

Christian Education for those 14 and under:

The Roles of Parents/Guardians/Godparents, Clergy and Catechist(s)

Orthodox Christian education of the young is an essential commitment after baptism. This should be age appropriate, Orthodox in content and employ differing teaching and learning styles. The ideal is for this education to be BOTH at home AND in Church. This two-pronged approach requires a close working partnership between the family, the godparents and the Church. This will enable the Church to support the family in finding appropriate content and also for the family to support the Church. How? ... by attending the services of the Church regularly and by having their children attend Sunday School or Youth activities consistently so that they may continue their Christian commitment and education in a social environment.

The Creed—the Symbol of Faith

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of light; true God of true God; begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by Whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man. And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried. And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; Whose Kingdom shall have no end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; Who spoke by the Prophets. And in one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Baptism and Chrismation at St Aidan's



The Baptism of Rus (with permission: <https://stjohndc.org/en/content/baptism-rus-and-legacy-russian-people-holy-prince-vladimir>)

What is Baptism and Chrismation?

In the New Testament, baptism is ...

- ◆ a spiritual water-immersion of our old life in the death of Christ (requiring repentance ... which means turning to God)
- ◆ a spiritual rebirth into His newness of life (Christ's resurrection)
- ◆ a life in the Holy Spirit (Pentecost) in which we are called to walk as followers of, and believers in, Christ (Chrismation)
- ◆ a cleansing and forgiveness for our sins, renewed by confession
- ◆ a transforming spiritual garment that we put on (Christ, eternal life) over the nakedness of a life without God (eternal death)
- ◆ membership of the Body of Christ (the Church)
- ◆ a means to share in the life giving Eucharist (Divine Liturgy) by receiving the Body and Blood of Christ in Holy Communion

Frequently asked Questions

Q: Who gets baptised? A: Anyone!

Q: Why do you baptise children if they cannot speak for themselves?

A: In the Old Testament everyone, including babes in arms, was included in the covenant relationship between Israel and God. In the New Testament this continued in the understanding of the Church as the Household of the households of God (whole families).

Q: Not all of us are Orthodox Christians in our family. How does that work then?

A: They are to be encouraged to attend and do what they can.

Q: Why is the same service used for both adults and children?

A: The understanding of baptism is the same for both, but with the baptism of infants, the family and the godparents make the responses and promises on their behalf until they are old enough to join in.

Q: What will I be called on to promise and follow throughout my whole life in the baptism service, either for myself or for my child?

A: At the most basic level you will be asked to renounce the devil, accept Christ by uniting yourself to Him, and confess and live the Orthodox faith according to the teaching of the Creed (page 4)

Q: Why do you insist on baptism taking place with the Eucharist?

A: Because belonging to the Body of Christ, the Church, in baptism, you must now receive the Body of Christ regularly in Holy Communion

Q: How will you prepare me or our child to be baptised?

A: This is what we will deal with next!

How will the Preparation for Baptism take place?

Those 14 and under:

1. Parents, the child to be baptised, any siblings and the godparents will attend the Liturgy (from the beginning) and then stay for 30 minutes after the end of the Liturgy three times (not necessarily consecutively) to discuss three pre-recorded YouTube talks with the priest; talks that they should view at home beforehand.
2. Both parents must attend the three church sessions, even if one parent is unbaptised or not Orthodox.
3. Godparents must also attend, but if one or more of these do not live locally, then the sessional teaching on YouTube will be discussed with the priest in three additional remote sessions.
4. The three teaching sessions and subsequent discussions will cover: *What is Baptism? / Christian Education / Discipleship*
5. The baptism cannot take place until all three sessions have been attended. There are no exceptions.

Those 15 to 17 will be enrolled as catechumens (learners) and then complete the same course of instruction (catechumenate, see below) as the adults, but in this age group, the priest, sponsor and catechists (teachers) will work cooperatively with the parents or guardians.

Those 18 and over will be enrolled to the catechumenate, which will follow the minimum 20/20 pattern; that is: 20 sessions of instruction combined with attendance at 20 Liturgies (however long that takes). After baptism or chrismation there will be 5 further sessions. Sessions may be delivered face to face or remotely. The final decision on whether or not to be received is made jointly by all parties concerned.