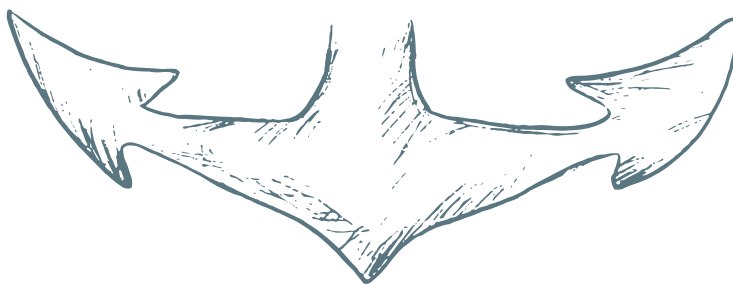


CLAIM



Leader Guide



Faith and Family Life
Catholic Ministries

AN INVITATION

You have been invited to welcome a new member into the Church! Oftentimes, these first moments can be missed opportunities. Baptism becomes a quick cultural celebration of faith, rather than the sacramental beginning of a new child into a life and community of faith. You have the chance to change this fundamental first encounter.

Claim is a resource to support you in this pursuit.

Claim ultimately calls parents into intentionality. It allows them to look at their own faith roots and encourages them to have thoughtful discussions about beliefs for their family going forward. *Claim* presents the sacrament of Baptism through content that helps parents understand its rich meaning and prepares them to participate more fully in the sacrament on Baptism day. The vitality of your Church community will speak loudly as parents come to fill out paperwork, attend sessions, and meet other couples. Use these opportunities to let your hospitality, encouragement, and support be the place they meet Jesus.

“The catechesis of parents who are asking to have their children baptized: the community, in the person of the catechists, should take care to welcome, listen to, and understand the reasons for the parents’ request, and provide an appropriate pathway for them to reawaken the grace of the gift of faith that they have received. It is also good for the godparents to be involved in this journey, and to provide adequate time for it to unfold” (Directory for Catechesis 232c).

PARENT MEETINGS

Claim is a Baptism experience for parents of infants or young children. Invite parents to reflect on the gift and responsibility of raising a child in the faith and equip them to actively participate in the liturgical celebration. Inspire parents to live out their faith through hands-on activities and meaningful conversations. Watch parents dive deeper into the incredible gift God gives us of Baptism. The 5 at-home Parent Meetings include a teaching, accompanied by reflections and activities, and a closing prayer.

GODPARENT MEETING

Claim also includes 1 Godparent Meeting. This resource was designed specifically for godparents and accompanies the second parent meeting. Two envelopes are included that contain a godparent guide and card to help prepare godparents for their important role on Baptism day and beyond.

In the journey of initiation into the Christian life, the Church calls for a re-evaluation of the identity and mission of the godfather and the godmother, as support for the educational effort of the parents. Their task is “to show the candidates how to practice the Gospel in personal and social life, to sustain the candidates in moments of hesitancy and anxiety, to bear witness, and to guide the candidates’ progress in the baptismal life.” It is known that often the choice of godparents is not motivated by faith but based on family or social customs: this has contributed in no small way to the degradation of these educational figures. In view of the responsibility that this role involves, the Christian community should indicate, with discernment and a creative spirit, pathways of catechesis for godparents, which may help them to rediscover the gift of faith and of belonging to the Church. Those who are selected for this role often feel called upon to reawaken their baptismal faith and to initiate a renewed journey of commitment and witness. The possibility that they might refuse to accept this responsibility may have consequences for them that should be evaluated with great pastoral care. In cases where the objective requirement for a person to be able to carry out this task are absent (requirements that should have been made clear in the discussion that precedes selection) in agreement with the families and according to the discernment of the pastors, godparents can be chosen from among the pastoral workers (catechists, teachers, organizers) who stand as witnesses of faith and of ecclesial presence. (DC 125)

A FEW TIPS

- By reading and experiencing the content yourself, you will be best equipped to accompany this program. We recommend first becoming familiar with the material before implementing it.
- *Claim* boxes can be given out individually to couples, but are most effective when accompanied by a Baptism team and the At-Church Support Materials.
- Have deacons or a Baptism team call couples to set up a *Visit* to discuss the *Claim* box and to journey with them throughout the formation process.
- *Claim* At-Church Sessions bring parents and godparents together to build community and share faith. The hope here is that they would find fellowship and common ground with other young families. There is one Session for Parents and one Session for parents and godparents together.
- It is important that you put in place next steps for these new families. For example: offer dinner with babysitting at the parish, family fun nights, parenting workshops, reaching out, etc.
- *Claim* can be preceded or succeeded by *Seek* and *Root* for Parents. Beginning or following up with these two programs will give them a solid foundation of faith to build upon.
- Passing on our faith is most importantly about our witness. Each time a couple interacts with our community, faith leaders have an opportunity for witness. Let us not be afraid of being witness forward rather than requirement forward. If they don’t first know that the Lord is good they will never know the requirements are for their good.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

Meeting	Theme	Activity
Parent Meeting 1	Parents naming rights and responsibility to be the primary educators in the faith.	I have called you by name print.
Parent Meeting 2	Faith is passed down from one generation to the next. We are part of a spiritual family tree with deep roots.	Spiritual Family Tree Letters to Godparents
Godparent Meeting	A reflection for godparents and an encouragement on how to best live out their special role.	Letter to Godchild
Parent Meeting 3	The natural and supernatural signification of water throughout salvation history and in our lives today.	Hooded Towel
Parent Meeting 4	Dive into the Explanatory Rites and how sacramentals keep us open to grace.	Create Baptismal Candle
Parent Meeting 5	A resource to help lead a prayer experience at the Baptism celebration.	Baptism Party Prayer experience.

AT-CHURCH SUPPORT MATERIALS

As part of the *Claim* process there are 5 at-home Parent Meetings, 1 at-home Godparent Meeting, and 2 at-church Sessions. We suggest having a *Visit* to begin the preparation. This can be done by your priest, deacon, or a Baptism team member. The goal of the *Visit* is to get to know the parents and make them feel comfortable as they begin this process. This is meant to be very inviting and the parents should leave feeling welcomed and supported. During the *Visit*, the *Claim* box would be introduced and given to parents. This should feel like a gift. These new parents are worth investing in! Open the box together and briefly go over the focus of the Parent Meetings and the items in the box. Make sure you are very familiar with all the content. Invite parents to finish the first 2 at-home Parent Meetings (they are brief but very worthwhile) before the first scheduled at-church Session. You have all the curriculum needed for the at-church Sessions. The parents will just need the dates. After completing the first at-church Session they will do 2 more at-home Parent Meetings. The second, and last, at-church Session takes place after at-home Parent Meeting 4. For this Session godparents are asked to attend. It will be a wonderful use of their time. If godparents are not able to attend, parents should still attend. This Session is designed to work either way. After this last at-church Session, parents will complete one more at-home Parent Meeting prior to their child's Baptism, which includes a way to celebrate. New parents are an incredible opportunity for our Church. We can not underestimate the time we have with them.

The goal of gathering is to:

- Break open the series of reflections they have been working on independently.
- To meet and hear from other parents on a similar journey. There is wisdom in any room of adults, especially parents!
- To provide experiential activities to help support and bring to life the studying they have been doing.
- To pray together - for each other and for their families.

This resource has been provided to support you in facilitating Sessions held at-church throughout the *Claim* experience. There is plenty of content to fill a 1-1.5 hour time frame. This material could be used from start to finish or you can use different sections to supplement things you may have already planned. We realize each of our directors have different gifts; some are wonderful teachers, some are storytellers, others are better facilitating small groups, some are gifted in finding volunteers to present. Use your strengths to lead the sessions, and look for others who can take the pieces you are not as confident in. It takes a team!

There are some things that need to be pulled together to help bring these lessons to life. We have given you supply lists. We have also suggested ways to set a mood in the room; candles, music, dimming the lights, setting the tables, etc. We feel it is critical to set holy spaces to lead parents into deeper intimacy with Christ and themselves. We can not over emphasize the impact of simple but beautiful decor, great hospitality, and intimate prayerful spaces. Your attention to detail tells everyone this is important, we prepared for you! It is recommended to have parents sit in small groups. Depending on the group size they can answer these prompts to the whole room or their small group.

As a Church we are just beginning the journey of calling parents into the opportunity of forming their children and themselves more deeply. We realize parents are in all different places and stages in their own faith journeys. We have written sessions we feel best take into account today's parents. The majority of the parents we encounter have very little theological background, but have the wisdom of their own lives to reflect on. We have found that when given helpful prompts and time to process, they do very well in sharing with each other. Parents, for the most part, are coming to these sessions because they've been told they have to, and probably aren't expecting anything that will truly impact their lives. It is our hope that these sessions meet them where they are at and slowly lead them into something more. Feel free to scale the material up or down. It is most important that families leave with a positive experience of Church and community, feeling like they have a place in it.

To make the Sessions extra special, we encourage you to provide a simple one-pot (crock pot, slow cooker) meal. You can make the recipe cards available for the parents and/or godparents. This will come in handy for those first few weeks and months when parents are adjusting to feeding themselves any way that they can.

MASTER PLANNER

Download the Pathways Master Planner [here](#) to schedule and organize your implementation of *Claim*.



Certificate of Completion

This certificate is to verify that the parents and/or godparents listed below have successfully completed the Claim baptismal preparation process.

Parents

Godparents

Certified by

Signature

Printed Name

Title

Date

Church

Diocese



Faith and Family Life
Catholic Ministries