

*“...the holy catholic church...?”*

What images or experiences of Church do you most value or cherish?  
If the church is ‘catholic’, it is ‘universal’, a church for everyone. In what ways is this true of your experience of church? In what ways do you foster hospitality towards others? What barriers are there?  
In what ways are the characteristics of the church (‘one, holy, catholic and apostolic’) visible in your community or parish? How do you understand them?

*“...the communion of saints...?”*

What saints do you invoke in your prayer? Are there saints of the Church’s history who inspire you? Who is your ‘Confirmation saint’, and why?  
How has your family responded in moments of bereavement? Do you mark the anniversaries of deceased family, or visit their graves?  
How do you feel when you think of those who have died? What effect do you think your family’s past has on you today?  
How will find your place in the church?

*“...the forgiveness of sins...?”*

How hard or easy do is it for you to forgive? How is forgiveness demonstrated in your family? Are there grudges that can’t be set aside?  
Have there been any powerful moments of reconciliation in your life?  
How do you think you might experience Baptism as God’s forgiveness?

*“...the resurrection of the body and life everlasting?”*

What is heaven like, do you think? What images come to mind?  
What do you hope for most in life?  
What aspects of life would you most want to be ‘everlasting’? What aspects would you rather leave behind?  
How do you show respect for the body – your body or that of others?  
What part do health worries, issues or weaknesses play in shaping your life?

*“This is our faith.  
This is the faith of the Church.  
We are proud to profess it  
in Christ Jesus, our Lord.  
Amen”*

## *Your Baptism*

### *A Reflection*

“Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised in the Jordan by John. No sooner had he come up out of the water than he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove descending on him. And a voice came from heaven: ‘You are my Beloved Son; my favour rests on you.’”



*(Mark 1: 9-11)*

You are preparing for Baptism. You are about to be welcomed into the fullness of life and faith in the Catholic family. You have come, over time, to know Jesus and to know God as Father, a loving God who speaks to you with the words he spoke to Jesus himself: “You are my Beloved, my favour rests upon you.”

*This community welcomes you and makes a commitment to support you as you.*

When you are baptised, you will make the ‘Baptismal Promises’, an ancient formula in the form of questions, shared by all Christians. Indeed, everyone present will renew their baptism after you. These notes are to help you reflect on what these faith promises mean to you, the faith in which you will be baptised.

*Take these personal reflections and make them your own.  
Some of them you might share; some might be more private.  
You might like to jot down some of your thoughts.  
These are the 'Baptismal Promises' you will make – your own baptismal  
promises and the expression of the faith tradition in which you are being  
welcomed.  
Let these reflection questions help you as you make these promises.*

### ***The Renunciation of Sin***

*“Do you renounce sin, so as to live in the freedom of the children of God?”*

What things have caused you most difficulty in life? What do you hope will be new for you when you enter the Church?  
Have there been times when the 'right thing' was harder, so you went for the 'easy option' even though you knew it wasn't the right one?  
What does 'freedom' mean for you? How does this shape your family and relationships? When do you feel most free?  
What will it mean for you to be a 'child of God'?

When you make this promise, what will you hope for?

*“Do you renounce the lure of evil so that sin may have no mastery over you?”*

What does the 'lure of evil' mean to you? What things attract you? How do you distinguish between what is right and good and what is not?  
How do you experience temptation? How do you overcome it?  
Who or what shapes or influences you? Yourself? Your family? Your faith? Your ambitions (for yourself or your family)? What others might think of you?

When you make this promise at Baptism, what will it mean to you? What might it mean in the future?

*“Do you renounce Satan, the author and prince of sin?”*

Where is there 'darkness' in your life? Where do you find light?  
In what ways are you a 'light' for others?  
What other 'voices' in culture, in the world or in your dealings with others, might distract you from God in your life?  
Is there anything in your lifestyle that you might need to end or change in order to live out this promise?

### ***The Profession of Faith***

*“Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth?”*

When you hear the word 'God' what do you think of? What is God like to you?  
When you speak to others about God, what do you say? How do you want them to understand God?  
Do you think of God, in any sense, as 'Mother' as well as 'Father'?  
Are there any images from Scripture, art or literature that help you understand who God is? How has God been revealed to you?  
What do you thank God for most in your life?  
In what ways do you see creativity in your life?

*“Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord...”*

What words best describe Jesus for you: friend, brother, saviour, teacher, shepherd, Lord... or something else?  
How did you discover who Jesus is? Who is he for you?  
How do you understand what it means to "believe in" Jesus?

*“... who was born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered death and was buried,*

*rose again from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father?”*

Is there a Gospel story about Jesus which appeals to you in a particular way?  
How will you mark Christmas, Holy Week, Easter? Will you attend the great liturgies of these feasts in church? Will you share time with others to think about the events they celebrate, or to pray together?

*“Do you believe in the Holy Spirit...?”*

What does the 'Holy Spirit' mean to you? Do any of these ideas come to mind: 'life-giver', 'comforter', 'strength', 'fire', 'breath', 'helper', 'gift', 'bond'? Are there any other ideas that come to mind?  
Where do you see the 'gifts of the Spirit' (courage, knowledge, wisdom, right judgement, understanding, reverence, wonder & awe) in your life? Which of these gifts do you most use – or most need?  
What would be the gifts – of the seven or any others – you would pray for in others?