

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism

A workbook for Parents and Godparents

By Pastor Matthew D. Musteric

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Please complete this workbook at return it to the Pastor well in advance of the date of Baptism. It will be returned to you. Before returning it, please remove and keep the sample order of service in the center of this booklet.

Candidate for Holy Baptism (full name): _____

Date and Time of Baptism: _____

**Some wonderful times for Baptism are the Great Easter Vigil (Saturday before Easter Sunday), Pentecost (50 days after Easter, usually May or June), All Saints Sunday (first Sunday in November) and the Baptism of Our Lord (first Sunday after January 6). Baptisms are generally not held during Lent.*

Date and Place of Birth: _____

Parents' Phone(s) (best number to reach you at): _____

Parents' Email addresses: _____

Parents' Mailing address: _____

Mother's Full (Maiden) Name: _____

Church: _____ Baptized? yes / no Active? yes / no

Father's Full Name: _____

Church: _____ Baptized? yes / no Active? yes / no

Godparents /Sponsors:

1. Name: _____ Connection to family: _____

Phone: _____ Baptized? yes / no Active? yes / no

2. Name: _____ Connection to family: _____

Phone: _____ Baptized? yes / no Active? yes / no

Date of Pre-Baptism Meeting with Pastor: _____

Before Meeting with the Pastor

The pastor will visit with you, the parents of the baptismal candidate, before the baptism. This visit usually takes place in your home. Please read through the materials enclosed and complete this workbook together before meeting with the pastor. The pastor may keep a copy of your completed book and give you a copy.

Why Do You Desire Baptism?

Why Do You Desire Baptism for Your Children?

In the space below, please jot down your answers to the following questions. The pastor may ask you to elaborate on your answers. This is not a quiz, but rather an opportunity to consider what is an extremely important decision your life (or, in the case of children, in the life of your family and your child).

1. Why do you desire to have your child baptized?

(Adults who have not been baptized: Why do you desire Holy Baptism?)

2. What questions do you have for the pastor?

Godparents / Sponsors

Those chosen to be Godparents for your child should be carefully chosen. They should be baptized Christians active in a Christian congregation. They will play an important role in the faith development of y our child.

Please list the Godparents / Sponsors and describe why you have chosen them to play this important role.

What Do Lutherans Believe About Holy Baptism?
A Summary of Baptism from Martin Luther's *Small Catechism*
Please read what Lutherans believe about Holy Baptism (below).

1. What is Baptism?

Baptism is not simply water, but it is water used together with God's Word and by God's command.

What is this Word of God?

In Matthew 28 our Lord Jesus Christ says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

2. What benefits does God give in Baptism?

In Baptism God forgives sin, delivers from death and the devil, and gives everlasting salvation to all who believe what he has promised.

What is this Word and promise of God?

In Mark 16 our Lord Jesus Christ says, "The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned."

3. How can water do such great things?

It is not the water that does these things, but God's Word with the water and our trust in this Word. Water by itself is only water, but with the Word of God it is a life-giving water which by grace gives the new birth through the Holy Spirit.

Where is this written?

St. Paul writes in Titus 3, "He saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The saying is sure."

4. What then is the significance of such a baptism with water?

It means that our sinful self all its evil deeds and desires should be drowned through daily repentance; and that day after day a new self should arise to live with God in righteousness and purity forever.

Where is this written?

St. Paul writes in Romans 6, "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life."

Baptismal Promises are Deadly Serious Commitments

During the baptismal service, you will be asked if you will fulfill some specific promises. As parents, you will be asked:

As you bring [child's name] to receive the gift of baptism, you are entrusted with responsibilities:

- to live with him/her among God's faithful people,
- to bring him/her to the word of God and the Holy Supper,
- to teach him/her the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and the Ten Commandments,
- to place in his/her hands the Holy Scriptures,
- and to nurture him/her in faith and prayer,

so that he may learn to trust God, proclaim Christ through word and deed, care for others and the world God made, and work for justice and peace.

Do you promise to help him grow in the Christian faith and life?

Note: It is offensive to God and to the community of the church to stand and make public promises if you do not intend to keep them. If you do not intend to keep these promises, you should reconsider whether you should bring your child for Holy Baptism.

1. How do you plan to fulfill your obligation to faithfully (i.e., regularly) bring your child to the services of God's house?

2. What is your plan for teaching your child the Lord's Prayer, the Creed (Apostles' Creed) and the Ten Commandments (also in the orange book)? When do you think this might begin?

3. When will you place in your child's hands the Holy Scriptures? How will you teach your child the Word of God *before* he/she can read?

4. How will you provide for your child's instruction in the Christian faith? (Here consider Sunday school, Christian school, teaching in the home, etc.)

You are Not Alone!
The Church and Holy Baptism

Good news! You are not alone. The congregation (speaking on behalf of the church around the world, in heaven and on earth) also makes some promises to you and to your child. The members are asked:

People of God, do you promise to support <your child> and pray for him/her in his/her new life in Christ?

They also renounce the devil and all his empty promises (three NOs) and affirm the faith of the church by confessing the faith of the Apostles' Creed (three YESes). And they speak this word of welcome to your child:

We welcome you into the body of Christ and into the mission we share: join us in giving thanks and praise to God and in bearing God's creative and redeeming word to all the world. You belong to Christ, in whom you have been baptized. Alleluia! Alleluia!

In short, you are not in this alone. Your child's Godparents, along with the whole church are there to support you and guide you. Better: they are your and your child's brothers and sisters in Christ!

The congregation will also provide you with many gifts, including:

- A baptismal candle that can be lighted each year on the day of the anniversary of your child's baptism (Ask the pastor for a copy of a special service in the home for this occasion).
- A "faith chest," which is a "hope chest" of sorts for your child's baptismal gifts and your child's first Bible, etc.
- A napkin used during the baptism. It is white, symbolic of your child's new life in Jesus Christ.

1. What kind of support do you think you will need from the congregation in raising your child to be a faithful follower of our Lord Jesus Christ?

2. Are there any other areas in which you might need some special help or support in raising your child as a follower of Jesus?

The Service of Holy Baptism

The service of Holy Baptism will occur during a regular Sunday worship service (presently 8 am and 10:30 am, may vary during the summer months) or on the Saturday evening of the Great Vigil of Easter (the Saturday evening before Easter Sunday). *Please read through the enclosed service—included in this booklet—and share a copy with your sponsors.*

1. Do you have any questions about the service of Holy Baptism? Write down your questions here:

2. Some general guidelines for the service:

- Baptisms usually occur right at the beginning of the worship service, so be sure to be there early. Following the announcements, you will follow the cross and the opening procession during the gathering (first) hymn to the baptismal font.
- **Please no photographs during the service.** There will be ample time to take photographs after the service and almost all parts of the service can be duplicated for photographs later.

3. The order of the worship service including Holy Baptism:

GATHERING HYMN

- The parents, child and sponsors follow the pastor and acolytes forward during the entrance (gathering) hymn, standing at the pulpit side of the Baptismal font.

PRESENTATION

- The Pastor reminds the congregation what Baptism is all about.
- The Sponsors present the child.
- The Pastor addresses the parents and sponsors, reminding them of their responsibilities.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

- The whole congregation responds with three NOs: to the devil, death and sin and three YESes, in the form of the Apostles' Creed.

THANKSGIVING OVER THE WATER

- The Pastor prays over the water, recalling God's salvation history.

BAPTISM

- The child is baptized with water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

LAYING ON OF HANDS AND SIGN OF THE CROSS

- The child is brought to the altar (parents and sponsors follow) and the Pastor's hands are placed on his / her head as he prays for the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- The child is anointed with oil and the sign of the cross is marked on his/her head.

CANDLE PRESENTATION AND WELCOME

- A candle is presented to the baptized child and he/she is welcomed
- During the hymn, the pastor will take the child around the congregation.

Baptism in Daily Life and Ongoing Celebrations

Read through the Living the Promises of Baptism book.

1. Think about how you might plan your child's 1st baptismal anniversary. What are some of your ideas?

2. How do you live out your own baptism daily?

3. What might celebrating the Christian faith in your home look like?

(A great resource for a practice called "Faith 5" is Rich Melheim's book, *Holding Your Family Together.*)