



Introduction

In holy baptism the triune God delivers us from the forces of evil, puts our sinful self to death, gives us new birth, adopts us as children, and makes us members of the body of Christ, the church.

Although a person is baptized once, the gift of baptism continues throughout a Christian's life. Instruction in the faith for a life of discipleship is part of the preparation of those who are to be baptized or their parents and sponsors. The ongoing nurture of that faith is part of the congregation's ministries of formation, education, service, and evangelical witness (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 225).

The development of this sourcebook has been guided by statements from *The Use of the Means of Grace* (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 1997):

- Baptism inaugurates a life of discipleship in the death and resurrection of Christ. (Background 14A)
- Baptism is for the sake of life in Christ and in the body of Christ, the church. Individuals are baptized, yet this baptism forms a community. It is for children. It is for adults. It is done once, yet it is for all of our life. (Application 14B)
- The parish education of the congregation is part of its baptismal ministry. Indeed, all of the baptized require lifelong learning, the daily re-appropriation of the wonderful gifts given in baptism. (Application 19B)

Overview



Washed and Welcome: A Baptism Sourcebook offers resources that support your congregation's baptismal ministry and the participation of God's people in the lifelong gift of baptism. Here you will find:

- five approaches to baptismal preparation with parents, caregivers, and sponsors of infants and young children;
- a library of helpful topics that explore both pastoral and practical considerations accompanying baptismal preparation and formation;
- advice, suggestions, inspiration, and examples;
- reproducible pages for parents, sponsors, godparents, children, families, and the whole congregation;
- encouragement and resources for strengthening your congregation's total baptismal ministry.

Flexible and Customizable

Local congregational practices around baptismal ministry vary. For this reason, *Washed and Welcome* resources are both flexible and customizable.

- All of the content in this sourcebook and its accompanying CD-ROM is reproducible and customizable.



- The content of individual sessions, take-home pages, articles, handouts, and bulletin inserts is provided on the CD-ROM in electronic files, allowing the leader to create customized session plans and pages that reflect local traditions and practices.
- The sessions in the “Approaches to Baptismal Preparation” section suggest five different approaches to preparing for meetings with parents and sponsors of infants and young children. You might choose to use just one of these approaches, part of one, or more than one, depending on a family’s background and interests and your congregation’s tradition of pre-baptismal preparation. Additionally, you might adapt, combine, or modify content from several of the sessions for pre-baptism or adult education classes. You do not need to use all of the sessions, or even all of one session. Leaders should feel free to pick and choose elements from any session and order or otherwise modify them in whatever way is appropriate for your local context. Experiment and see what works best for you.

The CD-ROM

The CD-ROM in the back contains all of the sourcebook pages in editable, customizable (RTF) text files. The pages are also available as designed (PDF) files, duplicating the formats on the printed page, but without the sourcebook page numbers on materials that will be reproduced as handouts or bulletin inserts. The CD-ROM also contains a glossary of terms related to baptism (in the Library folder).

May your congregation’s baptismal ministry and all the baptized be enriched by what is offered here. Soak it in. Blessings on the way.

Other Members of the Washed and Welcome Family



Living the Promises of Baptism: 101 Ideas for Parents (Augsburg Fortress, 2010). This 80-page book for parents and caregivers is filled with concrete ideas for celebrating with children the gifts of baptism in daily living. Each brief, practical idea helps parents put flesh on the promises they made or will make at their child’s baptism: to live with them among God’s faithful people, bring them to the word of God and the holy supper, teach them the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments, place in their hands the holy scriptures, and nurture them in faith and prayer so that their children may learn to trust God, proclaim Christ through word and deed, care for others and the world God made, and work for justice and peace (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 228). Meals, bedtime, play, seasons, milestones, transitions—all these occasions and more become opportunities for practicing faith. The ideas in *Living the Promises of Baptism* are for children from infant to upper elementary. Parents will find themselves returning to this book again and again for support, encouragement, and inspiration. Congregations are encouraged to purchase this book in quantity and give a copy to each family preparing to have an infant or young child baptized.

Welcome, Child of God (Augsburg Fortress, 2011). This board book for infants and toddlers explores the gifts of water, baptism, and belonging. The text, by Anne Ylvisaker, may be sung to the Welsh tune AR HYD Y NOS, sometimes known as “All through the Night” or “Go, my children, with my blessing.” Sung or spoken, the text becomes a prayer: “When the world feels wide around you / When the dark of night surrounds you / We are here to tend and guide you.” The book is beautifully illustrated by Claudia McGehee. Congregations are encouraged to purchase this book in quantity and give a copy to each family preparing to have an infant or young child baptized. It could also be given to the older sibling of a baby who will be baptized.

Certificate for Sponsors (Augsburg Fortress, 2010). This 4-page certificate for sponsors and godparents features artwork by Claudia McGehee. It provides a space to record names, date, and congregation; a brief excerpt from the *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* baptism rite; a brief history of sponsors and godparents; and ideas for activities sponsors can do with or for their godchild. The certificate is a keepsake that also places practical support and encouragement in the sponsor’s hands.

