

Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
Baptism

Catechist Preparation

Clarifying the Essentials

For those to whom the Good News of Jesus Christ has been proclaimed and who, therefore, have the possibility of requesting it, the Sacrament of Baptism is necessary for Salvation.

- Jesus himself (see John 3:5) describes the necessity for Baptism (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1257).
- Christ died for all, and in Christ all people are called to one, divine, and eternal destiny (see CCC 1260).
- The Church entrusts children who have died before receiving Baptism to the mercy of God and the tenderness of Jesus (see Mark 10:14), who delights in them (see CCC 1261).

Jesus freely submitted himself to be baptized.

- Jesus begins his public life (see Matthew 3:13) by going to John the Baptist to be baptized at the Jordan River (see CCC 1223).
- Jesus' baptism is a ritual foreshadowing of our own. Before he accomplished his saving work upon the Cross, Christ spoke metaphorically (see Matthew 10:38) of his impending suffering as a "baptism" he had to undergo (see CCC 1225).

Why Is This Important?

Jesus' baptism signifies that all people are called to turn to God and his grace. Everyone needs to die to the old self and put away sinful attitudes and actions. Everyone needs to be redirected toward the light of Heaven and the authentic life, which can only be found in God.

*See where you are baptized, see
where Baptism comes from, if not from
the cross of Christ, from his death.*

SAINT AMBROSE

Doctrinal Session Guide

(Approximately 60 minutes)

Arrange the space with chairs, and provide a focal point with a bowl of water, the Oil of Catechumens, sacred Chrism, a baptismal candle, and a white garment. Provide name tags and have some refreshments available.

Welcome

Greet the participants as they arrive, and take time for introductions. If you meet at the parish, gather around the baptismal font. Pray the Sign of the Cross to begin.

Engage

1. Ask the group to recall an experience of attending a Baptism, regardless of the particular faith tradition that was involved. Invite the participants to reflect on their experiences with others.
2. Invite the participants to read the story in *Insight*. Encourage them to share their response to the story, and explore the *For Reflection* questions together.

Teach

Summarize or invite the group to read *Church Teaching*. Then discuss the following:

- Baptism is the first sacrament a person receives. It is the gateway to all other sacraments.
- Baptism takes away all sin, Original Sin and personal sins. Through Baptism a person is "reborn" anew in Christ Jesus.
- Baptism brings us into the family of God, the Church, and makes us God's adopted children, heirs of Heaven, and brothers and sisters in Christ.
- There is one Baptism. The Catholic Church does not baptize a person who has already been baptized.

Apply

Invite those in the group who are baptized to find their baptismal certificate and, if possible, to visit the church where they were baptized. They might also wish to contact their godparents.

Pray

Proclaim Romans 6:3-4, found on the participant page.