS to the godparents, if they are present, for use in the ceremony. (They may collect them again afterward to write in before presentation after the Baptism.) These will be used for the final community prayer.

The host begins with an invitation to prayer spoken in a slow and meditative manner. "I invite all of you now to join together for a few minutes of reflection and prayer. Let us take some time to pause in silence. Let us acknowledge within our hearts that God is here with us during this time together, that God desires to speak to our hearts. Remember that Jesus said to his first followers, 'Know that I am with you always, until the end of the world'" (Mt 28:20.)

*Silent Reflection (Pause)*

“Let us recall silently an idea or two that has been offered in the video presentation or has been shared in the small group discussions. Let us offer a silent prayer of thanksgiving for anything that has been shared which helps us to appreciate a little more fully the presence of God in our lives or the meaning of infant Baptism.”

*Silent Reflection (Pause)*

*Scriptural Meditation*

“Let us now turn to our Sacred Scriptures which speak to us of God’s saving action in the history of our human family. Let us listen and in silence ponder their meaning for us at this time.”

A reading from the Gospel of Matthew

“Jesus said, ‘You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. People do not light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket. They set it on a stand where it gives light to all in the house. In the same way your light must shine before all so that they may see goodness in your acts and give praise to your heavenly Father’” (Mt 5:14-16).

AND/OR

A reading from the Gospel of John

“Jesus spoke to them once again. ‘I am the light of the world. No follower of mine shall ever walk in darkness; no, he shall possess the light of life’” (Jn 8:12).

*Silent reflection (pause)*

*Participant response*

“I invite each of you now to come forward, and taking a paper, light it from the flame of the candle burning in our midst. In your heart, promise yourself that you will try to keep the light of love burning brightly. Ask God to help you make your life an example to inspire the child who will look to you as a friend and guide.

“Now let us close our reflection by joining our voices in offering the two prayers from your memory folders. I invite the godparents present to offer their special prayer first. (*Godparent Prayer* from the GODPARENT CARD is prayed.)

“May God bless your generosity in agreeing to be a loving and supportive Godparent.

“And now I invite the parents to pray their special prayer.” (Parent Prayer from the PARENT MEMORY FOLDER is prayed.)

Remind the parents to take their PARENT PACKET to the Baptism so that the memory folders can be signed by the presider and any Christian witnesses they may wish to have sign it—in addition to the Godparents.

If there are any lingering questions about scheduling Baptism dates, parish requirements, etc., take time now to answer them before the parents and Godparents leave. Emphasize once again that the third session is an important one.

Guide written by Elizabeth Montes and Rev. C. Vincent Peterson

© MCMXC St. Anthony Messenger Press. All rights reserved.

NOTE: This guide can be printed and cut down in size to be stored with the DVD version of this video program. Simply cut ¾ inch from each side of the page for a guide that, when folded, can be placed inside of the DVD case or attached to the DVD or VHS case.

For use with: *Baby's Baptism: Sacrament of Welcome* on VHS (V7283B) and DVD (D7283)

St. Anthony Messenger Press  
28 W. Liberty St.  
Cincinnati, OH 45202-6498  
800-488-0488  
[www.AmericanCatholic.org](http://www.AmericanCatholic.org)

**Leader's Guide for**  
***BABY'S BAPTISM: SACRAMENT OF WELCOME***  
**Session Three: Christian Parenting**

**Welcome!**

This is the final session in the Baptism preparation trilogy. This session has a unique role in this process. The parents have already baptized their child. They have fulfilled the task they came for, but hopefully they have discovered through the preceding sessions and your welcoming support that there is more to Baptism than a ceremony. Hopefully, they have begun to see the importance of the Church community and their place in that community. Their presence at this session is testimony that they are looking for more. Your warmth and encouragement will leave a lasting impression of welcome and support.

Let's once again briefly review the content of the three sessions so that you can see the progress the parents have made on their journey and where this session will lead them. If you were the facilitator for Session One or Session Two, you may prefer to bypass the following italicized review paragraphs and continue with the materials for Session Three.

*This program is unique. It is designed for presentation by lay parishioners without a great deal of formal theological training required. The videos provide the correct theology, freeing you to be a good host. The sessions can be held very comfortably in a home or in a parish facility. The program combines the use of three VIDEO PRESENTATIONS, a PARENT PACKET and group participation. Let's look at the reasons for these three elements.*

*The three VIDEO PRESENTATIONS provide the latest theologically correct Baptism catechesis, presented clearly and sensitively by Fr. Anthony Scannell, Capuchin. Fr. Tony uses dramatic presentations to emphasize the doctrinal aspects of Baptism.*

- ***Part One: Faith Journey*** was concerned with the concept of belonging, of welcome, of community. It includes the historical development of the Rite of Baptism.
- ***Part Two: Symbols and the Rite of Baptism*** talked about symbolism and focuses on the important symbols used in the Baptism rite. It also includes a dramatic presentation of the beautiful rite with a Baptism by immersion.
- ***Part Three: Christian Parenting*** focuses on the Christian family. It offers helpful supports for and insights into Christian parenting.

*The **PARENT PACKET** contains four items.*

*The **PARENT BOOKLET**, *Baby's Baptism, Sacrament of Welcome*, provides the parent/couple with complementary articles which highlight the content of the video. The book is divided into three parts to mirror each video presentation. The book also contains special pages which allow the parents to personalize this preparation process. In addition, the **PARENT PACKET** contains a **BAPTISM CERTIFICATE**, a **PARENT MEMORY FOLDER** and two **GODPARENT MEMORY CARDS**.*

*The group participation element provides an opportunity for the parents to interact with each other, to begin to experience community, to share their own insights and stories.*

### **What do you need to start?**

#### *Materials*

A television set or video monitor, a DVD player, the *Baby's Baptism DVD, Part Three: Christian Parenting*, for Session Three, name tags and markers, coffee, and /or refreshments if possible. If you use the optional prayer service at the conclusion, a large open Bible, a lighted candle, a loaf of freshly baked bread and a carafe of red wine on a simply decorated coffee table or small parish table should be prominent throughout the session.

You might want to look ahead at the instructions for the closing prayer service now.

### **Background and goals**

This session invites the parents to focus on those elements that distinguish Christian parenting. Father Tony makes positive recommendations about support systems and active participation in the Church community.

Once again, prepare the room so that it is comfortable. If using a parish facility rather than a home setting, avoid tables or desks which act as barriers. Make sure your television screen is visible from every seat and that all equipment is working properly.

### **Welcoming**

As the parents arrive, welcome them back to Session Three. Ask them to again sign in and complete a name tag. Invite them to make themselves comfortable until everyone has arrived. Encourage conversation with questions about the baby, pictures from the Baptism, etc. You are nurturing a sense of support and community among the group. Promise that after the video presentation there will be time for sharing of experiences.

## **To Begin**

When all the parents have arrived, reintroduce yourself. Congratulate them on the entrance of their children into the Church community. Tell them how pleased you are that they have come back. Assure them that their presence shows their concern and commitment.

Invite them now to relax and to spend a minute or two picturing their family group. Ask them to quietly reflect on what they want for their family. (Allow 1-2 minutes of silence.) Now invite them to recite together the Parent Prayer found on the back of the PARENT BOOKLET, *Baby's Baptism: Sacrament of Welcome*.

## **Video Presentation**

*Turn on the video.*

*At discussion break in the video:*

If the group is too large for comfortable interaction, divide them into groups of six or eight. On the video Father Tony will ask them to share with each other their answer to the question:

*“What do you most want your children to remember about you?”* (Allow 5-10 minutes)

*Return to the video.*

*At the conclusion of the video:*

Invite parent to return to their small groups.

Ask them first to identify the four stories in the video (the child who trips, the boy who drowns, the husband and daughter whose wife/mother has died, the couple considering abortion).

On the video Father Tony will ask them:

*“What do these life experiences have to do with Baptism?”* and

*“What does Baptism have to do with the rest of your life?”* (Allow 10-15 minutes)

You may wish to replay the *Called By Name* segment. Each repeat showing excites additional insights and reflections.

## **Optional Closing Prayer Service**

*Preparation*

As in previous sessions, a large open Bible and large lighted white candle are displayed on an empty table in the midst of the participants.

For Session Three, a round loaf of freshly baked bread and a carafe of red wine are placed on the table near the open Bible and the lighted candle. A cloth and a bouquet of flowers may be placed on the table as decoration.

The host does not lead the participants in a formal prayer for this third session. Rather, the entire session becomes a prayerful celebration of thanksgiving by the participants themselves as they recall the day of their children's Baptisms.

The bread and wine placed near the open Bible and lighted candle will indirectly remind believers of the Eucharistic bread and wine which are always the focus of the Sunday prayer celebration of Christians.

The whole meaning of Christian initiation is to welcome the new believer into the ongoing weekly celebration of the parish's prayer life centered on the Eucharist.

So now at this third session, the symbols of Eucharist are enshrined with the Scripture and the light to emphasize the point that all the baptized need inspiration, direction and nourishment for the journey they are undertaking. No formal prayer is needed because the gathering and rejoicing of the participants is a form of a thanksgiving prayer itself.

The focus of Session Three is to enable parents, sponsors, family members and friends to see that they must stand together in order to become nourishers for one another so that the task of Christian parenting can truly achieve its profound goal.

Ending the session with viewing *Called By Name*, followed by immediate socializing respects both the flow and spirit of Session Three's content.

Invite the parents now to share their pictures and their memories of their child's Baptism day. It is party time!

N.B.

For information regarding *New Life, New Creation*, the music used in *Baby's Baptism: Sacrament of Welcome* video, please contact

Michael Lynch/C and M Productions  
10532 242<sup>nd</sup> Place S.W.  
Edmonds, Washington 98020  
(206) 542-1297

Guide written by Elizabeth Montes and Rev. C. Vincent Peterson

© MCMXC St. Anthony Messenger Press. All rights reserved.

NOTE: This guide can be printed and cut down in size to be stored with the DVD version of this video program. Simply cut 3/4 inch from each side of the page for a guide that, when folded, can be placed inside of the DVD case or attached to the DVD or VHS case.

For use with: *Baby's Baptism: Sacrament of Welcome* on VHS (V7283C) and DVD (D7283)

St. Anthony Messenger Press  
28 W. Liberty St.  
Cincinnati, OH 45202-6498  
800-488-0488  
[www.AmericanCatholic.org](http://www.AmericanCatholic.org)