

**Baptismal Preparation Program
St. Patrick Parish
Bridge Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44113**

Dear Parents:

Congratulations...

Our Parish Community pledges its support to you and joins you in giving thanks to the Lord for the gift of your child.

You might want to save a copy of the newspaper from the day your child was born. As your youngster grows, there will be many occasions when your children will be able to discover what was happening in the world the day they were born.

Another thought... In years to come you will be very happy if you now take time to write a note to your child, telling what thoughts went through your mind as you awaited the birth. Share where you were living, working. Tell them what things were like in your family as you waited and wondered. Relate the events and happenings "the day the new baby was born," your dreams and hopes.

When you show the child your letters, children will certainly know that their parents loved them since they took the time to write such a note. This is how bonding takes place.

The following information about your child will be needed as we arrange for the baptism:

Name	_____
Date and Place of Birth	_____
Father's Name	_____
Mother's Name (Maiden)	_____
Phone Number	_____ Registered in Parish _____
Date/Time of Baptism	_____
Church of Parents' Marriage	_____
Godfather	Married in Church _____
Godmother	Married in Church _____

PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS

1. You are the First Religious Educators of your children. You are their first Spiritual Directors. You will teach them by modeling rather than speaking.
2. If you pray, your children will learn that prayer is important. Only you can teach them prayer is important. –
3. Today, the connection between belief and behavior has been broken. People do not connect the two. Parents are the only ones who can make and firm up that connection. It has been proven that no institution, including the church and the school can have more than 10% of the impact on children that parents have.
4. Children will see as important the following:
 - a. Whatever you are excited about.
 - b. Whatever you enjoy and look forward to doing...
 - c. Whatever you make sure you never miss...
 - d. Whatever you spend a lot of time at...
3. In the lives of children, there are certain things that are "non-negotiable." They are part of daily living and they are simply done. What non-negotiables you plan for your child's life? How will you ensure that Church/God will be one of them. If they are not, you have already taught your child that God is of lesser import than brushing one's teeth.
4. It has been truthfully said: Having a child is no more a sign of being a good parent than owning a piano is a sign of being an accomplished musician. Read... Learn... Ask... Consult...
5. There are certain "Teachable Moments" in a child's day/life. Will you take advantage of them to tell them that God loves them?
 - a. Just before going to bed at night.
 - b. Quiet time prior to napping...
 - c. Time of pregnancy of Mom (Sex education could begin here).
 - d. Time when Grandparents come over and tell children how you were when you were their age.
 - e. Time when you sit down and tell them what things were like when you were young - at home - growing up.
6. What a person is interested in is reflected in the place they live. From looking at your home, what would people conclude you were deeply interested in? Children are naturally inquisitive. What religious objects will be in your home that might prompt questions/learning?
7. As you look into your own life, there are certain special people whose presence in your life made you the religious persons that you are today. You need to identify those people, be grateful for them and take the time to thank them. But you also need to remember that these are the types of people you want to have for your children's god parents.
8. Saints are our community's heroes. We look up to them and reverence them. What saint would I see as having qualities I'd like to see in my child. Perhaps this is something I should think about as I consider naming each of my children.
- 9.. In what ways would I like to see my child become like me? In what ways would I like to see a difference?
10. How will the different religious feast days, baptismal days be celebrated in our home?
11. Will my involvement in my parish and its ministries and programs say something to my

children about how important the faith is in my life? What is my involvement now?

15. As my child grows, it will be my responsibility to monitor such things as conscience formation, confession, a sense of self worth - in a word - my child's spiritual development. Am I comfortable with this? How will I ensure contact for my child with people of different cultures, background, economic level, racial and ethnic background? How will I help them see that those who are different need not threaten them? How will I be able to have them experience the physically and mentally handicapped so as to have compassion for them, etc..
16. Godparents or sponsors are persons whose faith life is such that a child will be able to model his/her life on them. Consequently, individuals who are regular in attendance at Sunday Liturgy, receive the sacraments regularly, and make an honest attempt to live a gospel life, are preferred.

Sponsors must:

- A. If married, have been married in a Catholic Church. The reason for this is that marriage is a sacrament and while the two people receiving it give the sacrament to one another, it must be done in the presence of the priest and two witnesses.
- B. If single or married must be regular in attendance at liturgy weekly. The reason for this is the fact that children see better than they hear.
- C. If single and living together, reception of the sacraments is not permissible, nor would sponsorship since marriage is a sacrament and involves an unconditional commitment for life before God, family and the Catholic Community before living together begins.
- D. Sponsors are called by their lives to live the "wisdom of God" as opposed to "wisdom of the world."
- E. Usually, a person is to have been confirmed as well.
- F. Usually, both godparents are of the Catholic faith. One must be.

It may be helpful to know these things beforehand and thus spare embarrassment of asking persons and then finding they would not be able to serve. When in doubt, ask the deacon, priest, or pastoral minister, or the couple working with you in the baptismal preparation program.

In the next two sections, two resources are provided which will hopefully afford some assistance in the awesome responsibility of parenting:

- 1, Guidelines for the Formation of your child's conscience.
- 2, Reflections on the home as a place where your children will come to learn what life is about – what love is about – what God is about.

Guidelines for Conscience Formation

We receive data on the appropriateness or inappropriateness of various actions from six distinct sources, each of which has its own guidelines. Properly to form one's conscience and help in the formation of the conscience of children, parents must be able to communicate to their children the fact that the messages we receive are conflicting, and just because things seem to make sense, they are not thereby do-able. We must have a sense of on what level it is that we are going to live, and as Christians, and commit to it regardless of contrary messages from other levels.

The sources are: 1. Emotion/Feelings, 2. Reason (Wisdom of the World) , 3. The Media, 4. Peers, 5. Civil Law, 6. Christian Faith (Wisdom of God)

SOURCES

GUIDELINES

<p><u>1.</u> <u>Emotion/Feeling</u></p>	<p>1. If it feels good - it is good. 2. If it is easier, it's better 3. If everyone's doing it, it's got to be OK.</p>
<p><u>2.</u> <u>Reason</u> (Wisdom of World)</p>	<p>1. The Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. 2. If two or more adults agree on a course of action, it's OK.</p>
<p><u>3.</u> Media</p>	<p>1. If it can be done, it's OK to do it 2. To question anyone's way of doing things is bigoted and un-American</p>
<p><u>4.</u> Peers</p>	<p>1. If one kid can do it, all kids can 2. If it's OK in one family – it's OK in all families</p>
<p><u>5.</u> Civil Law</p>	<p>1. If it's legal, it's moral 2. What's permissible for one – is OK for all</p>
<p><u>6.</u> Catholic Faith (Wisdom of God)</p>	<p>1. <u>The Commandment of Jesus:</u> "Love one another as I have loved you." 2. <u>Great Commandment:</u> "Love God above all things and neighbor as self." 3. <u>The Beatitudes:</u> Blessed are the poor in spirit 4. <u>The Works of Mercy:</u> Matt. 25:31-46. Feed the hungry, shelter the homeless.(Bodily), instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful (Spiritual). 5. <u>The Ten Commandments:</u> (as revised and edited by Jesus.</p>

Your children will hear all these messages. It is you who will have the privilege and responsibility to help them form their consciences so that they will be able to recognize that just because something makes sense to them, it does not mean that it's OK to pursue it. They must ask the further question – From what perspective does it make sense.

THE HOME AND THOSE WHO LIVE THERE

Before reflecting on Home-making, it is important to paraphrase the words of a wise Pastor. Speaking to one of his confreres, he made the remark: "You must remember there is only ONE PASTOR." Parents too must remember that there is only ONE PARENT – the Lord. The secret to parenting is to do one's very best and when things happen as we feel they should – to attribute the growth to the Lord with a "Thank YOU." When things don't go as we feel they should – instead of beating oneself up, remember "It's not yet God's time, apparently." One will ever be a parent after the Lord's own heart. One will never be down.

RELIGIOUS LIFE IN OUR HOME

Is the practice of the faith a normal part of our family's life?
 Do we attend Mass weekly and receive the sacraments?
 Do we extend forgiveness to one another and not let hurts last or fester?
 Is our home a place where real love and affection are experienced?
 Is home a safe place - a place of peace and happiness.

RELIGIOUS VALUES

Are religious values reflected in our selection of TV programs
 Do we discuss the values that are portrayed in the media in our family - contrasting them with Jesus' values?
 Do our choices for out of the home entertainment, movies reflect our religious values?
 What of our magazine subscriptions - the books we read?
 Am I conscious of the nature and type of programming my children are tapping on the Internet?
 What are the areas of interest, values, things my children are excited about?? Do I know what they are?
 What values are reflected in the books I have in my home, purchase and read?

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES IN OUR HOME...

Prayers before Meals	Quality Family time together
Mass attendance - both parents	Spontaneous Prayer fostered
PSR Religion Classes	Rosary - Scripture Reading
Parish Penitential Rites	Involvement in parish groups - ministries
Meals together	Family Confession Days at Christmas, Easter, Summer, Fall.

RELIGIOUS SETTING OF THE HOME

Religious Pictures	Crucifix
Parish Bulletin	Diocesan Newspaper
Religious Calendar	Bible
Catholic periodicals	Catholic Literature

SPECIAL FAMILY CELEBRATIONS

Parents Wedding Anniversary	Birthdays
Patron Saint Days	First Eucharist
Confirmation	Graduations
Vacations	Promotions
Special Achievements	Scholastic Honors

FAMILY TRADITIONS

DAILY: Morning Prayer
 Evening Prayer
 Meal Prayers
 Supper Conversation
 Apologize & Hug before bed
 Homework

WEEKLY: Chores
 Privileges
 Snacks
 Sunday Afternoon Drives
 Visiting relatives
 Family Day - Fun - Trips
 Sunday Morning Mass - PSR

MONTHLY

Holidays
 Sports
 Museums
 Hikes
 Camping

SEASONALLY

Winter: Sledding, Shoveling, Snowmen
 Spring: Cleaning, getting things ready for summer fun
 Yard work, Gardening
 Summer: Vacation, Memorial Day, Labor Day, July 4th
 Baseball, Fishing, Traveling,
 Fall: Halloween, Football, Back to School,

ANNUALLY

Vacation Trips
 Visit Relatives
 Plant own Garden
 Family Gatherings
 Plan Annual Gathering with Family

EXAMPLES OF FAITH LIFE MODELED

Positive attitudes towards Church

PSR Attendance regular - topics learned discussed

Appreciation of forgiveness, confession
 Sacraments received reverently, regularly
 God talk and personal prayer fostered
 Discussion on avoidance of vulgarity, profanity
 Sensible discussion on drugs - alcohol
 Involvement in Adult Ed Offerings
 Ministry of Eucharist to sick

Prayer cherished as way of helping those suffering
 Praying when hearing a siren, reading of tragedy in paper
 Forgiveness and acceptance of faults of one another
 Genuine and gentle concern for faith life
 Reverence for life, sex education appropriate to years
 Teaching PSR in the Parish
 Lectoring at Liturgy

CARING FOR OTHERS

Do we visit, keep in touch with aging relatives?
 Do we show care for those with depression, addiction?
 Are we race, ethnic, gender inclusive?
 How do I avoid stereotyping, and dismissing people?
 Volunteering in Church and other social activities.

Do we visit the sick somewhat regularly?
 Do we create positive attitudes towards minorities?
 How do we foster the value of every human life, born - unborn?
 How can I return God for the gift of health by healing others?

TRADITION - HOW WILL WE AS A FAMILY BUILD TRADITIONS AROUND:

Christmas	Easter	Halloween	Pentecost	Lent	Holy Week
Advent	Lent	Memorial Day	Labor Day	New Year's Day	July 4th
Thanksgiving Day	St. Patrick Day	Presidents Day	M.L.King Day	Ash Wednesday	Palm Sunday

POSITIVE ATTITUDES FOR JOYFUL LIVING

Avoiding cynicism - fostering hope
 Praising positives in others - achievements
 Avoidance of coarseness and insensitivity
 Loyalty to Family members - bonding together
 Not comparing children to one another

Encouraging and supporting gifts of others
 Respecting diversity - not threatened by it
 Avoiding of sarcasm and put-downs
 Prizing educational endeavors/ achievements
 Celebrating uniqueness - gifts of each

LIFE ATTITUDES FOSTERED AND MODELED

Respect children - respect parents
 Earning the respect of our children
 Sharing responsibilities - fostering empowerment
 Making home a place that's fun to be
 Cultivating a solid work ethic. Value of money
 Discussing and modeling "need" Vs "luxury"

Sharing our own faith life - life experience - history with kids
 Exacting accountability
 Foster sense of preciousness/uniqueness of each person
 Prioritizing realization - on any issue I could be wrong
 Appreciating different ways of seeing things = different decisions
 Avoiding comparisons - expectations

FAMILY DISCUSSIONS AND CONVERSATIONS WILL INCLUDE

What is need - what is luxury
 If something makes sense to me - can I go for it?
 Many levels on which things make sense - How choose?
 Values of the media vs. values of Jesus

Christian Values vs. media endorsement and approval
 What is normal in our home Vs what is normal in world
 WWJD
 If I were seeing Christ in 3 minutes, would my values change?

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

As parent, I teach values by:
 1. What excites me
 2. What pleases me
 3. What challenges me
 4. What I spend a lot of time with
 5. What I never miss
 6. What I do repeatedly and speak of often

7. Where I go
 8. Types of persons I cherish
 9. Books I read
 10. Magazines to which I subscribe
 11. TV Shows - channels that are favorites
 12. The hobbies, collections, sports, types of things I do

MOTHER AND DAD

Is our presence before our kids, warm, respectful, caring?
 Do we spend time with each, avoid comparisons?
 Do we relate - Mom & Dad, Parents & Kids with
 compassion, care, understanding and love?
 Do we spend quality time with one another? with Kids?

Do we model appreciation for diversity socially
 Do we cherish those physically challenged?
 Do we value the elderly for what they can teach us?
 Do we take each individual as such and value him/her?
 Do I exclude any from my acceptance, love, life? WHY?

