

GIVING BABY THE BEST

The single thing that will give your child the biggest advantage in life is available, at no cost, to all.

by Greg Trainor



*I*t is difficult to find words to accurately describe the rush of emotions that accompany the birth of your child. Nine months of preparation filled with prenatal nutrition, doctor visits, exercise, prayer and even reading to baby in the womb had scarcely prepared us for the wonder of this moment. Lydia and I were certain that our newly born child was the most beautiful sight that we had ever seen. There was a goodness and beauty in this little child that went far beyond us. The birth of each of our children produced an equal sense of awe. Each child is a gift from God, an expression of both the love and the magnificence of God.

Giving baby the best. For most people, becoming a parent produces a new sense of responsibility. The natural response is to want to be the best parent that you can and to give the baby the best life possible. Most people want to give their kids good nutrition, good medical care and a good education. I know of people that put their child on a waiting list for a private school even before they brought the baby home from the hospital!

First, you need to realize that God loves your baby even more than you do! God wants to be actively involved in giving your child a good life here on the earth today. Jesus made this clear when he said: “I have come that they might have life and have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). God, who created your

child, desires to give him a wonderful life: “For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare, not for woe! Plans to give you a future full of hope” (Jeremiah 29:11).

Entrust your child to God’s care. In the Old Testament, Hannah was barren. Her greatest desire in life was to have a son. God heard her prayer and she gave birth to Samuel. Hannah’s prayer of thanksgiving is so beautiful: “Pardon, my lord! As you live my lord, I am the woman who stood near you here, praying to the Lord. I prayed for this child, and the Lord granted my request. Now I, in turn, give him to the Lord; as long as he lives, he shall be dedicated to the Lord.”

As parents, we are caretakers of the gift that God has given us (a child). We are to look after this child with God’s help. Follow the example of Hannah and entrust your child to God’s care. Give your child to God all of the days that he will live. Ask God to help you nourish the life of this child that he has entrusted to you.

God pours out his goodness. God is on your side and wants to be your helper. It is not simply up to you to provide all of the material needs of your family through sweat and hard work. Seek God and he will bring you the things that your family needs.

God desires to pour out his goodness

upon the life of your child. What God has for your child is available just for the asking. God’s goodness goes beyond the bounds of material things. God desires that your child would live a completely new life. Through Baptism, the grace and power of God will transform your child and give them a life that is radically different. The practical

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advantages of having your baby baptized far outweigh the advantages made available through things like a nice house, prepaid college tuition, health insurance or even a hefty trust fund. The simple truth is that the best of what God has for your child is available in Baptism.

Come, receive God’s grace. Baptism is much more than a cultural or religious tradition. It goes well beyond establishing a church membership for your child. Baptism is God’s means to bestow his richest blessings upon your child. Even for a child that is no longer an infant, Baptism is the single, greatest thing that will give your child an advantage in life.

Through Baptism, your child receives a life that is better in substance and quality. In Baptism, your child is freed

from the bondage of original sin, freed from the power of evil, made God's child, an heir to God's Kingdom, and filled with the Holy Spirit. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* sums this up quite well: "Baptism not only purifies from all sins, but also makes the neophyte 'a new creature,' an adopted son of God, who has become a 'partaker of the divine nature,' member of Christ and co-heir with him, and a temple of the Holy Spirit." (CCC, 1265)

A new creation. In Baptism, we die with Christ and so we also rise with Christ. (see Colossians 2:12) This is a life transforming experience that makes us new, different in our very being or substance, giving us a life that is better in quality. The Bible expresses this quite clearly: "So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

The baptized person does not merely become different, but takes on God's divine nature: "Through these, he has bestowed on us the precious and very great promises, so that through them you may come to share in the divine nature, after escaping from the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire" (2 Peter 1:4).

Free from original sin. As beautiful and innocent as a newborn appears, it is important to remember that everyone is born into a world that has been marred by sin. The Catechism points out that: "Born with a fallen human nature and tainted by original sin, children also have need of the new birth in Baptism to be freed from the power of darkness and brought into the realm of the freedom of the children of God, to which all men are called." (CCC,1250)

Jesus came to rescue the world from sin. It is through Baptism that the grip of original sin is broken off of your child's life: "By Baptism all sins are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin." (CCC, 1263)

Free from the power of evil. "In a simple form, exorcism is performed at the celebration of Baptism." (CCC, 1673) Baptism frees your child from the power of evil. God pours out his grace in abundance in Baptism, addressing every area of need in your child's life. He is the God "who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly." (James 1:5)

Adopted as God's child. Secular culture refers to all people as "children of God." In fact, being born in to the fallen state of original sin makes us slaves to sin, not children of God. It is through the grace of Baptism that one becomes a child of God: "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption. As proof that you are children, God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!' So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God. (Galatians 4:5-7)

Heir to God's Kingdom. What could be better than being the heir to an industrial fortune? Being an heir to God's Kingdom would be better! "The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ..." (Romans 8:16-17a) Scripture calls the baptized believer who perseveres in faith in Jesus as Savior and dies in the state of grace a "vic-

tor." In the book of Revelation, Jesus promises that such a victor will share his throne: "I will give the victor the right to sit with me on my throne, as I myself first won the victory and sit with my Father on his throne." (Revelation 3:21)

Filled with the Holy Spirit. In the sacrament of Baptism, the Holy Spirit comes to physically dwell within the baptized person. The baptized person becomes a "temple of the Holy Spirit": "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19)

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit came inside the body of the prophet Ezekiel on the bank of the River Chebar. Though it was a momentary experience, Ezekiel would speak of that glorious experience for the rest of his life. He had a momentary taste of what the Christian receives in Baptism. What a glorious privilege it is to become a temple of the Holy Spirit. Just as the Eucharistic presence of Jesus resides within our churches, so the presence of the Holy Spirit resides every moment of every day in the body of a baptized Christian. It's an awesome thing!

Baptism is a "no brainer." Once you see all that God has available for your child in Baptism, the choice to baptize your child becomes a "no brainer." Remember, God's love for your child is perfect. Bring your child for the sacrament of Baptism to receive God's richest blessings.

If you then, who are wicked,
know how to give good gifts to your children,
how much more will the Father in heaven
give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?

(Luke 11:13)

