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## Program Goals:

- ▶ to welcome and invite you to a deeper involvement in the life of this parish community
- ▶ to lead you to a deeper understanding of the Sacrament of Baptism and the commitment it requires of you
- ▶ to help you discern whether you are ready to celebrate your child's Baptism
- ▶ to support and strengthen your relationship with the Church
- ▶ to prepare you to enter into the liturgical celebration of your child's Baptism with "full, conscious, and active participation"

# Session One

Good and Gracious God,  
you are the source of all life.

*bless* We ask you to bless our time,  
to guide our conversations,  
and to help us grow closer to you.

We thank you most especially  
for the gift of our children,  
and we ask for your continued blessings  
upon them and upon us as parents.

We ask you this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## In Session One, we will:

- ▶ pray together
- ▶ share one another's faith journey
- ▶ explore the roles and responsibilities of godparents
- ▶ discuss the significance of our children's names
- ▶ identify the spiritual hopes and dreams we have for our children

# My Faith Journey

relationship

Reflect on your relationship with God over the course of your life. Think of the ups and downs in that relationship. What events in your life may have caused your relationship with God to change?

On this page, draw a timeline that reflects how your relationship with God has changed throughout your life. Begin your timeline in childhood. Note significant events along the way.



CHOOSING

# Godparents

## Godparents in the Catholic Tradition

When you invite a person to serve as your child's godparent, you are asking this individual to make a *lifelong* commitment to your child. The day of your child's Baptism marks just the beginning of the godparent-godchild relationship. It is the hope of the Church and the Catholic community that your child's godparents will be lifelong companions who will nurture your child's faith and help him or her become a true disciple of Christ.



### THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY CALLS GODPARENTS TO:

- help their godchild grow in faith
- teach their godchild about Catholic traditions
- model for their godchild how to live a Catholic life

### TO BE A CATHOLIC GODPARENT, ONE MUST:

- be a Catholic who has received the Sacrament of Confirmation and regularly participates in the Eucharist
- be an *active* member of a Catholic faith community
- be at least sixteen years old

▶ **The law of the Roman Catholic Church** requires each child being baptized to have one godparent to serve as his or her spiritual role model and friend. This godparent may be male or female. Two godparents, one godmother and one godfather, are the norm in the United States, but are not required.

▶ **What is a Christian Witness?** For a variety of reasons, some families choose to have only one Catholic godparent. In such a case, it is permitted to have a second person, a *baptized, non-Catholic Christian*, participate in the ceremony. This person is called a "Christian Witness" and will stand beside the Catholic godparent during the baptismal celebration.

## Insights from a Godparent



"My dear godchild, who is also my niece, is now 32 years of age, happily married and the mother of a precious little girl. While our sacred journey as godmother-goddaughter has lasted over three decades, it seems like just yesterday that her parents asked me to be her godmother. Having never been married nor had any children, I always have had a very special bond with my godchild. We have a strong spiritual connection as well as wonderful shared moments of ordinary everyday life.

It is the hope of every godparent, I am sure, that in some small way, our lives drop seeds . . . the seeds of our own faith believed and lived, into the mind, heart, soul, and life of our godchild. As I sit back and marvel at the direction my niece's sacred journey has taken, I thank God for the times I was able to be there with her and I hope that in the 'being there,' a seed or two has been planted."

— Barbara Gooding

# Spiritual Hopes and Dreams

Name two ways you hope God will help your child throughout his or her life.

1.

2.

Name two ways you hope the Church community will help your child throughout his or her life.

1.

2.

## HOME

# Reflection

## Something to Think About

What will be your response when the priest or deacon at your child's Baptism asks you:  
"What do you ask of God's Church for your child?"

**REMEMBER:** At our 3rd session, you will be asked to share your response to this question with the group.

## Something to Read

► Romans 5:13, 15, 18

► In the *Rite of Baptism*, the priest prays a "prayer of exorcism" over the child, saying these words:

We pray for this child:

set him (her) free from original sin,

make him (her) a temple of your glory,

and send your Holy Spirit to dwell with him (her).

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

When parents look at the innocence and beauty of their newborn infant, nothing could possibly seem stranger than to suggest that this child is branded by sin. Indeed, if original sin were thought of as some sort of personal fault in the child, such an idea would rightly be dismissed as absurd. However, original sin is *not a personal fault*; it is an *inherited condition*.

Original sin is the name we give to the state of humanity that inclines every human being to evil and makes us all subject to temptation. Every child is born into a sinful world and is immersed—even before reaching personal consciousness—in the sinful conditions that breed war, ethnic hatred, corporate greed, and a host of other evils from which we all need to be delivered. No one escapes being under the influence of this dark cloud of evil that hangs over our broken human condition.

Paradoxically, the *removal* of original sin in Baptism is actually the *infusion* of Christ's grace and love into the heart and soul of a child. As the prayer above states, freedom from original sin is accomplished by the gift of the Holy Spirit, a gift that makes a child the temple of God's glory.

When a child is joined to the Church—the Body of Christ—that child is effectively inserted into a world of grace. Although sin and temptation will always remain present in the child's life because we cannot escape it in this world, the child now shares in the Reign of God already present in its beginnings in this world.

# saving grace

## Summary of the Church's Understanding of Original Sin

- ▶ Every human person is born into a world where the negative influence and effects of sin and evil surround us and are inescapable.
- ▶ Every human person is born into this world with an inclination to evil that makes us subject to temptation.
- ▶ Every human person is born in need of the saving grace of God that is available to us in Jesus Christ.
- ▶ This inherited condition that we are born with is what the Church calls *original sin*.
- ▶ It is the infusion of God's grace in Baptism that removes original sin and restores us to our "original justice" by giving us a share in God's own divine life.

## Reflection and Discussion



How is this explanation of original sin different than your previous understanding of the concept?

Think about the world we live in today, the world into which your child has been, or will be, born. What do you see as signs of God's grace in the world today?