



Called by God

**Preparing to Celebrate
your Baby's Baptism**

FACILITATOR GUIDE

Introduction

Called by God is a video resource for Baptism preparation based upon five moments of engagement with parents. These five moments of engagement link to the key liturgical symbols in the rite of Baptism. This video resource has a family friendly approach and sets out to help parents reflect together about the significance of Baptism for their family life.

The **first moment** is entitled '**Called by Name**'. This connects to the moment in the liturgy when the person to be baptised is named at the beginning of the liturgy. There is an accompanying reflection offered so that this helps parents to helpfully understand this action when it takes place at their baby's baptism.

The **second moment** is entitled '**Strengthened for service**'. This offers an opportunity to reflect on how the anointing at baptism strengthens in two ways, first for growth in the Christian way of life, and in the second anointing the strengthening is so that the person baptised can serve others and God in their lives.

The **third moment** is entitled '**Immersed**'. This focuses on the moment in the liturgy where the child is baptised, when water is poured upon them and the priest says 'I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.' We know that in the early Church this baptism was a full immersion in a huge pool of water, symbolising being plunged fully into the life of God forever.

The **fourth moment** is entitled '**Embraced**'. This connects with the moment in the liturgy when the baby is wrapped in a white garment, often this is a shawl. This is an outward sign of our Christian dignity and a reminder that those who are baptised are full of God's goodness and grace.

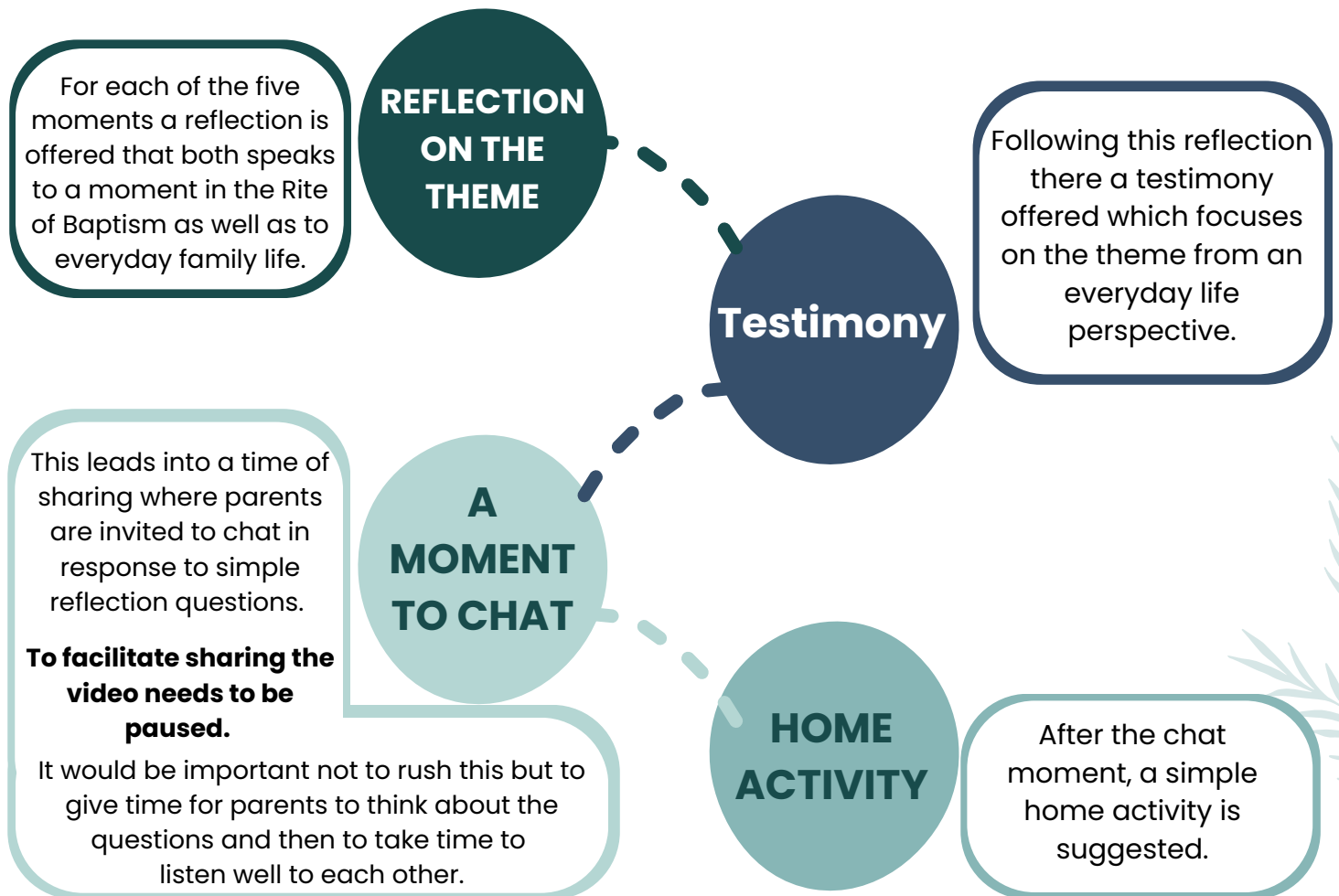
The **fifth moment** is entitled '**Living in the Light**'. This offers a reflection on why there is a moment in the liturgy of baptism where the light of Christ is handed on. It makes clear that Godparents are chosen as a faith presence and support to the parents and baby, accompanying them as they grow in faith throughout their life.

Finally, when the liturgy of baptism is celebrated there is always a blessing for parents. This has been adapted in this resource so that it becomes a prayer to end the session. It can also be used by the parents at home as they continue to support their child in the journey of faith and life.

Facilitating this Session

Ideally the video resource will be led by the Baptism team members.

It follows a simple format which looks like the following:



Practical Things to consider as Facilitator:

- You will need a laptop computer and a projector/screen to use the resource
- You should consider how the room is set up, and set up a prayer space with the symbols of Baptism in the room. For example, arrange the space with a candle, a white cloth, some oil displayed, a cross and a bible.
- You will need to consider how seating is arranged. If there is a big group for preparation Café style will be helpful. For example, sitting at tables in small groups with a cup of tea or coffee.
- You will need to print out prayer resources and the suggested home activities.
- You should consider the pace of the session so that there is ample time for sharing in the chat moments.

First Moment: Called By Name

The video highlights how **names are incredibly important** and what it feels like when someone remembers our name. This is linked to our identity and who we are. The video links this purposefully to our **Christian identity**. For many families, Baptism is the first time their child is named officially as being part of the parish community.

The video highlights how this is accompanied by the tracing of the **sign of the cross**. The cross reminds us daily that we are Christians, people who believe in and follow Jesus. It helps us to remember that we are called by **God who knows us by our name**.

TESTIMONY

Three people share their responses to the simple question **'How did you get your name?'**

This acts as a springboard into reflection questions for the parents.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

The questions for parents to consider and share about are:

- What name have you given your child?
- Why did you choose this name?
- What does it mean to you?

After you have **paused the screen**, you as a facilitator would then invite parents to take a moment to share together.

A MOMENT TO CHAT

In facilitating this make sure that it is not rushed, invite everyone to share as little or as much as they want. Once everyone has shared you can continue the video which leads on to a suggested home activity.

AT HOME ACTIVITY

Once more you can encourage parents to simply remember the following:

**When you use your child's name,
remember that they are known and loved by God.**

Second Moment: *Strengthened for Service*

The video now connects to the moments in the liturgy of baptism when the child is **anointed**, connecting this to growing physically strong, and the spiritual strengthening of anointing

It links with how the child is anointed with **two different oils** at Baptism. The first oil strengthens us as we **grow in our Christian life**. The second oil builds us up to be of **service to God** and each other.

TESTIMONY

A parent offers her testimony about how children need to grow strong and how parents need this too as a child grows.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

The questions for parents to consider and share about are:

- In what ways would you want your child to grow strong?
- As your child grows, how might you help them to use their gifts for service?

After you have **paused the screen**, you as a facilitator would then invite parents to take a moment to share together.

A MOMENT TO CHAT

In facilitating this make sure that it is not rushed, invite everyone to share as little or as much as they want. Once everyone has shared you can continue the video which leads on to a suggested home activity.

AT HOME ACTIVITY

You can suggest the following home activity:

Take a moment each day, maybe as you are putting your child to bed or first thing in the morning, to trace the sign of the cross on them to strengthen them and keep them well.

Third Moment:

Immersed

This moment connects with the everyday activity of **bathing a baby**. This leads into a deeper connection with the **water as an important symbol in Baptism**.

The story of **Jesus and his baptism** in the river Jordan is recalled. The video affirms that the water used at baptism is a symbol of being **immersed and totally surrounded in the love of God**.

TESTIMONY

This time another person offers her testimony about what Baptism means to her now.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

The questions for parents to consider and share about are:

- What does Baptism mean to you?
- Why have you chosen to have your baby baptised?

After you have **paused the screen**, you as a facilitator would then invite parents to take a moment to share together.

A MOMENT TO CHAT

In facilitating this make sure that it is not rushed, invite everyone to share as little or as much as they want. Once everyone has shared you can continue the video which leads on to a suggested home activity.

AT HOME ACTIVITY

You can suggest the following home activity:

When you are bathing your baby and pouring water over their head, you can recall this moment of baptism and how they are blessed by God.

Fourth Moment: *Embraced*

This video moment connects with the time in the liturgy of baptism when the baby is wrapped in a **white shawl** as a sign of their lifelong **Christian dignity**.

It begins with the everyday family experience of **hugging children** or holding them close, affirming the relationship of **love between parent and child**.

This connects to a simple teaching about how the child will be wrapped in a white garment, usually a shawl, as a sign that they are a **child of God**, full of goodness and grace.

TESTIMONY

This time a mum offers her testimony about moments when she feels the embrace of God's love in her family.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

The questions for parents to consider and share about are:

- What does the idea of being affirmed and embraced by God mean to you?
- How could you talk about this to your child as they grow up?

After you have **paused the screen**, you as a facilitator would then invite parents to take a moment to share together.

A MOMENT TO CHAT

In facilitating this make sure that it is not rushed, invite everyone to share as little or as much as they want. Once everyone has shared you can continue the video which leads on to a suggested home activity.

AT HOME ACTIVITY

You can suggest the following home activity:

**Take a moment each day to pray to God for your child,
so that they will grow in goodness and grace.**

Fifth Moment:

Living in the Light

This video moment connects with how parents often put a **nightlight** in their baby's bedroom. This gentle light is a constant presence in the night to help them to **feel safe in the dark**.

At baptism, there is a **lighted candle** given. When we are baptised, we **share God's light** with others in all we do. This highlights, too, that **Godparents are a faith presence** in the child's life, supporting them as they grow in faith. Godparents and parents **carry this light** for the baby.

TESTIMONY

This time a dad offers his testimony about moments when he shares the light of God's love in an everyday way.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

The questions for parents to consider and share about are:

- As parents, how can you share the light of God's love with your child every day?
- How will you carry this light for your child until they can carry it for themselves?

After you have **paused the screen**, you as a facilitator would then invite parents to take a moment to share together.

A MOMENT TO CHAT

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AT HOME ACTIVITY

You can suggest the following home activity:

Every time you light a candle at home (for a family meal, the anniversary of your baby's Baptism), remember that the light of God is always present in your home.

Time of Prayer: *Blessed by God*

The session ends with a blessing prayer which can be **used at home** as well as to end the preparation session.

This is taken from the **Rite of Baptism** and adapted to become a more direct prayer.

Before moving to end the session it would be important that you as a facilitator **offer space and time for any questions** that parents might have about the celebration of the liturgy.

This can be a time to **address any practical issues** that need to be considered.

Once this is done you can end by bringing all the group back into a simple moment of prayer and also giving parents the prayer and the suggested home activities to take home with them.

**May God bless us as parents.
May we give thanks
for the gift of our child.
God is the giver of all life,
human and divine,
may God bless us.
May we bear witness
to our faith by
what we say and do.
As members of God's family,
may we always walk
in the light of Christ
and may his peace live
in our homes and in our hearts.
Amen.**

This is a prayer than you too can use as facilitators, keeping in mind all the families who present for baptism.

You may also want to set up a prayer area in the Church where this prayer is displayed with the names of the children and families preparing for baptism.



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Archdiocese of Dublin



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Living our faith at home every day...

1. Called by Name

When you use your child's name, remember that they are known and loved by God.

2. Strengthened for Service

Take a moment each day, maybe as you are putting your child to bed or first thing in the morning, to trace the sign of the cross on them to strengthen them and keep them well.

3. Immersed

When you are bathing your baby and pouring water over their head, you can recall this moment of baptism and how they are blessed by God.

4. Embraced

Take a moment each day to pray to God for your child, so that they will grow in goodness and grace.

5. Living in the Light

Every time you light a candle at home (for a family meal, the anniversary of your baby's Baptism), remember that the light of God is always present in your home.

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