



The Catechumenate and Holy Baptism

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.
(Matthew 28:19)*

The recent renewal in understanding of the importance of Christian Baptism is bringing forward some interesting and useful insights about how the Church in the past has seen the process of children and adults coming to receive this Sacrament. Traditionally, the Church held that both parts of the final words of our Lord to his disciples be applied - "baptize" and "teach." The custom in the local Anglican Church of late has forgotten or ignored the second part and Baptism is not generally understood to require any kind of preparation or instruction. The cultural context in which the Church now finds itself is causing these assumptions to be challenged and corrected.

More common current practices throughout the Church at the time of Baptism recognize that the historic Church has something important to show us. In the Church's past, candidates for baptism and their sponsors were admitted to a group called the "catechumenate," with the sole purpose of preparation for baptism. "Catechumens" met with members of the Christian community for instruction in the Christian Faith, including intensive education and exploration in the area of Christian living - the Vows of Baptism. The Bishop's Directive 2.1 encourages the provision of this kind of instruction before Baptism.

To this end, we will strive in the future to continue to provide this instruction for candidates for Baptism and/or their sponsors. Whenever possible a short service of "Admission to the Catechumenate" (*see over*) will take place prior to this time in order to recognize the prayerful preparation about to begin. The Christian community will be invited and reminded of the need and responsibility to support and pray for those who have requested membership in Christ's Church through baptism as part of the Catechumenate.

Rite of Admission to the Catechumenate

For those bringing a child for baptism.

The parents (and sponsors) bring the child to the altar or chancel step.

<i>Priest</i>	What do you seek?
<i>Parents (and Sponsors)</i>	New life through baptism for our child N.
<i>Priest</i>	Will you be regular in attending the worship of God, and in receiving instruction?
<i>Parents (and Sponsors)</i>	We will.
<i>Priest</i>	Will you pray for N. and help <i>him/her</i> grow in knowledge and love of God by your example?
<i>Parents (and Sponsors)</i>	We will.
<i>Priest</i>	Let us pray.

Eternal and loving God, you have promised to be faithful to a thousand generations of those who love and revere you:
✠ bless this child N. and preserve *his/her* life;
receive *him/her* and enable *him/her* to receive you,
that through the sacrament of Holy Baptism
he/she may become your child in Christ
and a member of your Church;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

To the congregation

People of God, it is our intention to present N.
for Holy Baptism on [date].
I commend N., *his/her* parents and sponsors,
to your prayers and your loving support.

The Prayers of the People follow.