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1

## The Sacrament of Baptism

**Directions:** Read the following paragraphs about the Sacrament of Baptism and then answer the questions that follow.

**W**ater is necessary for life on earth. Plants need water to grow, and animals need water to drink. In fact, human beings can go only a few days without water, or they will die. Water is also powerful. Rainstorms can flood the land, and ocean waves can sink ships. Water can take life just as easily as it gives it.

Not only is water important for our physical lives; it is equally important for our spiritual lives. We must receive the Sacrament of Baptism in order to receive salvation. Baptism washes away sin. It gives us a new life in the Holy Spirit and makes us members of the Body of Christ, the Church.

Like all Sacraments, the rite of Baptism requires words and actions. The priest pours water on the head of the person being baptized (or immerses him or her in water) and says, "I baptize you in the name of

the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

We are all born into life, but that life is in a broken relationship with God because of Original Sin. Sin is a sort of death, so we are reborn when we are freed from sin. All sins are forgiven through Baptism, including Original Sin. Baptism allows us to share in Christ's Death for us on the Cross and to rise to new life with His Resurrection. Our broken relationship with God is restored, and we become the adopted children of the Father: we can now call Him Father, just as Jesus does. The baptized person receives sanctifying grace, which is God's life in the person.

Baptism makes an indelible (permanent) mark on our soul. Therefore, it can be received only once.

## The Sacrament of Confirmation

**Directions:** Read the following information about the Sacrament of Confirmation, then answer the questions that follow.

**J**esus made Confirmation a Sacrament. While Baptism is the “doorway” to Christian life, Confirmation helps give us the strength to live faithfully as Christians.

When we are baptized, we are reborn in the Holy Spirit. When we are confirmed, the grace we received at Baptism is made stronger within us. We are united more closely with Jesus and the Church. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit grow greater in us, and we are given special strength to spread and protect our Faith.

When we are confirmed, the bishop lays his hands upon us and prays for God’s blessing. This is similar to the way leaders in Jewish history would lay their hands upon someone who was selected for a task. This was a sign of being chosen. It was also a sign of God’s blessing upon the person to help him carry out his task.

The Church continues this tradition in the Sacrament of Confirmation.

In this Sacrament, the bishop also anoints us with holy oil. When he does so, he says, “Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.” This anointing is a symbol of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Oil cleanses, soothes, strengthens, and beautifies us. This anointing is a seal and a consecration. In other words, we are marked as God’s possession! This makes us more like Jesus, who said, “For on [the Son of Man] the Father, God, has set his seal” (John 6:27b).

Just as the Son of God was sealed by the Father, we are sealed by the Father in Confirmation.

Jesus often called his Father – and our Father – “Abba.” This shows the close, familiar love of a child for his or her own parent. Confirmation, through God’s grace, brings us into this love too.

## The Eucharist

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**Directions:** Read the following information about the Eucharist, then answer the focus questions.

**T**he Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. The priest at Mass, through the Holy Spirit, transforms bread and wine into the actual Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. This transformation is called *transubstantiation*. Even though the bread and wine look and taste the same as they did before, they have become Christ's true Body and true Blood.

The bread and wine are not just symbols of Jesus' Body and Blood. At the Last Supper, Jesus was very clear. When He gave His Apostles the bread, He did not say, "This is a sign of my body." Instead, He said, "This is my body." Similarly, when He gave His Apostles the cup of wine, He did not say, "This is a sign of my blood." Instead, He said, "this is my blood." We can believe what Jesus said because He is God. Therefore, we know that the Holy Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ.

When we receive Holy Communion, we grow closer to Christ. The Eucharist helps us avoid sin and strengthens our charity. It helps us see the face of Jesus in the poor. Just as real food nourishes us and gives us strength, the Eucharist nourishes us spiritually and strengthens our souls so that we can live faithfully as Christians. A desire for eternal life is placed within our hearts. When we receive the Eucharist, we are connected to Heaven, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all the angels and saints.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* no. 1394 explains that receiving the Eucharist often increases charity in our daily life. So what does increasing charity in our daily life mean? It means that we grow closer to Christ and see things in a different way – a more positive and hopeful way. Seeing things in this way leads us to practice the values of the Kingdom of God and to avoid activities that go

## Anointing of the Sick

**Directions:** Read the information below. You will use what you learn to complete the **Anointing of the Sick Scavenger Hunt**.

Jesus gave the Apostles some of His power to heal the sick and to forgive sins. They continued to heal the sick and forgive sins after Jesus Ascended to Heaven. One of the Apostles, St. James, tells us that the Apostles prayed over and anointed those who were sick:

Is anyone among you sick? He should summon the presbyters [priests] of the church, and they should pray over him and anoint [him] with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven.

—JAMES 5:14-15

Priests follow this example today. When someone is very sick and might die, a priest administers the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. He prays over the person and anoints him or her with holy oil.

The priest first anoints the person's forehead with oil and says a prayer. He then anoints the hands of the sick person and says another prayer. The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick has several effects:

- › It strengthens us to suffer with Jesus.
- › It heals us if it is God's will.
- › It frees us from our sins if we are not able to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- › It prepares us for eternal life in Heaven.

The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is not meant for someone who is suffering from a little cold. Rather, it is for someone with a serious illness or someone who might be in danger of death from sickness, injury, old age, or surgery.

We need help to suffer well and still be able to do good (practice virtue). Many people wonder why

God doesn't choose to heal everyone who is sick. Only God knows the answer to that. Perhaps the illness is purifying the person and helping him or her to choose God. Maybe it is an opportunity to do penance so the persons can go straight to Heaven when he or she dies. Perhaps the person's time on earth is simply over and it is time for him or her to go to Heaven. Whatever the reason, the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick helps us to make good use of our sufferings and to have our sins forgiven so that we can be ready to go to Heaven when the time comes.