

Discussion Questions

Lesson One: Why Have Your Child Baptized?

MY Community

We choose a community of faith and a body of saints in which to bring our children into loving relationship with God. Describe your ideal faith community.

All God's People?

If all people are God's people, regardless of whether we are baptized or not, why is baptism such a big part of the Christian Church?

Serious Business

Kitch suggests that baptizing our children is an "act of faith," lived out with much deliberateness.

Discuss. Lesson Two: The Promises We'll Make

Our Adult Faith

What do you understand by the term "lived faith"? Is this strictly personal, or are there standards that should be met to achieve this?

Teaching Our Children To Live Their Faith

How do we teach our children to lovingly live their faith values in the world, even in the face of contradictory values?

Godparenting

Why do you think that god-parenting was conceived to play such an important place in a child's faith development? Do you think it is meeting its intended expectations?

Lesson Three: Practical Considerations

Are We Celebrating?

A baptism is a celebration. Why?

Review The Baptismal Service

Prayerfully review or acquaint yourself with the Baptismal service in the Book of Common Prayer. What stands out with you on this review or first reading?

Your Prayer

If you were to create a prayer for parents in preparation for baptism, what would it say?

Lesson Four: Bringing Baptism Home

Fellowship And Breaking Bread

Why do you think that fellowship and breaking bread is such an important part of faith development that it's included in the Baptismal Covenant?

Proclaiming The Good News How do we teach our children to proclaim by word and example the Good News in Christ?

Are You Really Sorry?

How do we teach our children true contrition?

Lesson Five: Remembering Your Child's Baptism

Teaching Grace And Love

How do we live the example to our children that grace is God's gift given to us and that we are always God's beloved?

Your Baptism Party

If you were to plan a baptism party, how would it look, what would the focus be, and what could you use to evoke meaning?

Meaning In The Ritual

How do rituals bring stability and connection to a household when rituals are often charged with being mindless, rote activities?

The Takeaway

Why Have Your Child Baptized? It is an act of faith. It has to do with your faithfulness, your own relationship with God. Baptism commits you to parenting in a particular way, to raising your child in the faith continually. Some think of baptism as some sort of protection or an insurance plan. Choosing to be baptized is not a choice made out of fear but of love. It's not for the dead but for the living, for life. Most baptisms are on Sunday mornings in the midst of the community because the community has a role in your and your child's life. This communion of saints is trusted to bring your child into a beloved relationship with God. **The Promises We'll Make** In the case of an infant or young child, baptism is a choice made on behalf of the child by parents and godparents. These are big promises but they are not made alone. The two really big promises are 1) that the adults will be responsible for bringing the child up in the Christian faith and life; the adults are agreeing to be responsible for teaching about faith and providing experiences of faith. This can be overwhelming, but if you're involved in the community they will support you; also, don't doubt your own ability to share what matters to you with your child. And 2) that by your prayers and witness to help the child grow into the full stature of Christ. This means your own faith life is important as well. You model to children; they learn from what is around them. How you practice and commit to your faith makes a huge impact on your child. What does the "full stature of Christ" look like? Your job is not to make that happen but to help along the way. This is why it's important that you as parent or godparent nurture your own faith.

Practical Considerations This is a celebration; the church community is delighted, as is God. So relax, and remember that you are welcome. There are also a few tricks to help things go well. 1) Arrive early so you won't be rushed or stressed; give yourself time to settle in and calm yourself and your child. You'll then be more prepared and attentive. 2) Keep yourself calm; breathe; say a prayer for yourself and for the event. 3) What to wear? Something festive. White is the traditional color (for new birth), but choose what works best for you. 4) Comfort your child as needed; you are the parent and can do what you need to do. Don't feel trapped; we parent all the time. 5) Talk to the priest ahead of time so you know what to expect.

Bringing Baptism Home The Baptismal Covenant is a guide to going about Christian life. How can that guide be used in your parenting and in your life? Reading Bible stories, praying together, family meals – all these can live out the first promise to "continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in the prayers." Second, to keep the promise to "persevere in resisting evil" and "repent," teach "I'm sorry" and what it means to be sorry and how to express contrition and to make things right. Be willing to apologize to children. Third, "proclaiming by word and example the Good News of God in Christ" means showing children that grace is free, that Jesus loves them – and telling yourself that as well. Fourth, to "seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself" – practice loving and choosing loving actions in the home; talk to your children about that – a neighbor is anyone from a sibling to someone across the world. Striving for "justice and peace" and human dignity – think about what peace and justice look like in the home, and how to respect those in your household. Slow down, respect your children as complete human beings. And remember, we are never without God's help as we strive to fulfill all of these promises.

Remembering Your Child's Baptism There are many active ways to remember something, to "put it back together." It is one of the ways you deepen the faith of your household. Why not have a baptismal anniversary party? Many churches give a child a candle; you can light this at the anniversary and re-tell the story of the child's baptism. Have water games. You can also remember by engaging in family rituals; these can bring stability and connection. Practice the rituals of the Christian year. Keep godparents involved. Write letters or send gifts that encourage faith formation. Remember your own baptism; your life always affects the life of your child. Tell your story to your children. Tell them why your faith is important to you. It's not a moment in church; it's a lifetime.

Share Your Learning

We believe the Holy Spirit joined you in this class and would not be surprised if you learned a couple of things that inspired you and may inspire others.

So here's the assignment: Simply write down something that touched you in a sentence or two. Here are some examples: Clare from Texas took the course "Introducing Christian Stewardship with Kristine Miller" and writes, "*God doesn't want our money, God just wants us to want it less.*" Robert from North Carolina took "Introducing the Book of Common Prayer with Roger Ferlo" and writes, "*I learned that 70% of the Book of Common Prayer is directly quoted or paraphrased from the Bible, no wonder I like it so much!*"

If you want to add an image, that works too. Now simply post it to your Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr, or Google+ account with the hashtag: #churchnext

Not only will you inspire your friends, but your post will show up on the **churchnext.tv** home page for the whole community to see. Thanks for sharing your learning!

Notes

Preparing for Infant and Children's Baptism in the Episcopal Church

with

Anne Kitch

Participant's Guide

Welcome!

Baptism may be the best gift a parent can give a child.

This sacrament of initiation is the first step in a deeper understanding of God and the message of love found in the Bible. For those preparing to have an infant or child baptized in the Episcopal tradition, Anne Kitch gives us a solid background and framework for getting our minds around baptism.

In this course Anne's lectures include:

- Why Baptize Your Child?
- The Promises We'll Make
- Practical Considerations
- Bringing Baptismal Faith Home: The Baptismal Covenant
- Remembering Your Child's Baptism
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This course will take an average learner around 50 minutes to complete. It is a beginners course but may also be of interest to people who are sage in the Christian faith

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