

FAMILIES FORMING DISCIPLES

EPIPHANY AND THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

TOPIC: EPIPHANY AND THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD – JESUS' MISSION

OPENING PRAYER:

Come, O Spirit of Understanding, and enlighten the minds of parents, grandparents and children, so that they may have patience with one another in the daily challenges of family living. Our Father...

([Catholics For Family Peace](#))

MATERIALS

- Holy Water
- Baptismal candles/sacramental(s)/ clothing photos

GOALS

- To learn about the Epiphany and the families' experiences of the Family Epiphany Blessing
- To reflect on the First Luminous Mystery, the Baptism of the Lord, and on Jesus' mission
- To explore how we answer God's call to live our Baptism

ICE BREAKER

Ask everyone to imagine that they are living in a space station. All of a sudden, the space station malfunctions and they have to evacuate. They are only allowed to take 3 items with them. Which items would they choose?

Participants can share verbally or post their answers in the chatbox, explaining why they chose those items.

(Adapted from <https://symondsresearch.com/>)



FAMILY SHARING

Ask each family to share about their Family Epiphany Blessing experience. Was this a new tradition for them? How did it make them feel, about their family, their home, themselves?

(Tip: To help make the participants feel more comfortable about sharing, you may consider telling about your experience and explaining your answers to those questions first, before asking everyone to share.)



INTRODUCE/ REVIEW TOPIC

- We conclude the Christmas season by celebrating the Baptism of Jesus by his cousin, St. John the Baptist, in the Jordan River, marking the beginning of Jesus' public ministry.
- The celebrations of the Epiphany and the Baptism of the Lord are connected, since both events manifest (show forth) Jesus as Messiah of Israel and Son of God (CCC, no. 537).

CONTENT

- Ask all the family members to find a comfortable place to sit.
- Explain: We have learned about the Visit of the Wise Men/Magi and blessed the doors of our homes, so now we will explore another "Epiphany event," which is also the First Luminous Mystery of the Rosary, the Baptism of Jesus.
- I am going to ask you to quietly relax as I say a prayer and then read the story of Jesus' Baptism to you from Sacred Scripture.

When I have finished reading we will sit in silence for a minute and think about what God is saying to us through this story.

CONTENT

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, as we read and think about the story of your life, we ask the Holy Spirit to come and speak to the hearts of all here, from the oldest to the youngest.

Calmly Read Matthew 3:13-17

Wait at least 30 seconds

Explain: Now I am muting everyone so that each member of your family can share privately about what stood out to him/her in the Mystery of the Baptism of Jesus that we just read.

Give families time to share privately.

Explain: After John baptizes Jesus with the water of the Jordan river, the Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus like a dove, and Jesus hears the voice of God the Father: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” Jesus’ baptism shows him to be the Messiah of Israel and the Son of God. It is the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry. Jesus, as the beloved Son of the Father, has an important mission to save all of humanity by His divine love, shared in and through Jesus’ own humanity (as true God and true man).

When we are baptized, we also become sons and daughters of God in the Son and by the Holy Spirit, and we too share in Jesus’ mission to spread the love of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—in our homes, communities, and throughout the world.

Show video: The Baptism of Jesus by Redeemed Online (3 min)



FAMILY SHARING

1. Model, remind, and help families to feel comfortable, by first briefly showing examples of your baptismal sacramental(s), a candle, and photos from your baptism or the baptism of someone in your family that you have placed on your home altar.
2. Invite the family members to show the sacramental(s) and photos from their own baptisms that mark the beginning of their mission as children of God and that they have placed on their home altars.
3. Ask families to answer (some or all of) the following questions either with their children or in a large group:
 - How old were you when you were baptized?
 - What do you know about your own baptism?
 - If you were baptized as an adult, why did you want to be baptized?
 - How do you think you are answering God's call to live out your baptism?
 - Has Jesus helped you to live out your baptism and if so, when or how?
 - What do you remember about each of your children's baptism?
 - Why was it important to you that your children be baptized?
 - What do you hope for your children as they answer God's call to live out their baptism and share in Jesus' mission in the world?
 - What do you hope for your parents as they answer God's call to live out their baptism and share in Jesus' mission?



PRAYER

Renewal of Baptismal Promises including blessing with holy water and lighting of baptismal candle.

(Note: This version of the renewal of baptismal promises is designed for at-home prayer. If gathering together in the parish, catechists could decide to close with an alternate prayer and ask families to pray the renewal of baptismal promises at home, or this could be an opportunity to gather together in the church and ask a priest or deacon to preside.)

1. Ask families to remain gathered around their home altars.
2. Ask families to have at least one candle and the holy water on their altars.
3. Pray: Dear Heavenly Father, We thank you for loving us and for sending your beloved Son, Jesus, to save us from our sins. Now that we have reflected on the Baptism of Jesus as well as our own baptisms, we ask Jesus with the Holy Spirit to be in our midst. As families we come before you as we bless one another with holy water in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
4. Instruct parents to use the holy water to bless each of their children and one another by making the sign of the cross on their forehead saying I bless you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
5. Instruct parents to light one of the baptismal candles.
6. Explain: Today, your families will renew their baptismal promises to be the light of God in the world. After each promise please respond: I do.

Leader: Do you reject Satan? **R. I do.**

Leader: And all his works? **R. I do.**

Leader: And all his empty promises? **R. I do.**

Leader: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth? **R. I do.**

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father? **R. I do.**

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting? **R. I do.**

Leader: God, the all-powerful Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and forgiven our sins. May we always remember who we truly are, God's beloved sons and daughters in whom He is well pleased. May we live with the Trinity as children of the family of God for ever and ever. **R. Amen.**

REMIND

Remind families about the next meeting date and time.



SUPPORTING QUOTES FROM CHURCH DOCUMENTS

Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate* (2018), nos. 15, 19-20:

Let the grace of your baptism bear fruit in a path of holiness. Let everything be open to God; turn to him in every situation. Do not be dismayed, for the power of the Holy Spirit enables you to do this, and holiness, in the end, is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life (cf. Gal 5:22-23). When you feel the temptation to dwell on your own weakness, raise your eyes to Christ crucified and say: “Lord, I am a poor sinner, but you can work the miracle of making me a little bit better”. In the Church, holy yet made up of sinners, you will find everything you need to grow towards holiness. [...]

A Christian cannot think of his or her mission on earth without seeing it as a path of holiness, for “this is the will of God, your sanctification” (1 Thess 4:3). Each saint is a mission, planned by the Father to reflect and embody, at a specific moment in history, a certain aspect of the Gospel.

That mission has its fullest meaning in Christ, and can only be understood through him. At its core, holiness is experiencing, in union with Christ, the mysteries of his life. It consists in uniting ourselves to the Lord’s death and resurrection in a unique and personal way, constantly dying and rising anew with him. But it can also entail reproducing in our own lives various aspects of Jesus’ earthly life: his hidden life, his life in community, his closeness to the outcast, his poverty and other ways in which he showed his self-sacrificing love.

