

The Church gives us guidelines about what to include in the programme. She tells us:

- **Catechesis should include the baptismal ritual and symbols**, such as water as life-giving and cleansing, oil as strengthening and healing, light as driving out darkness, the community as the setting in which Christ is present.<sup>1</sup>
- **Baptism initiates people in Christ's priestly, prophetic and kingly roles.**<sup>2</sup> The catechesis for baptism should include an explanation of these roles and how we fulfil them.
- **Preparation should take place in the parish and it should truly reflect the mind of the Church**

Baptism catechesis should take place within the parish community — since it is the faith community into whose life of prayer and worship the children will be initiated. Parents have a right to be taught by catechists who truly reflect the mind of the Church and, in this regard, parents and catechists have a right to formation in contemporary theology.<sup>3</sup>

- **The sponsor must be a baptised and confirmed Catholic** who has received the Eucharist and who lives a life of faith which befits the role to be undertaken. Baptism preparation should offer an opportunity to reflect on the choice the parents are making of godparents and to be informed that people of non-Catholic ecclesial communities may be admitted in company with a Catholic godparent – acting as a witness to the baptism.<sup>4</sup>
- **Families should be part of the process of initiation.** Pope Benedict XVI reminds us that the sacraments of initiation (baptism, confirmation and first communion) are key moments not only for the individual receiving them but also for the entire family, which should be supported in its educational role by the various elements of the ecclesial community; he says that parish pastoral programmes should make the most of this highly significant moment.<sup>5</sup> This why parishes should offer and parents should participate in parish pre-sacramental catechesis.
- **There must be 'content' in the catechesis**

The General Directory for Catechesis tells us that we find content in Scripture, through witness (or apostolic work), in our Creed (our profession of faith, through our lived moral values and in our liturgies and in our prayer.<sup>6</sup> In fact, the Catechism of the Catholic Church is structured around these same fundamental dimensions (or pillars) of the Christian life.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> National Directory for Catechesis – *Sharing the Light*, Congregation for the Clergy, 1978, ¶117

<sup>2</sup> General Directory for Catechesis, Congregation for the Clergy, Catholic Truth Society, London, 1997, ¶57

<sup>3</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, ¶2037, General Directory for Catechesis, ¶234, Canon Law ¶213

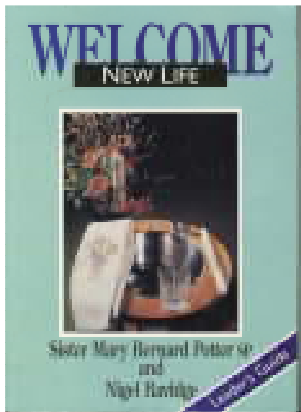
<sup>4</sup> Canon ¶874 §1 and Canon ¶874 §2

<sup>5</sup> Sacramentum Caritatis: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of the Church's Life and Mission (February 22, 2007), ¶19.

<sup>6</sup> General Directory for Catechesis, Congregation for the Clergy, Catholic Truth Society, London, 1997, ¶¶94-95 and 117-119. See also the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, ¶¶75.1-75.4.

<sup>7</sup> The Catechism of the Catholic Church, Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1994 as quoted in ¶122 of the *General Directory for Catechesis*.

**Welcome New Life:** a Leader's Guide, Sr. Mary Bernard Potter, S.P. and Nigel Bavidge, Leeds Diocese, Geoffrey Chapman, London, 1994  
(4 sessions)



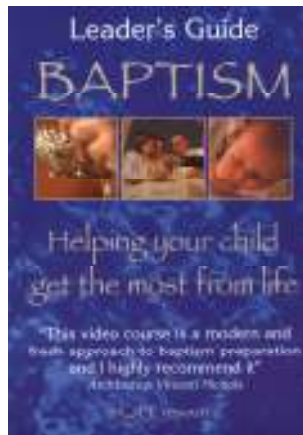
This is a hands-on resource for baptism preparation in every Catholic parish. It contains everything the catechist needs for every session, including photocopyable leaflets for the godparents and prayers. The parents booklet which accompanies the programme includes question and answer sheets to help the parents reflect and participate in the activities of the preparation programme. Each session begins with session aims, and outline of the session and what materials will be needed during the session. It should be an invaluable tool for the new catechist in need of practical help and confidence. The programme was developed by the diocese of Leeds RE Centre and piloted in the diocese. It makes the point that there is no one way of organising baptism preparation – and that priests and catechists need to be sensitive to the varying needs of each family. There are, however, advantages in trying to prepare families together if possible because

- it builds up a sense of community and a network of relationships which can be a great support for families;
- it allows for parents to learn from each other's experiences and insights;
- it can take a sense of pressure off individual families; and
- it saves the time and energy of priests and catechists.

See the attached chart for more details of the programme.

The cost of this Leaders guide is £14.99; the cost of the parent's book is £1.99.

**Baptism – Helping your child get the most from life:** a CaFE resource, Catholic Evangelisation Services, 2004  
(2 sessions)

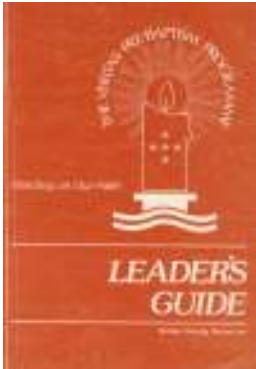


This is a video course – offering a modern and fresh approach to baptism preparation. It is an engaging series which uses a variety of ways to unwrap this Sacrament. Teaching from Archbishop Vincent Nichols is complemented with: commentary from David Payne (a parent of three children), the hopes and concerns of parents, and humour from infant school children. Parents watching have been surprised by the modern approach to the filming of this video course and are challenged by its teaching. Many parishes are also using sections of this for preparation for first Holy Communion and Reconciliation and is also being used in schools. The course is divided into 12 sections with an introduction at the beginning. After each section, a question appears on the screen – and they recommend that people pause at this point to talk, asking the parents to discuss their thoughts and feelings on what they have just heard. The course has been designed to run over two sessions but this can be extended to any number of weeks by using the natural breaks in the talks. All the sections in the course last approximately 50 minutes in total so both could, if necessary, be run over one session but this would mean reducing the amount of discussion time.

See the attached chart for more details of the programme.

The cost is £89.95 and it includes 2 sessions on video or DVD, a comprehensive leader's guide, 6 parent booklets and 6 godparent booklets (extra booklets can be ordered).

**Handing on our Faith – the Veritas Pre-Baptism Programme:** Mickey and Terri Quinn, Veritas Family Resources, Dublin, 1985  
(4 sessions)

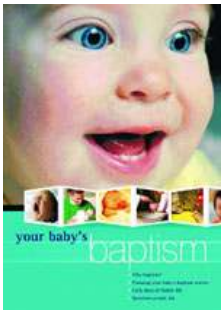


This is a flexible programme offering quite a number of options which parishes can adapt for their own circumstances and needs. The programme can be led by the parish priest or parent catechists. The aim of the Leader's Guide is to help parents in the preparation for the Baptism of their children. It encourages participation of the godparents if possible. The book is well laid out and offers valuable information and ideas (although it is a little old-fashioned in its presentation). Chapter 1 introduces five simple stages for getting the process started. Chapter 2 explains the formal and gives some idea of how an evening is run. The next four chapters give outlines and guidance for running each of the four evenings and Chapter 7 offers some general hints on preparing the talks. Chapter 8 is an introduction to the theology of Baptism seen in its historical perspective and Chapter 9 explains the thinking behind the course; it is particularly helpful for a presenting team to become familiar with the material in these last two chapters.

See the attached chart for more details of the programme.

The cost of this programme is £5 for the Leader's Guide and £5 for the Worksheets for Parents.

### Other resources:



**Your baby's baptism:** Rosemary Gallagher, Redemptorist Publications, Hampshire

This colourful and attractive book is designed for parents when they first make arrangements for a baptism. It deals in a straightforward way with all the practical questions that concern every parent and sets the scene prior to their instruction.

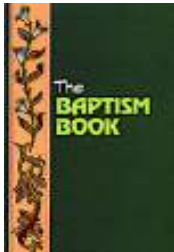
Available from Redemptorist Publications, this costs £3.50



**Welcome New Life:** also written by Rosemary Gallagher, Redemptorist Publications, Hampshire

These leaflets accompany *Your baby's baptism*; they include two questionnaires which can be adapted or developed as appropriate to the parish and can be used during baptism preparation for the parents

Available from Redemptorist Publications at a cost of £10.95.



### **The Baptism Book**

The Baptism Book contains the Rite of Baptism for one child and for several children. The Rite of Baptism during Mass is also included.

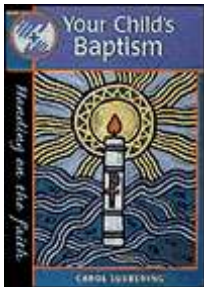
Available from Redemptorist Publications; cost: £3.75



### **Let's go to Baptism, Aileen Urquhart**

A new booklet in the Let's Go collection. Attractively designed and inspiringly written, it will keep the Baptismal liturgy exciting for younger children and hold their attention throughout. Colour in and wipe off again and again.

Available from Redemptorist Publications; cost: £3.75



### **Your Child's Baptism – handing on the faith, Carol Luebering, St. Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati, 2000**

This question, taken from the Rite of Baptism, requires only the briefest of answers: Baptism—faith—eternal life. And yet, the baptism of your child is a complex event, embracing those difficult concepts we understand only by degrees: faith, life, relationship, Church.

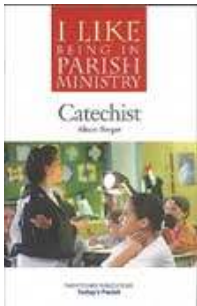
The far-reaching and clearly formed insights in *Your Child's Baptism*, will help you as you prepare for the simple—and yet complex—beginning of your child's life in Christ. This book is a revised edition of the popular *What Do You Ask for Your Child?*

Cost: £3.95



### **Will our children believe? Michael Paul Gallagher, S.J., Veritas Family Resources, Dublin, 1999**

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 the 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.



***I like being in Parish Ministry – Catechist***, Alison Berger, New London, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2006

*This is an ideal introduction to being a catechist for both those beginning their ministry and ministry veterans affirming their calls to service.*

Alison Berger invites catechists to probe the heart of their vocation: to help those they minister with to know, celebrate, live, and contemplate the mystery of Christ and so grow in communion with him. With stories, reflections questions, and concrete suggestions, she guides readers in exploring the spiritual and practical dimensions of catechizing as Jesus did. Ideal for both those beginning their ministry and ministry veterans affirming their calls to service

Cost: \$4.95

## Essential resources for catechists in the parish



***The Catechism of the Catholic Church***, Geoffrey Chapman, London, March 2000, London £10.99

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church* is the first new edition of the catechism in 400 years. It is the authoritative summary of Catholic belief regarding the Church creeds, sacraments, commandments and prayers. The book is exceptionally well organised, with line-by-line explanations of every conceivable aspect of orthodox Catholic belief. Extensive cross-referencing, indexing and footnotes and "In Brief" summaries of each section further ease the project of finding the precise answers to any questions a reader might have.

***Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church***, Catholic Truth Society, London, £6.95

The new essential guide to the Catholic faith is a faithful and sure official synthesis of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992) Prepared by a commission presided over by the then Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI,

***General Directory for Catechesis***, The Congregation for the Clergy, Catholic Truth Society,

The General Directory for Catechesis provides religious educators, teachers, and catechists with a single point of reference for all aspects of catechetical instruction. Also available in easy-to-read language: ***The General Directory for Catechesis in Plain English: A Summary and Commentary (Paperback)*** by Bill Huebsch, Twenty-third Publications, 2001, £7.99.

***On Catechesis in Our Time (Catechesi Tradendae)*** Pope John Paul II s timeless apostolic exhortation reflects on the realities and joys of bringing the mystery of Christ to all the world. (available on line: [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_16101979\\_catechesi-tradendae\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_16101979_catechesi-tradendae_en.html))

***Vatican II documents***: Sixteen documents produced by the Second Vatican Council (available on line: <http://www.vatican.va>).



<b>Cost: £5.98</b> <i>Welcome New Life</i>	<i>Baptism – Helping your child get the most from life</i>	<i>Handing on Our Faith – the Veritas Programme</i>
<p><b>Introduction for the team:</b> talks about where and when sessions will take place, what liturgies will be involved, and what follow-up might be offered to the families. It gives information about how people in the parish can be involved (as prayer partners, in the Prayers of the Faithful, by displaying photographs, etc). It gives guidance about who can be godparents and how the ceremony can be planned</p>	<p><b>Introduction for the team:</b> offers very good material to prepare the team of catechists to run the programme, including practical suggestions for running the course, leading the sessions, and explaining the different ways the course can be used and offering suggestions for follow-up after the baptism.</p>	<p><b>Introduction for the team:</b> Chapter 1 introduces five simple stages for getting the process started. Chapter 2 explains the formal and gives some idea of how an evening is run. The next four chapters give outlines and guidance for running each of the four evenings, as follows:</p>
<p><b>Welcome to our world:</b> aims to provide a setting in which the parents feel welcomed and accepted by those leading the session on behalf of the parish community; it invites parents to reflect on their hopes for their child and it shows that the Church community offers help and support for them and for their children.</p>	<p><b>Session 1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Wanting the best for your child;</i> addresses the question: “What do you want for your child?”</li> <li>• <i>Naming your child;</i> addresses the question: “Why have you chosen your child’s name?”</li> <li>• <i>The Sign of the Cross;</i> addresses the question: “Why do you want your child to belong to the Church?”</li> <li>• <i>The Celebration of God’s Word;</i> addresses the question: “How does the love you have for your child reflect God’s love?” suggesting that you might begin by reading out the Scripture passage about Jesus’s baptism</li> <li>• <i>The Intercessions;</i> addresses the question: “What do you pray for your child?”</li> <li>• <i>Prayer of Exorcism and Anointing;</i> addresses the question: “How will faith help your child?”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Stages of the “journey” – handing on faith:</b></p> <p>At the door ↔ love in the home          At the book ↔ example in the home          At the font ↔ religious practices          At the altar ↔ caring for others</p> <p><b>At the door/love in the home:</b> aims to set the atmosphere for this and future meetings; it talks about starting the ceremony at the door, the value of choosing suitable godparents and the value of a Christian name. It brings out how this faith begins with the atmosphere of love and affection in the home; and suggests emphasis on love in the home as being the foundation of faith – and how spending time together is the key to that.</p>
<p><b>Welcome to the Church:</b> aims to deepen parents’ appreciation of the Sacrament of Baptism by exploring the first part of the Rite of Baptism; it also heightens the parents’ awareness of the responsibilities they are undertaking.</p>	<p><b>Session 2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Profession of Faith;</i> addresses the question: “What difference can faith make in your life?” leading to a discussion where parents start to explore their own faith</li> <li>• <i>The Baptism;</i> addresses the question: “Have you thought of Baptism this way before?”</li> </ul>	<p><b>At the book/example in the home:</b> aims to highlight the significance of the second stage of the ceremony of Baptism – the Liturgy of the Word – and it stresses the parents’ role and the importance of their example in the home. A reading from Scripture offers an opportunity to explain the Ephpheta rite.</p>
<p><b>Welcome New Life:</b> aims to explore the concept of Baptism as New Life and it reflects on the sacramental signs of Baptism.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Chrism and the White Garment;</i> addresses the question: “How would you like your child to make a difference?”</li> <li>• <i>The Lighted Candle;</i> addresses the question: “How do you feel about guiding your child’s faith and how can godparents help?”</li> <li>• <i>The Lord’s Prayer;</i> addresses the question: “How can you help your child to pray?”</li> </ul>	<p><b>At the font/religious practices:</b> aims to explain what happens around the font – concentrating on water. It highlights the parents’ own prayerfulness and example at the centre of their religious practices.</p>
<p><b>Welcome to love for ever:</b> aims to explain the remaining rites of Baptism and emphasises the ongoing responsibilities of the parents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Blessing;</i> addresses the question: “What help do you need from God?”</li> <li>• <i>After the Baptism;</i> advises the catechists to be prepared with details of what your parish offers as follow-up for those wanting to continue to explore their faith.</li> </ul>	<p><b>At the altar/caring for others:</b> aims to remind the parents that, when they take this first step, they are leading towards eventually bringing their child to the Eucharist. It brings out the awareness of the Church as a caring community of faith and can be a good time to contrast the limitations of a private Baptism with one where the community is present to welcome the child.</p>
<p><b>Celebration of Enrolment:</b> The programme offers materials to be used if you have a Celebration of Enrolment before the Baptism itself at one of the parish Masses.</p>	<p><b>Appendix:</b> The appendix offers quotes on Baptism from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the role of the godparents and comments from Rt. Rev. Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Birmingham.</p>	