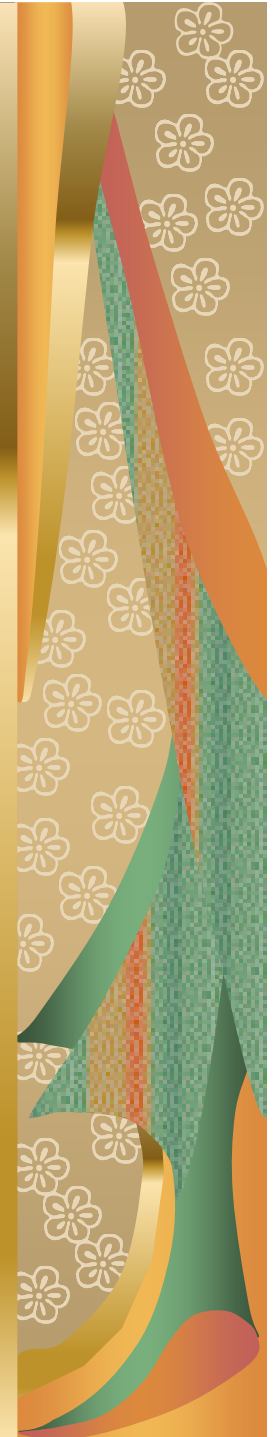


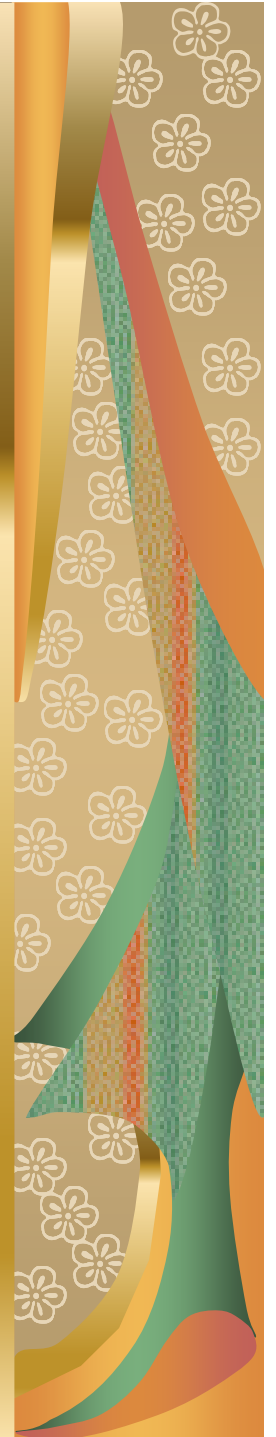
INFANT BAPTISM: A MILLENNIAL MILESTONE

WALKING IN THE
NEWNESS OF LIFE



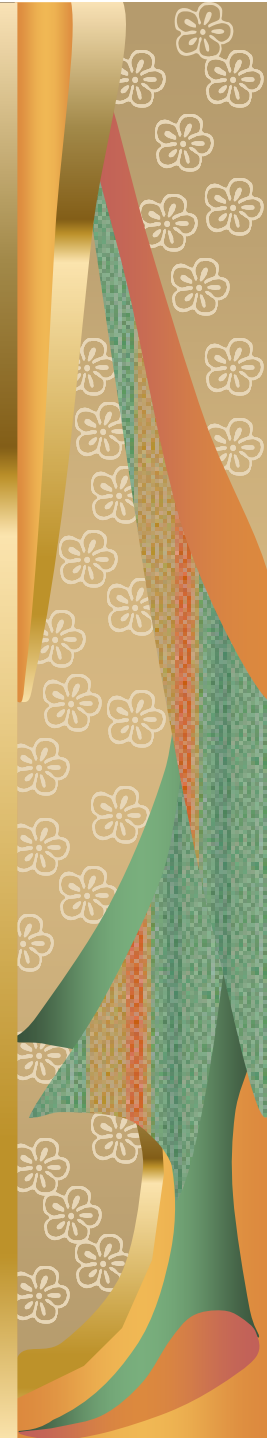
WELCOMING/HOSPITALITY

- First we need to reach out in hospitality, sensitivity; not wanting to overburden parents with unnecessary requirements. We want to invite and love them into the Church.
- Welcoming: The Bulletin Notice; the initial contact person; the registration process; personal interviewer; the baptismal letter; flyer about choosing godparents; parish rules; inclusion
- Prayer for expectant parents once a month; blessing after Mass always available



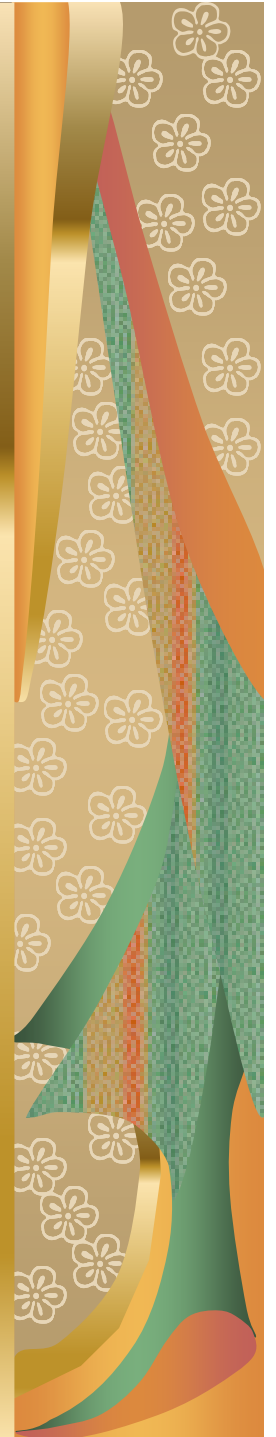
A PARISH TEAM APPROACH

- Many parishes today are so immense and parishioners so mobile, it is virtually impossible for the pastor to know the families in his care
- Priests are becoming over-extended and must look for further ways to delegate duties. They are increasingly looking to lay people to help prepare parents, and lay people are proving to be a great inspiration to young parents because they have lived the experience.
- Baptismal coordinators (the parish team) need background and training.....



A TIME TO TEACH

- Parents bringing their child for baptism may not understand what the sacrament is all about. Vatican II has given us a richer understanding of baptism and our faith, and challenges us to prepare parents well.
- If we can give these new parents an experience of faith, in addition to theology and rules, we can convert or bring them back into the fold.
- When we consider all the young parents bringing their babies for baptism, some may be barely churched at all. They need to be evangelized so that they would understand their faith to pass it on to their children.





By broadening baptismal preparation to include parenting as a vocation and adult faith formation and combining them with basic baptismal preparation in a deeply pastoral way and with follow-up, everyone benefits: parents, parish, unmarried individuals.

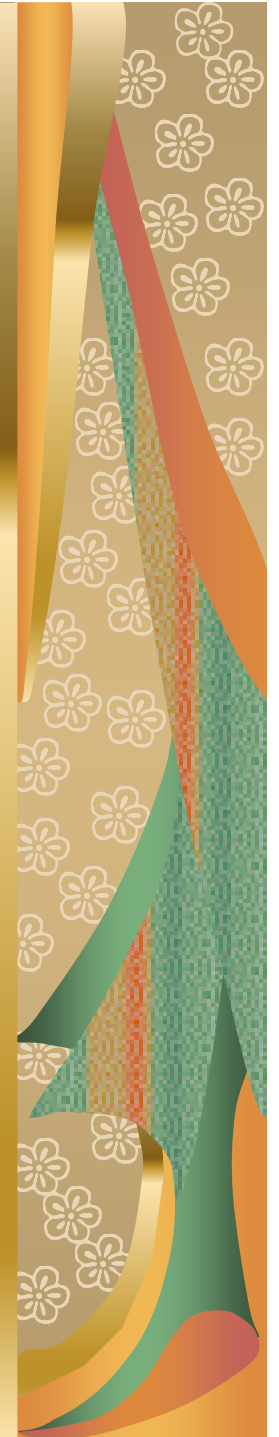


Offer a retreat program for couples expecting a new child focusing on the miracle of creation and skills for parenting and nurturing faith in young children.



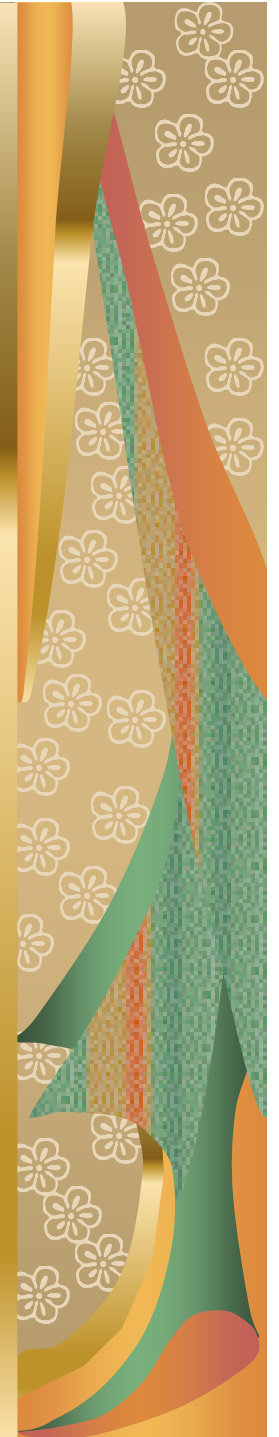
Prepare packets ABC (After Baby Comes)

1. child health, safety, and development
2. balancing a budget
3. managing stress
4. forming a loving, lasting bond with their child.

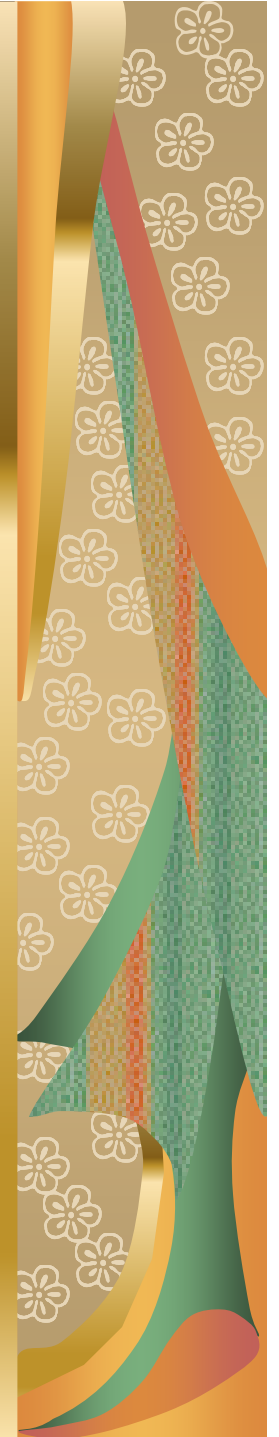


CELEBRATING BAPTISM

- Sunday Mass so community can be aware and support
- Have greeters welcome the family and their friends and show them to their seats where they can leave diaper bags, bottles, etc.
- Include parents, godparents and infants in the entrance procession
- Invite the assembly to respond to the baptismal promises along with parents and godparents
- Present the child with a baptismal garment made by, or personalized by a member of the parish

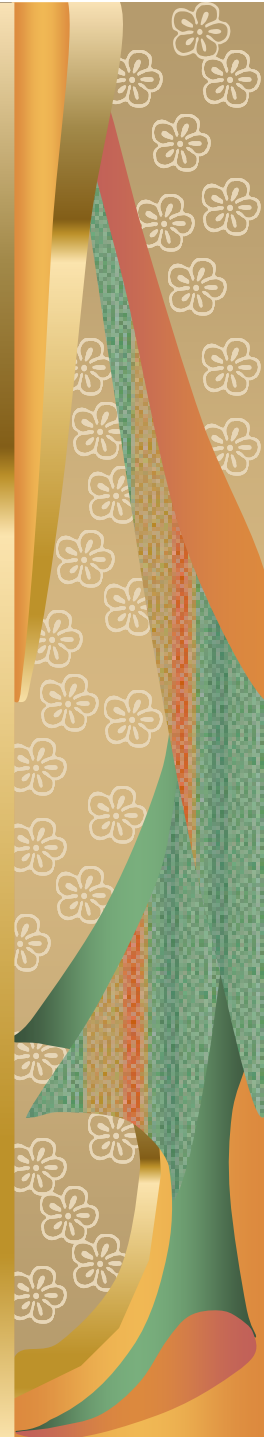


- Include the newly baptized and their families in the prayer of the faithful.
- Introduce the newly baptized to the parish at the end of the liturgy and hold the child(ren) so all may see and welcome them.
- Congratulate the newly baptized and their families in the parish bulletin/website.
- Encourage the parishioners to keep the family in prayer.
- Knit baby blankets as gift from parish; hot meals when they come home with baby with a special grace included.




FOLLOW-UP & CONTINUED SUPPORT

- Minister to Godparents—how are they treated? Encourage them to be involved with family especially re: faith.
- Give meaningful gifts (ritual booklet, holy water font, marriage booklet).
- Create a 'Parenting Corner' in the vestibule with bulletin board and table. Have useful magazines, brochures, upcoming workshop flyers, Catholic updates (available from St. Anthony Messenger Press www.CatholicUpdate.org)

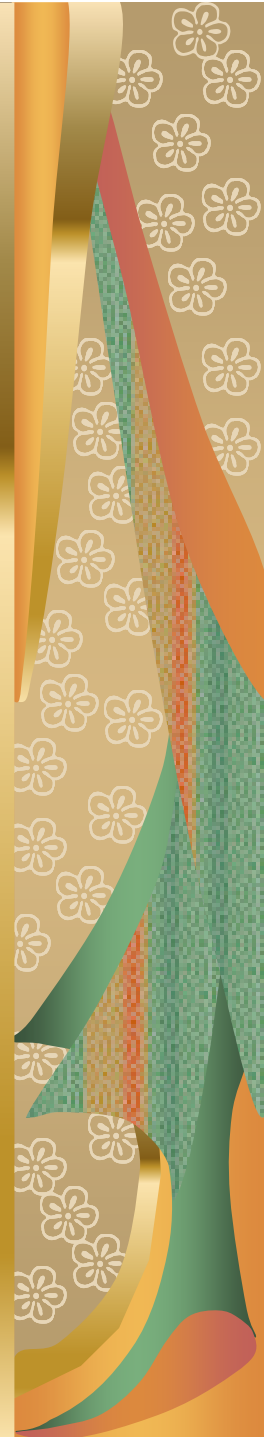


Families with Children

 With the birth of the first child, the couple embarks on a new life task to accept new members into the family and to adjust the rules, roles, responsibilities and relationships of their family to include the needs of the youngest members. The challenge for families with children involves:

1. developing parenting roles and skills;
2. negotiating and joining in childrearing, financial, and household tasks;
3. realigning relationships with extended family to include grandparenting roles;
4. sharing socialization with the outside world;
5. developing new patterns of family communication, traditions, celebrations.

from *Young Adult Works*, a publication from the Center for Ministry Development.





What is Elizabeth Ministry?

Elizabeth Ministry is an international movement designed to support women and their families during the joys, trials and sorrows of the childbearing years. Elizabeth Ministry's mission is to cherish children, encourage families and build community. They offer peer support, mentoring, spiritual nourishment, educational and inspirational resources.

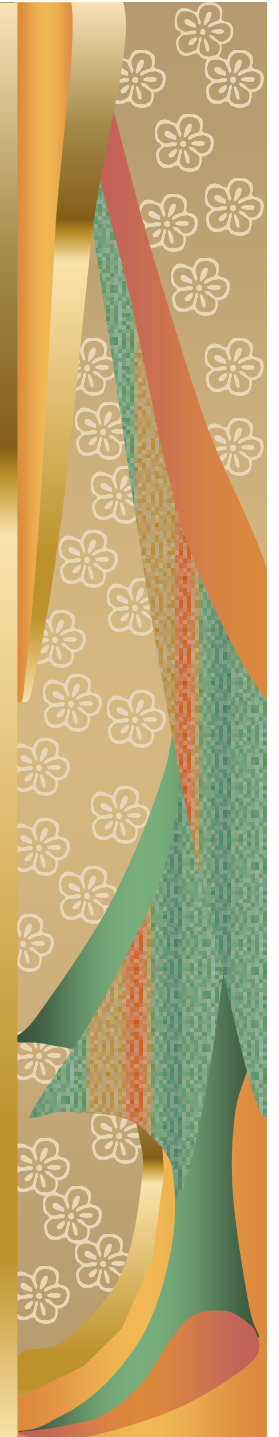
www.ElizabethMinistryInternational.com



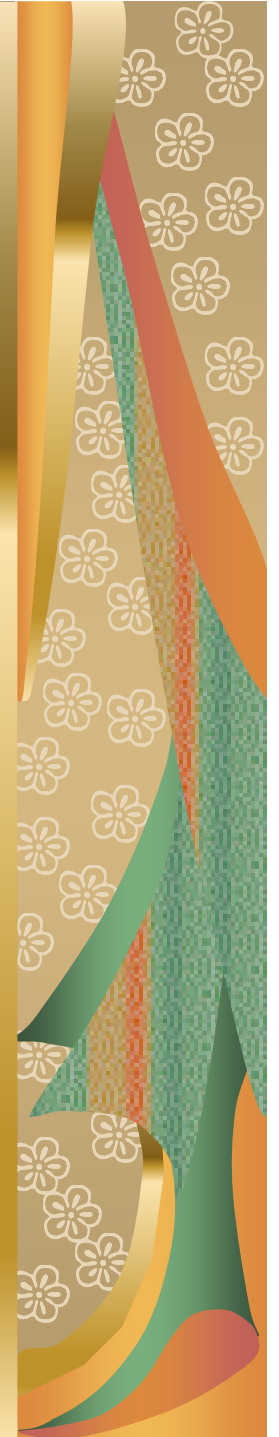
Newsletters, programs and activities we do as a parish *after* baptism to support parents.



Offer trained mentors.



- sponsor playgroups; have play areas available; also a changing area available in parish.
- welcome new parents along with their child at Mass (in main Church not separate room). Show them they are part of parish as a family.
- have babysitting available during parish events
- create Moms or Dads or couples group, using i.e. Home Faith Resources by Claretian Publications <http://homefaith.wordpress.com/homefaith-resources/>.



- have various on-line tools available; witness talks; podcasts; pertinent videos.
- send an anniversary card yearly.
- arrange home visits.
- send monthly letters to their home; Our Sunday Visitor publishes these as *Letters to Families*, www.osv.com.

Contact person for *Infant Baptism*:
Elaine Dankowski, Associate Director,
Department of Lifelong Faith Formation
edankowski@buffalodiocese.org 716-847-5516

