

Baptism Catechesis

For the grace of Baptism to unfold, the parents' help is important. So too is the role of the godfather and godmother, who must be firm believers, able and ready to help the newly baptized – child or adult – on the road of Christian life. Their task is a truly ecclesial function. The whole ecclesial community bears some responsibility for the development and safeguarding of the grace given at Baptism. (CCC 1255)

Catechesis for Baptism is directed primarily to adults: that is, catechumens – including children who have reached the age of reason – as well as the parents and godparents of infants who are to be baptized. (NDC 120)

Infant Baptism

Catechesis for infant Baptism is really catechesis for the parents and godparents. This catechesis should lead the parents and godparents to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the sacrament and their role in guiding the child to grow in the faith.

Catechesis (NDC 121-122)

- Teaches that Baptism (1) is the foundation of the Christian life because it is the journey into Christ's death and resurrection, which is the foundation of our hope; (2) gives sanctifying grace, that is, God's life; (3) gives them a new birth in which they become children of God, members of Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit; (4) cleanses people from original sin and from all personal sins; (5) incorporates them into the life, practices, and mission of the Church; and (6) imprints on their souls an indelible character that consecrates them for Christian worship and is necessary for salvation in the case of all those who have heard the Gospel and have been able to ask for this sacrament. (*Cf. CCC, no. 1257*)
- Teaches that through Baptism we receive a share in the mission of Christ as king, priest, and prophet.
- Teaches that Baptism "symbolizes the catechumen's burial into Christ's death, from which he rises up by resurrection with him as a 'a new creature.'" (*CCC, no. 1214*)
- Teaches that Baptism is "the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit...and the door which gives access to the other sacraments." (*CCC, no. 1213*)
- Teaches that through Baptism the faithful "share in the priesthood of Christ, in his prophetic and royal mission." (*CCC 1268*)
- Teaches that "the Most Holy Trinity gives the baptized sanctifying grace, the grace of *justification*" (thus "the whole organism of the Christian's supernatural life has its root in baptism"):
 - "enabling them to believe in God, to hope in him, and to love him through the theological virtues"
 - "giving them the power to live and act under the prompting of the Holy Spirit through the gifts of the Holy Spirit"
 - "allowing them to grow in goodness through the moral virtues" (*CCC, no. 1266*)
- Teaches that "having become a member of the Church, the person baptized belongs no longer to himself, but to him who died and rose for us. From now on he is called to be subject to others, to serve them in the communion of the Church, and to 'obey and to submit' to the Church's leaders, holding them in respect and affection." (*CCC, no. 1269*)

- Includes a thorough explanation of the Rite of Baptism together with the fundamental signs and symbols that it employs: immersion in or the pouring of water, the words of the Trinitarian formula, and the anointing with oil.
- Teaches that the ordinary minister for the Sacrament of Baptism is a priest or deacon (in the Eastern Catholic Churches the priest is the only ordinary minister of Baptism, since Chrismation follows immediately) but that, in the case of necessity, any person who intends to do what the Church does can baptize by pouring water on the candidate's head and saying the Trinitarian formula.