

[COVER]

After Your Baby's Baptism

Raising Your Child in the Catholic Christian Faith

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[ST. PIUS V BAPTISM LOGO]

[PAGE 1]

The Family is the Domestic Church

Congratulations on having your child baptized in the Catholic Church. In baptism, you have given your child the gift of faith. But your child's baptism is just the beginning of that gift. In the years to come, as your child grows in the Catholic Christian faith ***primarily by watching what you do and listening to what you say***, you will continue to give that gift of faith that began with your child's baptism. Indeed, even before your child grows beyond

infancy and begins to be aware of the world around him or her, you as a parent are continuing to give your child the gift of faith by living the faith yourself day by day.

The family has been called "the domestic church" because parents, "by their word and example," are "the first preachers of the faith to their children" and it is in the family that children grow in the faith (Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church) 11). Parents "have the first responsibility for the education of their children," and "in particular they have the mission of educating their children in the Christian faith." Parents educate their children in the faith "mainly by example, prayer, family catechesis and participation in the life of the Church" (*Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* 460-461).

There are many ways that you can raise your child in the Catholic Christian faith. This brochure discusses some of the essentials, including –

- (1) taking your child to Mass every Sunday,
- (2) praying daily prayers and devotions with your child
- (3) teaching our basic beliefs and practices to your child, and
- (4) living a good life yourself, so that your child sees you living the Gospel of Jesus Christ in every aspect of your life.

Take Your Child to Sunday Mass

Taking an infant or small child to Mass on Sunday can be difficult, and rarely do parents with small children experience the Eucharist in the same way as before they had children. Parents of small children often have to give significant time and attention during Mass to keeping their children occupied in a reasonably quiet manner that allows the surrounding faithful to pray and participate in the liturgy.

Nevertheless, it is essential to your child's upbringing in the Catholic Christian faith that you bring him or her to Mass every Sunday (except when there is illness in the family or for some other just cause). While your child is very young, we suggest that you bring quiet toys for him or her to play with (for example, cloth toys and books are great for church, toy drums are not!). Even if your child is just playing quietly while you are praying and participating in the Mass, he or she is experiencing the Mass and watching how you participate in the Mass. In that way, your child is learning from the very beginning how to make Sunday Eucharist an indispensable part of his or her life.

Young children typically will get restless at some point during the Mass. We recommend that you not immediately take your child out of the church when he or she gets restless or starts to cry. Try first to calm him or her down. Stretching out the time that your child is able to stay with the assembly during Sunday Mass is

part of raising him or her in the faith. However, at the point when your child's restlessness or crying is becoming a notable distraction for others, we ask that you take him or her out of the church into the vestibule, the cry room or outside. (Note that we discourage parents automatically taking their children to the cry room from the beginning of Mass – your child needs to learn how to participate in the assembly.)

As your child gets older and is learning to read, we suggest that you show him or her how to find prayers and songs in the missalette and hymnal so that he or she starts to learn how to respond to the prayers and to participate in the singing. Your child should be moving at this point from playing with toys during Mass to participating as a member of the assembly.

Pray with Your Child

At home, you should be praying with your child on a daily basis (for example, before meals and at bedtime) so that he or she learns to make prayer a part of his or her daily life. Although you can pray with your child even before he or she is able to talk and participate in the prayer, praying with your child becomes even more important when he or she learns to talk. In particular, we recommend that parents teach their children in their younger years the Sign of the Cross, the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Glory Be and the Prayer Before Meals (printed on the back of this pamphlet). In addition to these and other rote prayers, you should also teach your child to pray spontaneously – in other words, to pray just by

having a conversation with God (for example, thanking God for the good things that are happening, asking God's help with the things that aren't going so well, etc.).

Teach Your Child the Faith

In addition to praying with your child, over time you will want to teach your child the basics of our Catholic Christian faith (for example, who Jesus is, that he loves us, that he wants us to love and care for one another, etc.). There are many ways that you can teach your young child the faith, including, for example:

Read to your child from a children's Bible or a book of Bible stories. There are many children's Bibles available in bookstores and on the internet. One very good one is [NEED CITES TO GOOD CHILDREN'S BIBLES IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH]

Have crucifixes and other religious pictures and statues (of Jesus, Mary, etc.) displayed in your home, and talk about them with your child.

During Advent, have an Advent wreath in your home and have simple family prayer services around it (for example, when you light a new candle each week). During the Christmas season, have a creche or nativity scene in your home and talk to your child

about it. Tell your child about how some other parts of our Christmas celebration are also religious (for example, that Santa Claus is St. Nicolas).

During Lent, have a rice bowl for collecting money for the poor on your table, and at each meal at which you fast or abstain from meat, say a special family prayer for those who are poor or hungry.

At Easter, when you celebrate with Easter baskets from the Easter Bunny and in other ways, talk to your child about how Easter is first and foremost about remembering and celebrating that Jesus rose and now lives forever.

If you would like to do further study about the Catholic Christian faith so that you are better able to teach the faith to your child, there are a number of good resources available. You might find one or another of the following useful [NEED TO IDENTIFY SOME GOOD SPANISH TEXTS]:

Essentials of the Faith by Alfred McBride, O.Praem. (updated 2002)

Catholicism for Dummies by Rev. John Trigilio, Jr. and Rev. Kenneth Brighenti (2003)

Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2006)

(These and other resources can be found in some bookstores and on the internet.) Most importantly, though, attending Mass every Sunday and listening attentively to the readings and homily will help you to grow in the faith and in your ability to communicate the faith to your child.

As your child gets older, we recommend that you enroll him or her in some type of formal religious education here at St. Pius V (to supplement the religious training you are giving him or her at home). Children may be enrolled in St. Pius V School (K-8) when they will turn five years old by December 2 of the year in which they begin kindergarten. Children may be enrolled in our English religious education program when they are three years old and our Spanish program in the first grade. Preparation for First Communion is a two-year process, typically beginning in the fall of the first-grade year and continuing through the springtime of the second-grade year when the child receives First Communion. Your child's Christian initiation will be completed when he or she receives the Sacrament of Confirmation. The age of Confirmation in our diocese is currently the second year of high school. Preparation for Confirmation is a two-year process typically in a teen's first and second years of high school.

Live the Faith

Your child will learn the Catholic Christian faith most effectively by watching you and learning from you how to live the faith. You are reminded in the Rite of Baptism that as parents, you

are "the first teachers" of your child "in the ways of faith," and that you will be "the best of teachers" if you bear "witness to the faith by what" you "say and do, in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rite of Baptism for Children 70). Your child will learn the faith most effectively not by what you tell your child but what he or she *sees in you* and especially what he or she *does with you*.

This would be a good time to look at your life and consider whether there are ways that you could be doing better to live the faith. In addition to Sunday Mass and the other sacraments, how is your prayer life? Do you treat others with love and care? If you are living as husband and wife, are you married in the Catholic Church? Yes, you want to live a good, faithful life because God is watching. But maybe even more importantly, *your child is watching!*

Your Child Will Come to Know God Through You

Your child will come to know the love of God through the way that *you* love him or her. Let your child's first memory be of parents who are spiritually rooted in their Catholic Christian faith and living their faith day by day. Let your family life be thoroughly immersed in our Catholic Christian spirituality and practices. In this way, your child will come to know God's presence in his or her life and the joy of Christian life.

Sign of the Cross

Touching your forehead with the fingertips of your right hand –

In the name of the Father

Touching your abdomen –

and of the Son

Touching your left shoulder and then your right –

and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done

on earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us,

and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

Hail Mary

Hail, Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.

Blessed art thou among women

and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,

now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father
and to the Son

and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning

is now, and ever shall be

world without end. Amen.

Prayer Before Meals

Bless us O Lord

and these thy gifts

which we are about to receive

from thy bounty

through Christ our Lord.

Amen.