Baptism: Welcome to the Family of God

I was once given the assignment to research my own baptism, so I tracked down the photos and interviewed my mother. I learned when and where it happened, who was there, and what was served at the party that followed. When I asked my mom why she wanted to baptize me, she explained that she was eager to initiate me into the family of God.

Our baptisms are an important first step in our faith journey, but what is begun at baptism takes a lifetime to grow into. We never finish becoming Christian.

Baptism reminds us that we are one body

How do you react when you find out a baby will be baptized during the Mass you are attending? One of the reasons the Church brought baptisms back as a part of Sunday liturgies is to remind us all of our own baptismal moment, and to renew our personal commitment to living out our baptism. Due to our custom of infant baptism, adult Catholics tend to not think about this sacrament very much. But what if we lived as though we have just emerged from the baptismal font? How would this change our perspective?

We are baptized into a community. Indeed, one of the most significant reasons to baptize our children is to claim them as children of God within the community of believers. As Pope Francis reminds us, “No one can be a believer alone.” We are given our faith traditions from those who have traveled before us, and we pass along our faith to those just beginning their journey. We are part of something much bigger then ourselves.

We may experience dramatic moments along the way, yet more often God is found in the ordinariness of life. The Church provides tools and encourages us to deepen our faith: regular

attendance at Mass, personal prayer, frequent confession, acts of charity, liturgical seasons, spiritual direction and religious retreats.

Remind kids where their faith journey began

One of the best things we can do for our children’s religious formation is to remind them of where their journey began, so tell them about their own baptism. Perhaps you have pictures from your children’s baptism or the white garment and candle given at the celebration of the sacrament. Talk about the special day of their baptism: Who was there? Who performed the sacrament? Did a celebration follow the service?

Most important: Remind kids that their baptism is only the beginning. Knowing and loving God as a Catholic Christian is a path they will walk for a lifetime!