

A NOTE TO PARENTS

"... until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature humanity, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ ..."

Ephesians 4:13

At the baptism of a child, the celebrant asks the parents and godparents, "Will you by your prayers and witness help this child to grow into the full stature of Christ?" They reply, "I will, with God's help." Later, the entire congregation promises to *do all in their power to support the candidates in their life in Christ*. These are sweeping promises; at their heart is Paul's conviction that our new life in Christ can only be lived out in community. In the work of creation and redemption, God has showered us with gifts, which bring us into a shared life. There, the very exercise of these gifts, and our thanksgiving for them, enables God to bestow them in ever greater abundance, so that the Body grows stronger, more loving, more faithful ... more able to grow.

Read this passage from Ephesians every day this week: read it with your spouse or your child's godparent or grandparent; find a quiet time and meditate on it. Then read the baptismal promises (Prayer Book, p. 302 - 305) as you look at your child, lying asleep or playing nearby. What do you remember of your child's baptism? Of your own baptism? If your child was too little to remember his or her baptism, have you looked together at photos of the day, or told your child about it? Do you have mementoes, such as a candle, or cards, that your child has seen? Do you remember the day on its anniversary?

There are many good books on baptism for parish adult study: *The Baptizing Community* by Theodore Eastman; *Remember Who You Are: Baptism and the Christian Life* by William Willimon; *Taking the Plunge: Baptism and Parenting* by Anne Kitch; *Living Water: Baptism as a Way of Life* by Klara Tammany. Are there periodic adult study groups on baptism in your congregation? How faithful is your parish in fostering a sense of the ongoing, transformative power of these promises—and of God's grace through them—in its common life?

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Year B
PROPER 13
TRACKS 1 and 2

"There is one Body and one Spirit ...
one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
one God who is Father of us all."

EPHESIANS 4:4-6

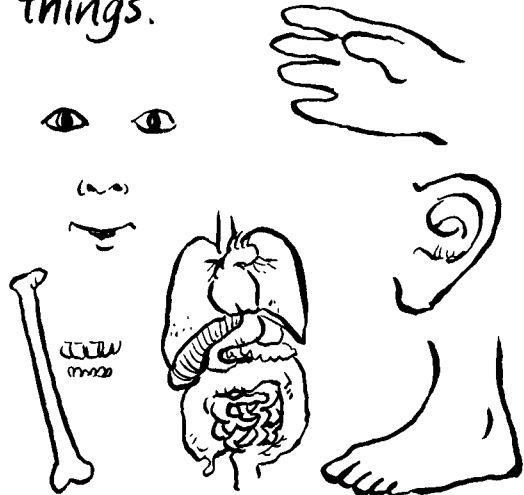


GOD'S FAMILY, THE CHURCH, IS LIKE A BODY.

The head is JESUS.
We are all parts of his
Body, because we are
baptized.



The different parts of
a body do different
things.



The people in CHRIST'S
BODY do different things
too. They do different
things in church...



...and different things
in God's world.

God made us all to be different. But he made us to love each other, and work together to take care of his world. When Jesus fills us with his love, we are like a healthy body that is growing big and strong.

The Bible tells us to grow to be like Jesus.
Draw the baby who has just been baptized,
growing to be big and strong, like Jesus.

GROW
to mature humanity
to the measure of
the stature of
the fullness of
CHRIST EPHESIANS 4:13

