



Faith Chest (Birth)
Discussion Guide Session Three

Baptism—Episcopal Perspective

Warm-Up

(video segment 1:22 minutes/discussion time ____ minutes)

Discuss in your small group: Since last session, what have you done to deepen the spiritual atmosphere in your home? For example, did you have prayer or devotions with your spouse? What were the challenges you faced and what were the successes?



Legacy Point 1

What is Baptism?

(video segment 14:37 minutes)

Baptism is a sacrament...an outward and visible sign of an inward spiritual grace.

It is the primary entrance into the community of faith...

- ...a public affirmation of a person's faith
- ...a public acclamation from the parents and how they intend to raise that child
- ...the welcoming of the child into the family of God
- ...a picture of adoption into God's family

Galatians 3:26-27, *"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."*

God has always wanted to be in covenant with us...We are fully a part of Christ.

Romans 6:4, *"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."*

Through baptism, the parents and congregation are asking the Holy Spirit to come and fill the child.

It is recognition of a commitment the parents are making for their child and the expectation that they will grow into as well.

The parents commit before God to raise their child in the Christian faith and to become fully incorporated into the community as well.

The advantage of baptizing your child as an infant is you are lifting up this child in Christ from this day forward. The family of God also supports and lifts up this child in Christ.

Matthew 3:11 John says, *"I baptize you with water for repentance...He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."*

Through baptism, one is changed...marked forever.



Let's Talk About It:

(discussion time ____ minutes)

- ❖ **When you see a baptism in your church, what touches your heart the most?**



Legacy Point 2

What Does a Child Need Spiritually?

(video segment 11:30 minutes)

A child needs a relationship with Jesus Christ!

Are parents willing to have and develop a relationship with Christ? It begins here as the child watches and imitates them. Parents can be examples of what it looks like to be a follower of Christ.

Parents can also be examples of Christ's forgiveness by seeking and giving forgiveness. Then the home becomes a place of grace.

Hebrews 12:1-4, *"Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who*

for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin..."

Through infant baptism, the child becomes part of God's covenant from the beginning of life.

Matthew 28:19-20, *"Therefore go 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."*

To grow in the covenant, there must be teaching. To raise a child in Christ, you must give him/her the equipment to understand the great promise Jesus has given.

Teach them to pray...teach them the Bible...teach them church history...



Let's Talk About It:
(discussion time ____ minutes)

- ❖ What would you like to spiritually give your child?
- ❖ What would you like your home to be like as a grace place?



Legacy Point 3

The Ceremony of Baptism at the Episcopal Church

(video segment 13:02 minutes)

1. The parent(s), child and godparents are asked to come forward.
2. The child is presented and the parent(s) and godparents are asked if they will be responsible to see the child is brought up in the Christian faith and life.
3. They are asked several questions and respond to make a public statement of their beliefs.
4. Everyone present also stands and joins in committing to Christ and renewing their baptismal covenant.

5. The priest makes the outward and visible sign...pouring of the water and the application of the Chrism demonstrating God's power and grace and that the child is marked as Christ's own forever. The child is baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
6. The priest then concludes in prayer.

The Faith Chest is a tool. It is a reminder to parents of their responsibility to raise their child spiritually. It is symbolic of giving this child the treasure of faith.

The Faith Chest can be presented at the baptism ceremony or at a blessing event and parents can speak a blessing over their child.



Let's Talk About It:

(discussion time ____ minutes)

- ❖ **What blessing would you like to pray over your child?**

(See Appendix 1: Create a Blessing for Your Child and Appendix 2: Blessing Script)



Wrap-Up

(video segment 0:47 seconds)

Build not just a Faith Chest but also a legacy of faith. Invest in the treasure of faith in your child's life!

Assignment:

Plan a blessing event...a time to build your child's faith chest and meet together to celebrate this new beginning in your child's spiritual life.

Closing Prayer: *(Form small groups again and encourage each person to pray for the following.)*
Ask God to bless your family's spirituality and your role in leading it.

Where do you go from here?

You have seen how beneficial it is to be in conversation and prayer with other adults in a similar life stage. This might be a good time to start or join a small group.