

# 1 God Chooses Me

**Parents & guardians, start here.**  
**Read these numbered instructions**  
**to yourself throughout the process.**

1

In this session you and your child will remember his/her Baptism. Baptism is how we begin our initiation into the Church.

2

## You will need:

- a Bible
- a slip of paper and pen or pencil for each person
- a candle and match/lighter
- a small basket or bowl

3

**God's love.** Make sure your child understands that God has always loved him or her. Always. Even if they do something wrong God will never stop loving them.

## Growing Up Catholic begins at Baptism

God already loved you  
before you were baptized!

But... at baptism you became  
a special friend of Jesus.

What else happened  
at baptism?



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**Who is the Church?** Explain to your child that the Church is all those who have been baptized, including your child and yourself. The people in the Church are all trying to follow the teachings of Jesus, and they get help in doing this from the Holy Spirit and the sacraments.

1

**The special help** we all get is called “grace” which is God’s own life within us.

2

3

**What we believe.** At baptism, our godparents (along with the whole parish) professed the faith that we are now learning about. It’s the same as the Creed we all say at Mass on Sundays. In the prayers to be memorized on the web site, you will find the Apostles’ Creed. This would be a good time to help your child memorize that.



### From Pope Francis

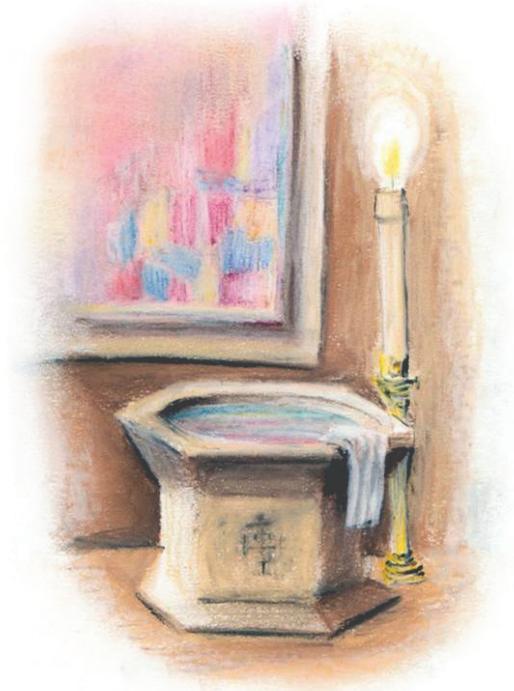
Pope Francis spoke passionately about baptism: “It is not a mere formality! A baptised child is not the same as a child who is not baptised; a baptised person is not the same as one who has not received baptism. It is an act that touches the depth of our existence. We are immersed in that inexhaustible fount of life that is the death of Jesus, the greatest act of love of all history; and thanks to this love we are able to live a new life, no longer at the mercy of evil, sin and death, but rather in communion with God and with our brothers and sisters.”





## What Happens at Baptism?

- You became part of the Church, God's family.
- You received **special help** from God to overcome temptations.
- You went under the water.
- You came out of the water as a **friend of Jesus**.
- The **Holy Spirit** came to you in a special way.
- You professed your **faith** along with everyone else (if you were just a baby, your parents and Godparents professed it for you).
- You began the process of **growing up Catholic**.



## God Chose YOU!





# Prayer Celebration

1

**Pray** this with your child, helping him or her follow along. If a leader is guiding the process, follow their lead. Otherwise, speak the leader parts below.

If you have a candle available, light it now. Have the slips of paper and basket/bowl available.

*Everyone begins by making the Sign of the Cross.*

All: **In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Leader: We thank you, Jesus, for giving us this water, which has been blessed by you and the Church.

All: **With water, we were all baptized.**

Leader: We thank you, Jesus, because you forgive our sins and help us live as your people.

All: **In baptism, we were made your children.**

Leader: Now we thank you, Jesus, because we in this room are all members of your Church. With these people, we will prepare for the wonderful Sacrament of Reconciliation.

You have called us by name to this important time of our lives.

All: *Please listen to the reading: Matthew 4:18-20.*

Leader: The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!**

5

At this point, open your Bible and **read these verses out loud.**

## Growing Up Catholic begins at Baptism

2

**Child of God.** Explain what it means to be a “child of God.” It means that God chooses us and loves us as much as our parents do! God really loves us and will never stop loving us. God knows all our names and calls us by name to be his children!

3

**When we’re wrong.** Explain that we go to Confession because sometimes we fail to love God or our parents or each other as much as we should. Confession helps us admit that to someone else, reminds us we are forgiven, and helps us get back on track.

4

Have the children **write their names and their parents’ or guardians’ names** on a slip of paper and then read them aloud. Place them in the prayer basket/bowl afterwards.



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6

**Use the talking points** below to reflect on the reading with your child, pausing to let your child respond to questions and sharing your own answers.

- Just like Jesus called Peter and Andrew to be his friends and follow him with their lives, now he is calling us to learn about forgiveness and how to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This sacrament is also called “confession” or “penance.” The important thing is that we know that to follow Jesus means we are willing to learn how to love Jesus more.
- At baptism, we were given grace. Grace helps us love God and love our parents and friends, and all the people of the world. But sometimes we do things that aren’t very loving. Still, God wants us to be near him and calls us back through this sacrament.
- **He is calling you by your own name, each of you here. God has already forgiven you, but we all need to celebrate that in the Church – which is why we have this sacrament.**

Leader: Let us pray together

**Please pause after each line:**

All: **Jesus, we accept your invitation  
to grow closer to you in love  
and to learn about the  
sacrament of reconciliation.**

**Please bless us and be with us.**

**We love you and want to love you more.**

**Amen.**



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**Your child's baptism.** Help your child complete the first part of this page. Tell them about their baptism – when, where, who were the godparents, and any other details.

Help them write their full, proper name on the line.

1



**The Sign of the Cross.** Practice the Sign of the Cross until they know it by heart.

Note for at home later:

Use the Sign of the Cross often at home. You can use it before every meal prayer, bedtime prayers, and at other appropriate times.

The parish might allow you to fill a small jar of Holy Water (you have to bring your own jar in most places). Have that Holy Water in a central location in your home. At night time, as your children are going to bed, you can sprinkle them with it or use it to make the sign of the cross on their foreheads and say something simple like, "Good night. God bless you. I/ We love you very much and so does God."

It is a very sweet way for them to end the day and can help your children truly rest in peace at night.

2

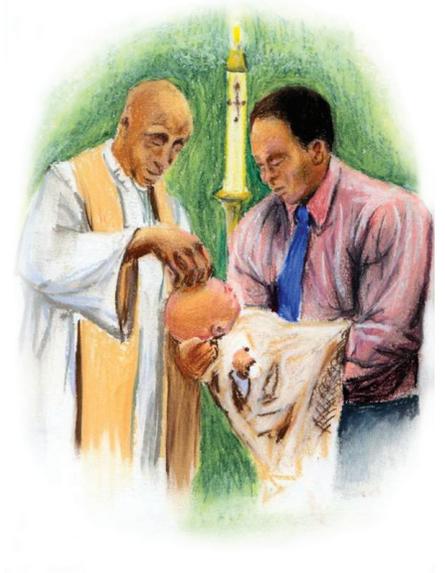


# Your Baptism Day

At baptism, you became a special friend of Jesus

When were you baptized?

What is your name?



## What happened at your baptism?

**The priest or deacon began the baptism.**

The first thing he did was to trace the Sign of the Cross on your forehead.

He said, "I claim you for Christ...by this sign..."

**Words!** Write the words we say in the Sign of the Cross:

In the name of the

And of the

And of the



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Begin by showing your child a **Bible**. Open it to show them this passage.

Tell them that we are going to read this story in words that we understand better.

1



Then close the Bible and ask them to read this passage aloud. Help them when needed.

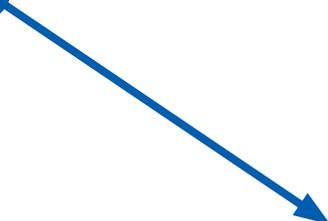
2



Tell your child that you believe in Jesus, too. Explain that Jesus gives us the strength we need to be forgiving, to be loving, to be generous.

Use some examples from your family life of times when you did something for which you depended on strength from Jesus.

3





# Meeting Jesus in the Bible

**At baptism we become friends with Jesus who is our friend first. He chooses us because he loves us very much.**

## Jesus Meets and Loves the Children

*(Based on Mark 10:13-16)*

The moms and dads  
were bringing their children to see Jesus.

And Jesus was happy to see them.  
He blessed them all!

Some people told these  
children and their parents  
to go away because they thought  
he didn't have time for the children.

But Jesus made it very clear  
that he loved the children.

He wanted them to be near him.

"What I am teaching you is for these children," he said.

In fact, he told everyone,  
"You should all have  
the simple faith of these children!"

Then he hugged them all and blessed them.





# Color This Picture

1

**Time for a break!** Help your child enjoy coloring this image of Jesus and the children.

Coloring time is a good time to be close to your child without necessarily talking about faith. Don't be afraid to put your arm around your child during this time.

**After coloring,** follow the instructions to help your child find the right words and write them out here. They might say things like:

- Thank you for loving me and giving me my mom and dad.
- Thank you for pets/friends/siblings, etc.
- I want to be your friend.
- I will show you my love by: trying to be my best self/treating others like I want to be treated, doing my chores without complaining, etc.

2





# Write a Letter to Jesus

Now write Jesus a letter to thank him for loving you.  
Tell him how much you want to be his friend.  
What will you promise Jesus? How will you show your love to him?

**Dear Jesus,**



**Love,**



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1 Explain that the names “Reconciliation,” “Confession,” and “Penance” refer to the same sacrament.

2 If possible, take your child to see the parish reconciliation room.

3 Tell them that they will be in the reconciliation room with the priest. **Assure them** that you will be there that day with them, just outside the room.

Explain that when they go to confession, they do not have to tell you what sins they are telling the priest but they can if they want to. The priest will never tell anyone else what they say.

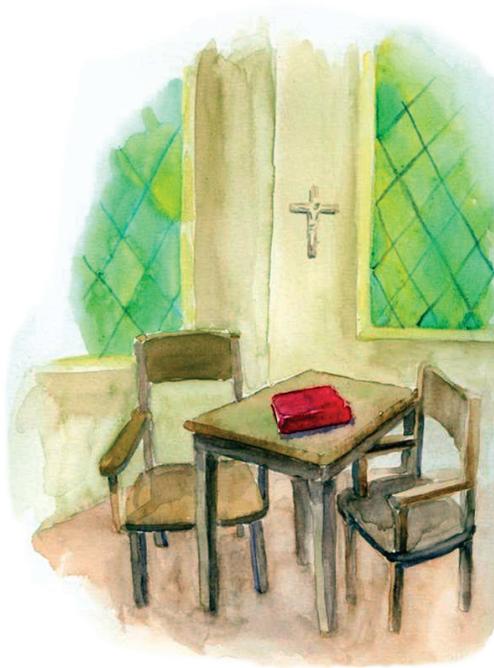
4 Use these notes to explain what the priest will say to them and how to begin.

5 It helps a great deal to **share with your child what it's like** for you when you go to confession. If you have not been to the Sacrament of Reconciliation lately, this is a great time for you to return and make a confession. Usually the parish offers this at a certain time every week. You can also call the parish office to make an appointment.





# Sacrament of Reconciliation



## The Reconciliation Room

**Where do we go to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation?**

- It's a small room
- The priest is there waiting for you.
- It has chairs and a Bible
- You sit down or kneel and begin

## The Priest Welcomes You

**What is the first thing the priest will do when you enter the room?**

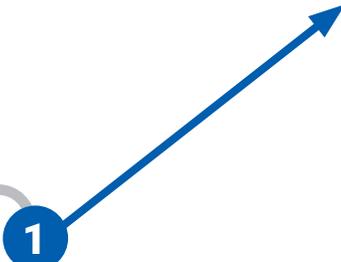
- He invites you in and welcomes you, saying:  
"May God bless you and help you to make a good Confession today."
- Then you make the Sign of the Cross together.



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Help your child draw this picture and write the names.

1



### Closing prayer

Dear Jesus,  
we know you are with us here.  
You are present in this room.  
We love you  
and want to love you more.  
Help us be more loving this week.  
Thank you for giving us faith.  
Increase our faith every day.

Now let us pray together:

**Glory Be to the Father,  
and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end, Amen.  
In the Name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**





# At Home This Week

Work on this together at home as a way of continuing the process of preparing for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

In the box above, draw a picture of your family members all together. Below, list all their names. These are the people who belong to your family. Just like a family, you belong to the Church.

Names:





**Prayers** - Make sure your child knows the four prayers below by heart this week. Help him or her practice them and pray them together at bedtime each night.

- **Sign of the Cross**
- **Our Father**
- **Hail Mary**
- **Glory Be**

Find the text for these prayers and tips for helping your child memorize them at [GrowingUpCatholic.com/r1](http://GrowingUpCatholic.com/r1) (see right).

Every Catholic child should know certain prayers by heart. Of course, you as parent or guardian should know them, too.

Help your child learn these prayers by heart this week. When helping your child **memorize a prayer**, take it one line at a time. Practice with your child until he or she knows it.

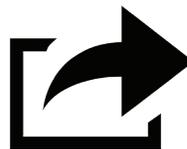
Help him or her practice these and pray them together at bedtime each night. Another good time to practice might be on the way to Mass or to these sessions.

1

The *Growing Up Catholic* website offers great resources, including videos, extra tips for you as a parent, and more. Be sure to check them out!

This week has a great video for parents to help you understand Reconciliation a little better.

2



## Tips and Activities for This Week

Use your computer, phone, or tablet to view this week's page:

[GrowingUpCatholic.com/r1](http://GrowingUpCatholic.com/r1)

Each week, find suggested activities, videos, ideas, parenting tips, and more!

