

Celebrating Baptismal Birthdays



Baptism anniversaries are joyous occasions that can be celebrated by the entire family. If parents, grandparents, and baptismal sponsors pay attention to these “birthdays”, children will come to regard these anniversaries as significant. We help our children value the remembrance of their “birth” into the family of God. By also celebrating adult baptismal birthdays, we show that our baptism is something we treasure throughout our whole life.

Here are a few suggestions for celebrating baptismal birthdays:

- **Cross of Honor**

During the mealtime, make or designate a special cross for the one who is honored to wear around their neck. If you collect more than one cross for this purpose, the family member can choose which one to wear.

- **Candle Lighting**

Many of our younger family members received a candle that was used at their baptism. Use this candle or a special candle reserved just for baptismal birthdays. Let the “birthday” person have the honor of lighting the candle if they are old enough to safely do so. Offer a special prayer. You may combine this with a meal or devotions.



- **Read Aloud Together**

Read from a book that is a gift from a baptismal sponsor. Bible storybooks, age appropriate Bibles, and other Christian books are wonderful ways for a baptismal sponsor to remember their godchildren’s baptismal birthdays. Read one together.

- **Mementos and Photographs**

Look at photographs from the “birthday” person’s baptism. Remember together who was there, what happened, and what the day was like. Look at mementos, such as the towel used to wipe the water from his/her head or the bulletin from the worship service.

- **Small Gift**

Some families may want to give the person a small gift chosen to nurture faith: a small cross to wear or one to hang in the bedroom, a CD of Christian music, a Bible story coloring book, a Christian video, a book of Bible Stories, or a collection of prayers. It isn’t necessary to spend a lot of money, but these kinds of gifts help to focus on the spiritual significance of this event.

- **Special Dessert**

Let the baptismal birthday person choose a favorite dessert. Cake and celebrations are strongly connected, but any special dessert can add an extra touch to the celebration.

- **Special Liturgy**

You can create your own liturgy to celebrate a baptismal remembrance. Things you could include might be:



Scripture Reading

One of many possibilities is Romans 6:3-4.

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”

Hymn

Again, there are many possibilities, including from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, “Children of the Heavenly Father” #781, “Borning Cry” #732, “Baptized and Set Free” #453, “You Are Mine” #581, “Waterlife” #457, and “Jesus Loves Me” #595.

Apostle's Creed

Families might choose to repeat together this earliest of Christian creeds, which offers a statement of our baptismal faith. Its origins reach back to baptism in the early church.

Signing of the Cross



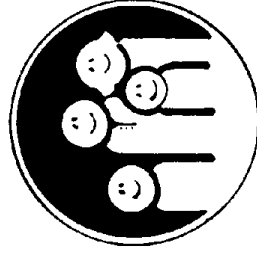
At our baptism, we receive the sign of the cross on our forehead with the blessing, "(Name), child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever." Repeat this blessing to each other! One way is to place a small bowl of water on your table. One by one, each person wets their thumb in the water and makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the person beside them. As you do this, repeat the blessing for that person.

Candle

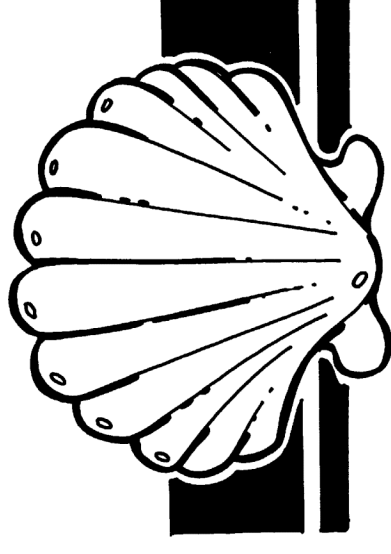
As you light the special baptismal candle, your family can repeat the scripture verse used when presenting the lit candle during the service of Holy Baptism. "*Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven.*" Let the whole family say it together to the one who is celebrating their baptismal birthday. This blessing could be said while each family member places a hand on his/her head.

Prayer

You may use your own prayer of thanksgiving or one from the service of Holy Baptism found in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. The use of the Lord's Prayer would be a wonderful way to conclude your prayers. Consider joining hands as you pray as a sign of your unity.



Remembering Your Baptism:



Ideas for Celebrating Baptismal Anniversaries In the Home

