

Christian Initiation of Infants

(Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist)

A Model Liturgy

J. Frank Henderson

Frank Henderson's Page on Liturgy and Medieval Women
www.jfrankhenderson.com

© 1998 J. Frank Henderson

Contents

Introduction

Pastoral Notes

Outline of the Rite

Reception of the Infants, Parents and Godparents

Liturgy of the Word

Liturgy of Baptism and Confirmation

Procession and Litany of the Saints

Profession of Faith

Thanksgiving over Water

Baptism

Clothing with a Baptismal Garment

Confirmation

Intercessions

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Presentation of a Lighted Candle

Concluding Rites

Introduction

The Roman Catholic rite of baptism for children was published in 1969; a second, slightly revised edition appeared in 1973.

In late 1998 I prepared a critique of this rite, “Rite of Baptism for Children: Critique and Prospects;” it is to appear in *liturgical ministry*, published by The Liturgical Press (St John’s Abbey, Collegeville, MN 56321).

The model liturgy presented here is a response to this critique and an attempt to implement suggestions for improvement made in that article. It is taken for granted that other liturgies could also arise out of this critique and suggestions.

Christian Initiation of Infants

The term “infants” in the title indicates that this liturgy is intended for infants or young children, “those who have not yet reached the age of discernment and therefore cannot profess personal faith” (Rite of Baptism for Children, n. 1).

The term “infants” will also be used to distinguish this liturgy from the “rite of Christian initiation of children” which is part of the rite of Christian initiation of adults; more precisely, the title of this rite is “Christian initiation of children of catechetical age.”

Nevertheless, the word “child” has been retained in direct address because it seems more natural.

The phrase “Christian Initiation” indicates that this liturgy includes baptism, confirmation and eucharist.

It is to be celebrated on Sunday or on special occasions, e.g., the Vigils of Easter or of Pentecost. This model liturgy is written for use with several infants.

The term “baptism” has several levels of meaning. It can refer to the immersion in or pouring of water on the infant together with the trinitarian formula. It can also refer to the complex of liturgical actions that accompany the water rite. It can also refer to Christian initiation as a whole. Although the language would be smoother if it were used to refer to Christian initiation as a whole, here present common usage is followed and it is used in the first two senses only.

Celebration in Stages

As with the rite of Christian initiation of adults and Christian initiation of children of catechetical age, Christian initiation of infants might also be celebrated in stages. That is, parts of the liturgy might come before and after the actual celebration of baptism, confirmation and eucharist.

Possible stages include the Reception or Presentation of the infants, which obviously would come prior to the celebration of the sacraments of Christian initiation.

Other stages might be celebrated in the months and years following Christian initiation. Based on elements of the present rite of baptism for children, these might include the following.

Anointing and prayer for protection against violence

Anointing for initiation into Christ's ministries

Washing of feet

Touching of ears and mouths

Prayer for wisdom, strength, courage and grace.

Model liturgies for such stages are being developed and will be published in due course.

Participation and Ministry

Assembly: The assembly - the local church community gathered for worship - has an active part in the rite of Christian initiation. In some places this requires that everyone have short texts in their hands; however, the people do not need the text of the entire rite.

Members of the Community: Individual members of the community may take leadership roles at a number of places in the rite of Christian initiation. Thus from one to four members of the community may lead dialogues in the reception of the infants, parents and godparents. One may present the Holy Scriptures, and another may lead part of the profession of faith. One or two members of the community may lead the rites of clothing with a baptismal garment and presentation of a lighted candle.

These persons show the face of the church in a particular way and should represent its diversity as well as its unity. Thus elders and youth, married and single persons, persons with disabilities, etc., may participate, as seems appropriate. Naturally, they will know their roles well and carry these out effectively and prayerfully.

Special Ministers of Hospitality: One or several people act as special ministers of hospitality to the infants, parents and godparents. They help make the families and godparents feel welcome and at ease. They also act as ritual facilitators for the families and godparents and help them celebrate the rite well. This includes prompting them with respect to movement and posture, providing written texts when needed (and holding them if necessary), seeing that microphones are used properly when this is appropriate, etc. These may be one or more families who have recently celebrated the Christian initiation of one of their children, or individuals or families who feel comfortable taking a public role in the liturgy. They are never dominating or obtrusive, but show warmth and care; they too embody the church.

Parents: Parents obviously have a central role in the rite of Christian initiation, including meaningful participation in a number of dialogues. They will speak to the entire assembly, and use a microphone if needed. They will be involved in the choice of the alternatives and options provided in the rite.

Godparents: Godparents participate in several parts of the liturgy and help the parents throughout the rite. This may include holding and caring for the infants to be initiated.

Siblings: Sisters and brothers may be important members of the families celebrating Christian initiation, and they are recognized in several places. They may help in filling the font.

Other children may also help in filling the font, participating in processions, and singing. They should be able to see what is happening.

Infants celebrating Christian initiation: These are participants and celebrants of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and eucharist, together with other members of the assembly. It is therefore desirable that they remain with the assembly and with their parents and godparents throughout the liturgy.

However, parents, godparents or others should feel free to take the infants out if necessary, e.g., to

change diapers, nurse them, or if the infants are disturbingly noisy or restless. Those caring for the infants should feel free to stand or sit at any time, if this seems best. Godparents and other should recognize that the needs of the infant will preoccupy the parents and should seek to minimize this.

The infants should be dressed only in diapers and kept warm in blankets. This facilitates undressing them for baptism by immersion. It also gives authenticity to the rite of clothing in a baptismal garment, which should be put on only at the proper time.

Presider: The presiding minister will understand the liturgy, make intelligent use of the options provided (in collaboration with the parents), and be sensitive to the needs of the families. Presiders will be generous in their use of water and chrism.

Other liturgical ministers: Readers, cantor and other musicians, communion ministers, servers, regular ministers of hospitality, ministers of the environment and others will carry out their roles as usual.

Music

Christian initiation of infants is meant to be a musical liturgy. Singing is indicated at the beginning and end of the liturgy, and is assumed in the usual places during the liturgy of the word and liturgy of the eucharist. Sung acclamations, antiphons, responses or songs are indicated in several places, and the litany of the saints is intended to be sung. Singing immediately before and after the baptism in water helps to give prominence and solemnity to this part of the liturgy.

Some examples are provided using *Catholic Book of Worship III*.

Baptism

Baptism by immersion is the preferred mode of baptism. Hopefully, parents will know from prior participation in other liturgies of Christian initiation what this looks like and its significance, and will have come to value it. Parents who have not had such experience will need catechesis on this point. Children generally love to bathe, and the water will be warm.

If parents object to immersion, water will be poured generously over the child.

In the rare case that diapers are dirty, water again is poured generously.

Confirmation

Liturgical texts for the sacrament of confirmation are modified from the present Roman Catholic rite of confirmation. They now include references to Christ as well as the Holy Spirit, and also mention the church. The sacramental formula is the official text.

I understand the laying on of hands of this rite as the stretching out of hands over the candidates.

Infants should be anointed generously with chrism.

Eucharist

Parents and godparents will hold the infants throughout the liturgy of the eucharist.

After the parents have received the Body and Blood of Christ, the presider or a minister of communion will give communion to each infant in an appropriate way, for example with consecrated wine on the tip of his or her finger.

Adaptations

Presiding ministers, parents, special ministers of hospitality and members of the community who have leadership roles will make adaptations as seem appropriate. For example, wording will be adapted in the case of single parents.

Outline

RECEPTION OF THE INFANTS, PARENTS AND GODPARENTS

- Greeting
- Opening Dialogues
 - Dialogue with Parents
 - Dialogue with Siblings
 - Dialogue with Godparents
 - Dialogue with the Assembly
- Welcome and Signing with the Cross
- Opening Prayer
- Invitation to the Celebration of the Word of God

LITURGY OF THE WORD

- Presentation of Holy Scriptures
- Readings
- Homily

LITURGY OF BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION

- Procession and Litany of the Saints
- Profession of Faith
- Thanksgiving over Water
- Baptism
- Clothing with a Baptismal Garment
- Confirmation
- Intercessions

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

- Preparation of the Altar and Gifts
- Eucharistic Prayer
- Lord's Prayer
- Sign of Peace
- Communion

CONCLUDING RITES

- Presentation of a Lighted Candle
- Blessing
- Dismissal

Reception of the Infants, Parents and Godparents

The infants, parents and godparents gather at a convenient place in or near the narthex.

Other significant family members (e.g., siblings, grandparents) and persons who have played important roles in bringing the infants and families to the celebration of the sacraments of initiation (e.g., midwives, nurses, doctors, close friends, catechists) may accompany the infants, parents and godparents.

The special ministers of hospitality accompany this group.

The presiding minister and other liturgical ministers, as well as members of the community who may have special roles in the reception, gather in an appropriate place.

- A The infants, parents, godparents and special ministers of hospitality join the presiding minister and other ministers at the door of the church or entrance of the nave.

The reception is celebrated as set out below.

At the end of the reception (after the invitation to the celebration of the word of God), the infants, parents, godparents and ministers process to the front and take their places for the liturgy of the word. An appropriate song is sung.

The penitential rite and Glory to God are omitted.

- B The infants, parents, godparents and special ministers of hospitality join the presider and other ministers at the entrance of the nave and together enter in a single procession as the opening song is sung.

The procession is led by cross-bearer, servers with candles, and presiding minister, followed by the godparents, infants, and the parents.

At the front of the church all bow and then take their places for the reception. Parents, godparents and siblings, with the infants, face the people.

The reception is celebrated as set out below.

At the end of the reception (after the invitation to the celebration of the word of God), the infants, parents, godparents and ministers take their seats for the liturgy of the word.

The penitential rite and Glory to God are omitted.

C The infants, parents, godparents and special ministers of hospitality enter the nave informally and go to seats at the front.

The opening song is sung and the presider and other ministers enter in procession in the usual way.

The reception is celebrated as set out below.

Parents and godparents, with the infants, face the people.

At the end of the reception (after the invitation to the celebration of the word of God), the parents, godparents, infants and ministers take their seats for the liturgy of the word.

The penitential rite and Glory to God are omitted.

Greeting

A special minister of hospitality announces the celebration of the sacraments of Christian initiation to the assembly, in these or similar words:

People of God,
we rejoice that these parents
bring their infants to celebrate baptism, confirmation and eucharist.

The parents and godparents of each infant are named:

The parents are [names]..., with godparents [names]

If appropriate, the minister may continue, in these or similar words:

Siblings and other family members, and other persons who have traveled with these families on their journey, are here as well, including:
[e.g., grandparents, friends, midwives, nurses, doctors]

These persons are not introduced by name.

The minister speaks to the parents, godparents, infants and those who accompany them:

Parents, godparents, infants and special guests:
This community shares your joy
as we all participate in the celebration
of the sacraments of Christian initiation.

Opening Dialogues

Opening dialogue A may be used when parents are willing to speak in public, and where there is ample time.

Opening dialogue B may be used when parents are reluctant to speak in public, or when time is limited.

Opening dialogue B is also used if opening dialogue A has been celebrated on another occasion.

[Dialogue with Parents]

A member of the community asks the parents of each infant:

[N. and N. / Parents], what name have you given your child?

The parents respond:

We have named him/her [our child] N.

A Member of the community:

What does this name mean to you? *Or:* Why have you chosen this name?

The parents respond briefly in their own words.

A member of the community asks the parents of each infant:

What are your hopes and dreams for your child?

The parents respond briefly in their own words.

If the parents' response includes "Baptism," Faith," "Eternal life," "Entrance into the church," "Christian initiation" or the like, the next question is not used.

If their response does not include such words, the member of the community asks the parents:

What do you ask of the church for your child?

The parents respond briefly in their own words, indicating their desire that their infant celebrate the sacraments of initiation.

B A member of the community asks the parents and godparents of each infant:

Is it your will that N. [this child] should celebrate baptism, confirmation and eucharist?

Parents and godparents:

Yes, we desire that N. be initiated into the Body of Christ.

A member of the community asks the parents:

A [N. and N., / Parents,] you have asked that your children receive the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and eucharist. Do you appreciate what you are undertaking?

B [N. and N., / Parents,] you have asked that you and your children celebrate the sacraments of Christian initiation. Do you accept the ministry of Christian parents?

Each family responds individually.

A Yes, it will be our joy and privilege to nurture N. in the faith and life of the Christian community, and by our prayers, our teaching, and the witness of our lives to bring him/her up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor.

B Yes, we look forward to the opportunity of raising him/her as a young Christian: living in fidelity to God's dream for humanity, praying in church and at home, doing justice, and caring for the world.

C Yes, we want to be good Christian parents. We will do our best to nurture N. in the faith and life of the Christian community, and by our care and love honor him/her as a beloved child of God.

D We accept the gift and ministry of Christian parenthood, and we will endeavor to affirm and nurture our child's vocation

as a sister/brother of Jesus Christ and member of Christ's body, the church.
We will do our best to be signs of God's love and grace for N.
and to be open to the love and grace that he/she brings to us.

E We promise, by the grace of God,
to nurture this child in the Christian faith
through the love we show,
through the lives we lead,
through the witness of our faith,
and through our participation with him/her in the life of the church.

All:

Thanks be to God.

[Dialogue with Siblings]

A member of the community may ask siblings (and other close family members);

[N. And N.,] As sisters and brothers [or other relationship] of these infants,
will you love and care for them
and help them grow as friends of God
and sisters and brothers of Jesus?

Siblings (all together);

We will, with God's help.

All:

Thanks be to God.

[Dialogue with Godparents]

A member of the community asks the godparents:

A [N. and N., / Godparents,]
do you appreciate your responsibilities as godparents?

B [N. and N. / Godparents],
do you accept your ministry as godparents?

Godparents (all together):

Yes, it will be our joy and privilege
to help the mothers and fathers of these children
to be good Christian parents.
We also commit ourselves to make room in our hearts
for our godchildren
and help these children know that God loves them.

All:

Thanks be to God.

[Dialogue with the Assembly]

The presiding minister addresses the people:

People of God,
do you accept your ministry
to uphold these parents
as they seek to be good Christian mothers and fathers?

All:

With God's help,
we will assist and support these parents
as they open themselves to the grace God gives them in their children
and as they nurture their children in the Christian faith.

The presiding minister again addresses the people:

People of God,
do you accept your ministry
to honor these children and guide them
in their life in Christ and in the church?

All:

With God's help,
we will affirm and love these children
by word and deed, with love and prayer,
encouraging them to know and follow Christ
and be faithful and fruitful members of the church.

Welcome and Signing with the Cross

The presiding minister addresses the infants:

[N. and N. / Dear children],
the Christian community welcomes you with great joy.

All:

We welcome you. Thanks be to God.

The presiding minister continues:

In baptism, confirmation and eucharist
you enter into communion with Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit:
God has freely chosen you to receive these special gifts of love.
Receive now the sign of the cross,
symbol of the Holy Trinity,
into whose life you are entering.

I invite your parents [and godparents and siblings] to do the same.

The presider signs each children on the forehead, in silence.

The parents [and if appropriate, the godparents and siblings] do the same.

Opening Prayer

The presiding minister says the opening prayer of the Mass
or one of the following:

A God of all love and goodness,
the fullness of human life is your delight;
in baptism, confirmation and eucharist
you call us to share your very own life.
Lead us into Christ's own death and resurrection,
bestow upon us the Holy Spirit of reconciliation,
and incorporate us into your holy church.
Bind us to each other in the Spirit
and empower us to live out Christ's ministry
of love, peace and justice.

We pray in praise of your glory,
in union with Jesus Christ who is Risen
and through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

All:

Amen.

B God who weaves the web of life,
in baptism we become one with you
in the threefold tapestry of your being.
Weave us into solidarity with Christ,
sew into us the empowerment of the Spirit,
fashion us into the new community of your church.
As you spin the design of a new heaven and earth,
shape in us your own passion for justice.

We pray in praise of your creativity,
in union with Jesus Christ who is Risen,
and through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

All:

Amen.

C God of grace and love,
you have chosen us as your own;
you adopt us as sons and daughters;
you bring us into the community of your covenant.
Deliver us from ways of living that separate us from you;
let us live lives of praise and gratitude.
As sisters and brothers of Jesus Christ,
empower us to live as he did,
preaching good news, comforting the afflicted, reconciling and healing.
Give us the grace of your Spirit:
may we be open to your love
that is revealed in children, in every human face, and in all of creation.

We pray in praise of your graciousness,
in union with Jesus Christ who is Risen,
and through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

All.

Amen.

D God of all little ones,
bless these children whom we initiate today:
take them into your caring arms
and place them in the center of your church.
May they increase in wisdom, strength and grace
and share in the ministry of Jesus, your Beloved,
who was himself baptized in water
and anointed by your Spirit.

Help us to welcome you in welcoming these children:
open our hearts to recognize in them your grace and presence.
Give us strength and humility to become like little children,
that we may live as your disciples and friends.
May we care for all of God's little ones,
that none of them be lost.

We pray in praise of your love,
in union with Jesus Christ who is Risen,
and through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

All:

Amen.

Invitation to the Celebration of the Word of God

A minister may invite the infants, parents, and godparents to take part in the liturgy of the word, using these or similar words.

- A We thank God for the word that calls, challenges, transforms, reconciles and affirms.
Listen now to God's word.
- B Let us greet God's word with joy and attention.

An antiphon or other appropriate song may be sung
as all go to their places for the liturgy of the word. For example:

Blessed be God, who chose you in Christ

[Catholic Book of Worship III, 4A]

God is love; those who live in love, live in God.

[Catholic Book of Worship III, 4C]

Liturgy of the Word

Presentation of Holy Scriptures

A catechist or another members of the community may present the parents with Bibles, New Testaments, or portions of the Holy Scriptures, using these or similar words:

- A It is your ministry as Christian parents to listen to the word of God in church and at home, and to teach your children to value the Scriptures.

- B Christian parents:
together with your children
you are called to learn and re-learn the story of our faith through worship, through study, and by the way you live.
The Christian community promises to help you in this.

Readings

The infants remain with the parents and godparents during the liturgy of the word.

The liturgy of the word is celebrated in the usual way.

The readings are taken from the Mass for Sunday
or from the lectionary texts for baptism.

Homily

The homily is based on the scripture texts that have been read and takes account of the sacraments of initiation that are to be celebrated.

After the homily, it is desirable to have a period of silence.

The creed is omitted.

[The intercessions are prayed at the end of the liturgy of baptism.]

Liturgy of Baptism and Confirmation

Brief Address

The presiding minister briefly introduces the liturgy of baptism and confirmation in these or similar words.

- A Brothers and sisters in Christ,
through the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and eucharist
we share in the death and resurrection of Christ
and are incorporated into Christ's holy church;
these sacraments proclaim the faith of the Church.
By water and the Holy Spirit God cleanses from sin, renews life,
and promises the reconciliation of all things in Christ.
In baptism, confirmation and eucharist, Christ and the Holy Spirit
bind us to each other in the community of God's covenant
and join us to Christ's ministry of love, peace and justice.
- B Sisters and brothers in Christ,
baptism, confirmation and eucharist affirm that we are God's own image and likeness.
In these sacraments we enter deeply into communion with Jesus Christ,
whose life, death and resurrection give life and liberation.
We are empowered by the Holy Spirit
who urges us toward a new heaven and earth.
We enter into a new network of life-giving relationships,
a new community of radical equality.
In the sacraments of initiation we are called to transform church and society,
empower others, honor the dignity of all,
and honor children, seeing in them God's love and grace.
Each celebration is a challenge:
a call to the church to be what it is supposed to be.

C Presider:

Brothers and sisters of Christ:
baptism, confirmation and eucharist
are gifts of God and manifestations of God's grace;
they proclaim God's great love for us.

All:

In these sacraments we are chosen by God,
we are delivered from slavery to sin and death,
we are made free to walk according to the Spirit.

Presider:

In the sacraments of initiation God gives us the grace of adoption:
we become God's sons and daughters
and inheritors with Christ of God's promised realm.

All:

In these sacraments we receive the gift of the Spirit,
we are empowered to live in hope and fidelity
we are filled with longing for the fulfillment of God's saving plan.

D Presider:

Sisters and brothers in Christ,
let us celebrate the gift of grace
given to us in the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and eucharist.

All:

There is one body and one spirit:
we have one hope in Christ.

Presider:

There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God, Creator of us all.

All:

Out of water and the Holy Spirit
we rise with new life,
forgiven, renewed and one with Christ,
members of Christ's body.

Procession and Litany of the Saints

The infants, parents, godparents and ministers, with some or all of the assembly, process to the font.

If there is no procession to the font, the infants may be taken among the people to be signed.

The litany of saints is sung during the procession.

It may also be sung even if there is no procession.

The presider may invite the assembly to join in the litany of saints, using these or similar words.

Holy people of God:

[as we process to the baptismal font / as these children process among us,]
let us celebrate the communion of saints,
of which we are members
and into which these children are being initiated.

The names of other saints may be added or may replace those suggested, especially the patrons of the children to be baptized, and of the church or locality.

This list may also be shortened.

A cantor intones the names; all sing the response, “pray for us.”

[The Family of Jesus]

Mary and Joseph
Anne and Joachim
Elizabeth and Zechariah
John the Baptist

[Prophets and Ancestors in the Faith]

Abraham, Sarah and Hagar
Moses and Miriam
Tamar and Rahab
Ruth and Naomi
Hannah and Samuel
David, Bathsheba and Solomon

Elijah and Elisha
Deborah and Huldah
Isaiah and Jeremiah
Esther and Judith

Holy ancestors and prophets

[Apostles and Followers of Christ]

Mary Magdalene and the other women at the tomb
Peter and Paul
Priscilla and Aquila
Andrew, James and John
Phoebe and Junia
Matthew, Mark, Luke and John
Euvodia and Synteche
Barnabas, Silas and Timothy

All disciples of Christ

[Martyrs]

Stephen, Ignatius and Polycarp
Perpetua and Felicity, Agnes and Lucy
Thomas Becket, John Fisher and Thomas More
Isaac Jaques and Jean de Brebeuf and companions
The Ursuline and Carmelite Sisters martyred in the French Revolution
Charles Luanga and his companions, and the martyrs of Japan, China and Indo-China

All holy martyrs for Christ

[Leaders in the church]

Leo and Gregory
Ambrose and Augustine
Catherine of Siena and Hildegard of Bingen
Cyril and Methodius
Teresa of Avila and Therese of Lisieux
Martin of Tours and Patrick of Ireland
Bridget of Ireland and Bridget of Sweden
Thecla of Iconium and Genevieve of Paris
Boniface and Lioba

All holy leaders in the church

[Priests, Religious and Laity]

Monica of Hippo and Benedict the African

Benedict and Scholastica

Clare and Francis

Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier

Rose of Lima and Julian of Norwich

Vincent de Paul and Francis de Sales

King Louis, King Henry and King Casimir

Queen Hedwig of Poland and Queen Elizabeth of Hungary

Princess Olga and Prince Vladimir of Kiev

Kateri Tekakwitha and Marguerite Bourgeoys

Marguerite d'Youville and Jane Frances Chantel

Gertrude and Great and Bernard of Clairvaux

All holy men and women, pray for us.

Profession of Faith

The presider invites the parents and godparents to profess their faith.

The Renunciations follow; alternatively, they may be omitted.

The parents and godparents profess their personal faith and the faith of the church by saying the Apostles' Creed or another text.

The rest of the people remain silent, as the parents and godparents are speaking in the name of the assembly as well as for themselves.

When the parents and godparents have concluded, the rest of the assembly affirms their profession.

For significant pastoral reasons, the rest of the assembly may give example to the parents and godparents by professing their faith before the parents and godparents do so.

The people will still sing or speak the affirmation later.

Three ways of using the Apostles' Creed are offered.

Two alternative texts are also provided.

[*Community's Profession of Faith*]

The assembly may profess its faith.

The presider may invite the profession of faith in these or similar words:

People of God,
we have committed ourselves and this community
to help these parents be good Christian mothers and fathers.
With a deep sense of responsibility, therefore,
let us witness to our own faith and the faith of the church.

The presider and people together profess their faith, using the Apostles' Creed, as printed below.

[Parents' and Godparents' Profession of Faith]

The presider speaks to the parents and godparents in these or similar words:

Dear parents and godparents:

May your faith continue to grow,
and may your families be households of faith, domestic churches.

I invite you now to renew the vows of your own baptism:

[Reject sin and] profess your faith in Christ Jesus.

This is the faith of the church.

This is the faith in which these children are about to be baptized.

Renunciations

For significant pastoral reasons, these may be omitted.

A member of the community asks the parents and godparents:

Do you renounce violence and the abuse of power?

Parents and godparents:

I renounce them.

Member of the community:

Do you renounce ways of living that fail to show God's love to your family?

Parents and godparents:

I renounce them.

A A member of the community asks the parents and godparents:

Do you believe in God?

Parents and godparents:

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

Member of the community:

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

Parents and godparents:

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.

Member of the community:

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

Parents and godparents:

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.

B For significant pastoral reasons, the parents and godparents may profess their faith without being questioned, saying:

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He 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,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father,
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

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

C For significant pastoral reasons, the Creed may be used in the form of questions:

The member of the community says the full text of the Creed in three parts,
using the following form:

Do you believe in God...?

Do you believe in Jesus Christ...?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit...?

Parents and godparents (three times):

I do believe.

D For significant pastoral reasons, an abbreviated form of the Creed may be used:

Member of the community:

Do you believe in God, creator of heaven and earth?

Parents and godparents:

I believe in God.

Member of the community:

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Word of God?

Parents and godparents:

I believe in Jesus Christ.

Member of the community:

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

Parents and godparents:

I believe in the Holy Spirit.

E For serious pastoral reasons, an adapted form of the Creed may be used.

Member of the community:

Do you believe in God?

Parents and godparents:

I believe in God, source of love.

Member of the community:

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

Parents and godparents:

I believe in Jesus Christ, love incarnate.

Member of the community:

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

Parents and godparents:

I believe in the Holy Spirit, love's power.

[Affirmation]

The presider and people affirm the parents' and godparents' profession of faith.

A The affirmation may be sung:

This is our faith,
this is the faith of the church.
We are proud to profess it,
in Christ Jesus our Savior.

[Catholic Book of Worship III 4D]

B The affirmation may be spoken:

The faith you have professed
is our faith as well;
it is the faith of church;
it is a gift of God, of Jesus Christ,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Thanksgiving over the Water

Members of the families and other may pour warm water into the font.

After this is done, the presider invites the assembly to pray:

Let us all pray that God will bless this water
and those baptized in it today.

All pray in silence for a moment.

A suitable acclamation, such as “Glory to you for ever and ever” or “Blessed be God for ever and ever,” is sung or said where indicated by R.

The presider may touch the water one or more times during the prayer.

Presider:

A We give you thanks, generous God and mother of all,
for by the gift of water you nourish and sustain all living things.

We give you thanks for the waters of creation’s birth.
Over them the Spirit brooded,
bringing forth life in all its fullness. R.

We give you thanks for the waters of the Red Sea.
Through them Moses and Miriam led the covenant people;
in them you triumphed gloriously.

We give you thanks for the waters of Mary’s womb.
In them Jesus was nurtured;
out of them he was born as your good news. R.

We give you thanks for the waters of Jesus’ baptism.
In them he was anointed as Christ by the Holy Spirit
that he might make the whole creation new
and open to us the joy and freedom of everlasting life.

We give you thanks for the waters of Jacob’s well.
From them Jesus asked a drink of the Samaritan woman;
in return he offered her the gift of living water. R.

We give you thanks for the waters of the pool of Siloam.

In them, at Jesus' urging, the man born blind found sight.

We give you thanks for the water and blood
that flowed from Christ's side as he hung upon the cross.
In them he gave birth to his sisters and brothers. R.

We give you thanks for the gift of baptism.
In this water these children will become one with Jesus Christ
and incorporated into Christ's body the church;
through this water they will be made temples of your Spirit.

Pour out your Holy Spirit,
that through these baptismal waters our children may be empowered
to preach good news to the poor,
proclaim release to the captives,
and set at liberty those who are oppressed. R.

To Christ, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory
now and for ever.

All sing or say:

Amen.

B O God, you are the fountain of life:
we bless you for these baptismal waters
in which you show us your great love.
Like morning dew upon the grass,
let your Holy Spirit come upon us
that we may be full of wonder and delight
and may witness to your Word and your Wisdom. R.

O God, you call us forth as from the waters of your womb:
we thank you for these baptismal waters
in which you adopt us as daughters and sons, sisters and brothers of Jesus Christ.
Like spring showers upon the thirsty soil,
let your Holy Spirit come upon us
that we may be life-giving and creative
and may know Christ in the breaking of the bread. R.

O God, you rescue us from deep waters:
we praise you for these baptismal waters
in which you deliver us from slavery to sin and death.
Like cleansing water upon the body,
let your Holy Spirit come upon us
that we may have strength and energy
and may continue Christ's ministry of peace and justice. R.

O God, you quench our thirst with living water:
we bless you for these baptismal waters
in which you call us to be disciples of Jesus Christ.
Like ocean waves upon the shore,
let your Holy Spirit come upon us
that we may be committed and persistent
and may build up Christ's Body, the church. R.

O God, you refresh us beside still waters and wipe away every tear from our eyes:
we thank you for these baptismal waters
in which you make us inheritors with Christ of your own realm.
Like rivers flowing from melting glaciers,
let your Holy Spirit come upon us
that we may be hospitable and caring
and may manifest Christ's love for all. R.

To Christ, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory
now and for ever.

All sing or say:

Amen.

Baptism

Parents and godparents prepare the children for baptism.

The assembly sings an appropriate antiphon or song.

A [Alleluia]

B You are God's work of art,
created in Jesus the Christ. [Catholic Book of Worship III 4E]

The presider invites the first of the families to the font.

Using the name of the individual infant, the presider baptizes each child, saying:

A N., I baptize you in the name of the Father,

He immerses the infant.

and of the Son,

He immerses the infant a second time,

and of the Holy Spirit.

He immerses the infant a third time.

The mother of rather lifts the child out of the font.

B [The formula of baptism may instead be worded: "N. Is baptized in the name...."]

C For significant pastoral reasons, infants may be baptized by the three-fold pouring of water in the name of the Trinity.

In this case it is preferable that the infants be held by one of the parents.

Clothing with a Baptismal Garment

The children are dressed in their baptismal garments.

Suitable music may be played or sung.

A member of the community:

[N. and N. / Dear children], in baptism you have been clothed in Christ.
All the baptized are one in Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit,
and there are no more distinctions of race, social status or gender.

Parents and godparents:

Dear children, you are God's beloved saints;
you are temples of the Holy Spirit.
You are to be clothed in sincere compassion,
in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience,
and above all, in love.

All sing or say:

Thanks be to God.

The children may be taken around the assembly to be signed,
if this has not already been done.

Confirmation

The presider invites all to pray:

My dear friends,
let us ask God to pour out the Holy Spirit
on these newly baptized infants
to enrich them with many gifts
and anoint them to live with Christ,
that they may build up the church in faith and love.

All pray briefly in silence.

The presider holds his hands outstretched over the infants and says:

O God, our creator and redeemer,
by water and the Holy Spirit
you draw your sons and daughters into the community of your church,
you make them members of Christ, your Wisdom, your Beloved and your Servant,
and you invite them to share your very own life.

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon them
to be their helper and guide,
that they may share in the ministry of Christ,
who is priest, prophet and shepherd.

Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of right judgment and courage,
the spirit of knowledge and reverence.
Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.

We pray in praise of your holiness and love,
in the name of Jesus Christ who is Risen
and through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

All:

Amen.

The presider anoints them on the forehead with chrism, saying:
N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

The presider speaks to each infant:
Peace be with you.

Intercessions

The general intercessions (prayer of the faithful) are prayed as usual.

Intentions may be made for the children, the parents and godparents, the families, all baptized persons, the universal church, and the needs of the world.

It is desirable that some intentions be proposed or composed by the parents and godparents, and that opportunity is provided for spontaneous intentions.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Altar and Gifts

The liturgy of the eucharist begins as usual with the preparation of the gifts.

The parents and godparents, carrying the children, take part in the gift procession.

They may carry food or other gifts of the poor that they have brought.

With other members of the community they may also help carry the bread and wine for the eucharist.

Eucharistic Prayer

The parents and godparents hold the child during the eucharistic prayer.

Special portions of the eucharistic prayers that refer to baptism are provided in the sacramentary.

Lord's Prayer

Presider:

- A Dear friends,
all who have received the gift of adoption
and entered the covenant community
are called children of God,
for so indeed they are.

In the Spirit of adopted children,
let us pray together in the words that Jesus gave us:

Our Father, who art in heaven... *or* Our Father in heaven...

- B Dear parents and godparents:
As you pray with your children and lead them into prayer,
both in your homes and with the church community,
you yourselves will learn anew how to pray.

We now invite you to begin your ministry of teaching your child to pray,
by saying the prayer of Jesus over your child.

The parents and godparents say the Lord's Prayer,
giving example and teaching it to their child.

Our Father who art in heaven... *or* Our Father in heaven....

The rest of the assembly then says the Lord's Prayer in the usual way.

Our Father, who art in heaven... Or Our Father in heaven....

Sign of Peace

The sign of peace is shared by all, including the parents, godparents, siblings and newly baptized children.

Communion

After the sign of peace, the parents, godparents and children come to the altar.

After the communion of the presider, he shares the Body and Blood of Christ with the parents and godparents. He also gives communion to each child in an appropriate way, for example with consecrated wine on the tip of his finger.

Concluding Rites

Presentation of a Lighted Candle

Someone from each family lights a candle from the paschal candle.

A member of the community says:

Parents and godparents [and siblings],
whenever these candles burn in your homes,
remember that Jesus said, "I am the light of the world;
whoever follows me will not be walking in the dark
but will have the light of life."

Parents and godparents:

Dear children, you now live in the Holy Spirit:
you are the light of the world.
Your light must shine before all
so that, seeing your goodness,
others may praise God.

All sing or say:

Thanks be to God.

The lighted candles are held until the conclusion of the liturgy.

Blessing

A The parents all together ask God's blessing on their newly initiated infants:

May God, the source of life,
bless our beloved children,
teach them to walk in faith,
and lead them with kindness and love.

All:

Amen.

The assembly asks God's blessing on the infants and parents [and siblings];

May Jesus Christ, love incarnate,
bless these families,
walk with them as a friend,
inspire them to love one another,
and send them out to show God's love.

All:

Amen.

The presider asks God's blessing on all present:

May the Holy Spirit, love's power,
bless all of us here
and bestow wisdom and understanding,
courage, wonder and awe.

All:

Amen.

B The presider asks God's blessing on the parents and infants:

May the God who creates all life
guard these children as the apple of his eye,
hover over them like a mother,
and bless these parents.

All:

Amen.

The presider asks God's blessing on the godparents [and siblings]:

May the Word made flesh, who lived as a child,
help these children grow in wisdom and grace,
keep them in the center of his community,
and bless these godparents [and siblings].

All:

Amen.

The presider asks God's blessing on all present:

May the Spirit who gives new life
make us receptive to the grace God gives through these children,
call us to praise God and care for those in need,
and bless all of us here.

All:

Amen.

Dismissal

The deacon (or the presider) dismisses the people in the usual way.

The procession may be accompanied by a song of praise.