



Ten ways to Host a Party for your Baby's Baptism

With attention to small details, the party after the baptism of your child can be a continuation of the faith reality you have just celebrated at the church. Here are ten suggestions.

1. Focus on faith

In planning the party, ask: How can we make this gathering a tangible experience of the love of the body of Christ? Keep your plans simple. You needn't try every idea on this page!

2. Spring-clean your heart

Don't just tidy the house, spring-clean your heart. Release any personal grudges and family tensions that could impede the grace of this special day. Breathe in the Spirit's gifts of forgiveness, love and patience.

3. Decorate with faith symbols

You want your home to look nice, but don't adorn it with just 'anything'. Use symbols of faith to reinforce the baptismal message. Instead of a bunch of flowers, display a rustic cross draped in green and white foliage. A big bowl of water with floating candles could make a stunning table decoration. Frame a picture of your child's name saint. Make a creative feature of your child's baptismal candle.

4. Involve children

Involve young children in spring-cleaning and decorating the home (with

the emphasis on family bonding rather than perfect housekeeping). Let them help ice the cake, pick flowers for the table. Some 'fun' touches like painted eggs and paper butterflies (images of new life) are a way to involve little ones.

5. Tell the story

If planning a speech, use the opportunity to affirm the love of God and the grace of the Church present at this gathering. Testify to your faith by saying why this day is important to you. Introduce the godparents and tell people why you chose them. Or say something about the saintly person after whom you have named your child.

6. Encourage religious gifts

If gift-giving is part of your celebratory traditions, encourage religious gifts (e.g., a children's bible, a baptismal medal) that will support your child's ongoing faith development through life.

7. Lead in prayer

Include prayer as a natural part of your gathering. Pray grace before sitting down to a meal. Invite guests to offer a spontaneous prayer for the baby, or to name one God-given gift they desire for this child.

8. Affirm people

In all interactions with the guests, look for opportunities to affirm and thank people for their presence in your child's life. They are the body of Christ! It is largely through their influence that this child will grow up knowing the reality of Jesus.

9. Say it with photos

Set up a collage of photos depicting the baptisms of other family members, as far back in the family tree as you can go. As well as being a talking point it serves as a visual reminder of the fact that baptism bonds us to a family of faith, and that Jesus has promised to be with us always, from generation to generation. Photos are also a way of acknowledging family members who have gone before us to eternal life.

10. Offer a prayerful momento

Farewell departing guests by giving them a prayerful momento of your baby's baptism. This could be a prayer/holy card. Or a photo of your child to place on the 'fridge door as a reminder to pray for him/her.

Helpful Hint

A typical baptismal party will involve people of varying religious commitment. Be sensitive to people who do not embrace your Catholic faith or who are 'distanced' from the Church. Let them know, by word and gesture, that they are warmly welcomed and included in this gathering. A baptismal party is also a natural and attractive way to share faith. While respecting the religious positions of others, be open to opportunities to invite people to know more about the Catholic community.

TeresaPirola.net

Text: Teresa Pirola

Design: Sarann Ryan

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