

LIFE 2.0: Holy Baptism



To choose to be baptized is to choose to enter deeply into a life in Christ...The Christian life is about more than a set of values. It is about believing that Christ conquered sin and death. It is about the assurance that comes with having a savior who has suffered the worst the world has to offer, has overcome death, and has risen to respond in love. The Christian life is about more than getting into heaven. It is about choosing to love others each day because God first loved us, and because all people are God's beloved.

(Preparing for Baptism in the Episcopal Church by Anne Kitch, p. 7)

Our Baptismal Vows, found on p. 304-305 of the Book of Common Prayer, are excellent guidelines for any baptismal discussion and reflection.



Key of Faith #1: Caring Conversations

One of the first steps to effective faith formation in the home is a simple willingness to talk about it! As we think about our own baptisms and our lives as Christians, the first baptismal vow gives us some direction:

Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers? I will, with God's help.

Fellowship, or spending time with each other, is an important part of Christian life that is modeled to us by Jesus and the apostles. As you spend time in fellowship with your family, in the breaking of bread (meals) and in prayer and reflection, you are living out, and helping your family live out, your baptismal vows. Here are some ideas:

- Actively participate in the life of St. Peter's. Attend activities, participate in ministries, and be regular in worship.
- Read Bible stories, and learn together about the lives of saints.
- Share family meals on a regular basis, and enjoy special celebrations for Christian holy days.
- Say grace before meals and offer bedtime prayers.



Key of Faith # 2: Rituals & Traditions

Family rituals and traditions speak to what the family values and believes. Some rituals are daily, and some are infrequent. Some are part of the church calendar, and some are in our home lives. All of the events we celebrate are from God!

Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ? I will with God's help.

The Christian life is good news and we share this news by what we do and what we say. The good news is that Jesus loves us, and through baptism we become beloved children of God. Here are some suggestions:

- Celebrate your family members' baptismal anniversaries. Light the candle and have a special meal or dessert. Tell stories about the baptisms. Since many of us don't remember our baptismal days, we rely on others to tell us about it!
- Do not be shy about being a Christian. Invite others to your parish for worship, a class, or a social event. Share your love, joy, and hope in the goodness of God's creation with others.
- Tell children that Jesus loves them. Act like you know Jesus loves you too!



Key of Faith #3: Worship & Devotions

Each Sunday, the celebration of Eucharist is a renewal of baptism. When we worship God, and are intentional in our lives as Christians, we are living out our baptismal vows.

Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord? I will, with God's help.

The words to note here are "persevere" and "whenever." Baptism does not prevent anyone from sinning. Rather, it offers us the loving response: repent and return.

Here are some suggestions:

- Learn to recognize temptations and actively resist hurtful and harmful behavior. Teach these skills to your children.
- Be willing to admit shortcomings, faults, and sinfulness. Expect opportunities for reconciliation and act on them.
- Be able to forgive when someone apologizes to you, and be able to accept forgiveness when it is offered to you.
- Teach children to accept responsibility for their actions and to apologize when they have hurt someone. Help them to understand what it means to say, "I am sorry," and to be sorry. Be willing to apologize and make amends to children when you have done the hurting. Be willing to apologize and make amends to the adults in your home when you have done the hurting.

For further devotions, here are some Bible verses that pertain to baptism:

- Isaiah 55:1-11
- Ezekiel 36:24-28
- Psalm 15
- Psalm 23
- Psalm 42:1-9
- Psalm 84
- Mark 1:9-11
- Mark 10:13-16
- John 3:1-6
- Romans 6:3-5
- Romans 8:14-17
- 2 Corinthians 5:17-20



Key of Faith #4: Serving Others

Serving others is a significant component to our lives as Christians. A baptized life is not about our close friends and us. It is about seeking out those who need love, and then offering our gifts to them. It is about expecting to find Christ in others: in people who we don't know, in people we don't like very much, in people who are quite different from us, in all people

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself? I will with God's help.

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being? I will with God's help.

No one is beyond the love of God. All people, regardless of their status or behavior, deserve to be treated with dignity. Here are some suggestions:

- Notice people you would normally overlook and expect to find Christ in them.
- Look for opportunities to use your gifts to serve others. Be open to receiving the gifts of others.
- Practice loving your neighbor down the street or across the world by loving the people you share a home with. Look for the image of Christ in those who live closest to you. Think of preparing a meal or assisting with homework as acts of loving service.
- Be aware of instances of injustice around you. Advocate for those with little power. Work against racism, poverty, and other social injustice.
- Recognize what privilege you hold and be willing to share it. Speak with courtesy to everyone.
- What would it look like to respect the dignity of every member of the household? Especially the youngest? Give all people in your household a voice and the opportunity to make important choices and contributions, regardless of age and ability. Teach children to settle disputes with love and fairness.

*Material from Preparing for Baptism in the Episcopal Church by Anne Kitch, p. 30-31, 42-47.
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