



## Ask, Father James:

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*“Monday non-Catholics ask: Why does our Church baptize infants? Are there examples of infant baptism in Scripture?”*

Baptism in the Catholic church is in obedience to the commands of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Who tells us: “Unless one is baptized of water and the Spirit, they cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven” (John 3:5). In regard to infant baptism, the Bible tells of people "bringing babies to Jesus" (Luke 18:15). And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them. (Mark 10:14,16). Jesus then warns the adults; "do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these..."(Matthew 19:14). Nowhere in the Scripture does it say that we “should not baptize anyone until they reach the age of 7... or the age of 12... or the ‘age of reason.’”

Infant baptism became the practice of the ancient Church right after the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Immediately after the Ascension, after Jesus told the disciples; "go to the whole world and baptize in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit... (Matthew 28:19), one of the first places the Apostle Peter went to was to the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:19-48). He including all the children in the household. So also was the woman named Lydia; "She and the members of her household were baptized" (Acts 16:13-16). So also was Apostle Paul Jailer; He and all his family were baptized (Acts 16:33), A synagogue ruler named Crispus "and his entire household" became believers and were baptized (Acts 18:8). In one of Paul's letters, he wrote, "I also baptized the household of Stephanas" (1 Corinthians 1:16). These households must have included infants.

The Christian tradition from this earliest time was to baptize everyone in the household. For references, we note that on the day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter told the people; "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children" (Acts 2:38-39). Also, Paul's jailer asked the apostle Paul, "What must I do to be saved?" he was told, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household." The man believed, his despair turned to joy, and "he and all his family were baptized" (Acts 16:31,33). Thus, we can safely say that when an adult was baptized, whether a father or mother, so were the children in the household.

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