

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Through Baptism we are incorporated into the universal church. Ecumenical representatives may be invited to share in presiding in this liturgy wherever the role of a minister is indicated.

If the Easter Vigil is part of the liturgical practice of the congregation, the paschal candle is lighted and placed by the font at the beginning of the Service for the Lord's Day.

Following the sermon, an appropriate hymn is sung as the candidates, sponsors, and parents assemble at the baptismal font or pool. An elder or another representative of the congregation may carry a large pitcher of water to the place of baptism.

PRESENTATION

The minister addresses all present:

Hear the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: Matt. 28:18–20

All authority in heaven and on earth
has been given to me.

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,
teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.
And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

A member of the congregation or ecumenical representative may speak these or similar words (BCW 403–404; BCW—P 8–9; see also Ezek. 36:25–27; John 3:3, 5; and Titus 3:4–7) from the midst of the people.

A There is one body and one Spirit, Eph. 4:4–6
just as you were called
to the one hope of your calling,
one Lord, one faith, one Baptism,
one God and Father of all,
who is above all and through all and in all.

B As many of you as were baptized into Christ Gal. 3:27–28
have clothed yourselves with Christ.
There is no longer Jew or Greek;
there is no longer slave or free;
there is no longer male or female;
for all of us are one in Christ Jesus.

An elder presents each candidate for Baptism, using the appropriate forms.

For adults and older children:

A On behalf of the session,
I present N. and N.
to receive the Sacrament of Baptism.

For infants and younger children:

B On behalf of the session,
I present N., [son/daughter] of N. and N.
to receive the Sacrament of Baptism.

The minister addresses candidates for Baptism who are adults and older children:

A Putting your whole trust
in the grace and love of Jesus Christ,
N. and N., do you desire to be baptized?
I do.

The minister addresses parents presenting children for Baptism:

B Do you desire that N. and N. be baptized?
I do.
Relying on God's grace
do you promise to nurture N. and N.
in the life and faith of the Christian community?
I do.

The minister addresses sponsors (if any are present) for each candidate:

Will you, by your prayers and witness,
help N. and N. to grow into the full stature of Christ?
I will.

The minister addresses the congregation:

Do you, as members of the church of Jesus Christ,
promise to guide and nurture N. and N.
by word and deed,
with love and prayer?
We do.

Will you encourage *them* to know, trust, and follow Christ, and to be faithful *members* of his church?

We will.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

Through the Sacrament of Baptism we enter the covenant God has established in Jesus Christ.

Within this covenant God gives us new life, guards us from evil, and nurtures us in love.

Through this covenant, we choose whom we will serve by turning from evil and turning to Jesus Christ.

The minister asks the following questions of the candidates for Baptism and/or the parents or guardians of children being presented for Baptism.

Trusting in the gracious mercy of God,
do you turn from the ways of sin
and renounce evil and its power in the world?

I renounce them. *or* **I do.**

Who is your Lord and Savior?

Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior.

Will you be Christ's faithful disciple,
obeying his word and showing his love?

I will, with God's help.

The minister asks the following question to those being baptized on public profession of faith.

Will you devote yourself
to the church's teaching and fellowship,
to the breaking of bread and the prayers?

I will, with God's help.

The people may stand.

Acts 2:42

*All profess their faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed (see also p. 35).
The question-and-answer form ("Do you believe in God?") may also be used.*

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

THANKSGIVING OVER THE WATER

Water is poured visibly and audibly into the font.

*The minister leads the people in the Thanksgiving Over the Water
(BCW 410-412, 422-425; BCW—P 16-18, 28-32).*

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Thanks and praise is given for:

*God's covenant faithfulness;
the cleansing and rebirth in the flood in the time of Noah;
the exodus through the waters of the sea;
Jesus' baptism in the Jordan;
the baptism of Jesus' death and resurrection.*

The power of the Holy Spirit is called upon:

*to attend and empower the baptism;
to make the water a place of redemption and rebirth;
to equip the church for faithfulness.*

The prayer concludes with praise to the triune God.

To you be all praise, honor, and glory;
through Jesus Christ our Savior,
who, with you and the Holy Spirit,
lives and reigns forever. **Amen.**

BAPTISM

The people may be seated. Candidates (other than infants) may kneel; if candidates are to be immersed, they may walk down into the water.

Calling each candidate by his or her Christian (first or first and middle) name, the minister shall pour water visibly and generously on the candidate's head or immerse the candidate in water, while saying:

N., I baptize you
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The minister lays hands on the head of each person baptized, while saying:

O Lord, uphold N. by your Holy Spirit. Isa. 11:2
Give *him/her* the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord,
and the spirit of joy in your presence,
both now and forever. **Amen.**

The minister may mark the sign of the cross with oil on the forehead of each of the newly baptized while saying:

N., child of the covenant,
you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism
and marked as Christ's own forever. **Amen.**

The minister addresses all who have been baptized:

God who began a good work in you
will bring it to completion
by the day of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Candidates who have been kneeling will stand.

WELCOME

An elder or ecumenical representative may say:

N. and N. *have* been received
into the one holy catholic and apostolic church
through Baptism.

By the power of the Holy Spirit,
they have become members of the household of God,
to share with us in the priesthood of Christ.

Welcome to the family of God,
and to Christ's ministry with us!
Amen. Alleluia!

A baptismal candle may be lighted from the paschal candle and given to each of those baptized by a sponsor or an elder.

Live as a child of the light Matt. 5:16; Eph.
and let your light shine before others. **Amen.**

The minister says:

The peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

An Ascription of Praise (nos. 551–609) may be sung.

Those who have been baptized are welcomed in a manner appropriate to the congregation. The people may exchange signs of Christ's peace, greeting those who have been baptized.

The service continues with the Prayers of the People, which include petitions for the newly baptized and for those who will nurture them in faith (BCW 416–418; BCW—P 22–23).

It is appropriate for the newly baptized to receive communion first.