

## PART 2

# WE HOPE: CELEBRATING THE CHRISTIAN MYSTERY

## CHAPTER 6

# The Sacraments of Initiation

## Parish Religious Education Adaptation

### Student Preparation

- Students were requested to journal their responses to Chapter 5 “Review Questions” (page 141) 1, 2, 5, and 6.
- Students were asked to read the Introduction to Part 2, We Hope: Celebrating the Christian Mystery (pages 144–147) and Chapter 6: The Sacraments of Initiation (pages 148–167) in preparation for this session.

### Warm-up (15–20 minutes)

- Point out to the students how the Catholic Church calls its public worship *liturgy*, which means “public work.” **Stress that liturgy—worshiping God—is the first and most important work of the Church. In the liturgy we learn to think and speak and act like Jesus—to be people who serve others and build up God’s kingdom.** There is no more appropriate response to God’s gracious love. Go on to ask: *Who celebrates the liturgy?* Make sure the students understand: (1) Christ is the foremost celebrant of the liturgy/sacraments (all sacraments are liturgy). (2) The faithful in heaven celebrate the liturgy. (3) The members of the Church on earth celebrate by sharing in Christ’s priesthood in one of two ways—the common priesthood and the ministerial priesthood.
- **Call attention to the text section “The Liturgy and the Blessed Trinity” (page 145). Use questions like the following to discuss the work of the Trinity in the liturgy:**
  - To whom are the prayers of the liturgy addressed? (God the Father)
  - What does it mean to say that God the Father is “the source and end of all blessings and creation and salvation”?
  - What are some ways Christ is present in the liturgy?
  - What are two ways the Holy Spirit helps us celebrate the liturgy?
- Continue with text subsection, “Sacraments” (pages 146–147). Distinguish between signs and symbols. Signs point to the notion of something else, e.g., a stop *sign* suggests the notion of cessation of motion, but it doesn’t actually stop a car. An efficacious *symbol*, however, not only points, it causes. For example, the bread and wine at Eucharist not only point to Jesus’ gift of self, they become the body and blood of Christ for us. Conclude by stressing to the teens that sacraments are efficacious symbols that make God’s grace-full love visible in signs that make real what they signify.

### Part I: Lesson (40 minutes)

#### Text Reference: Our Need for Symbols and Signs; Baptism; Confirmation (pages 148–156)

- Remind the students how they discovered in Chapter 2 that “In Jesus, God became a human being because God knew we could not love anything we couldn’t put our arms around” (G.K. Chesterton). Stress that in Jesus, the invisible God becomes visible, the transcendent God becomes imminent and embraceable. Then, go on to talk about rituals and symbolic actions that shape our lives, that signify an invisible reality in our lives. For example: a handshake confirms reconciliation; an embrace drives out fear; a kiss promises faithfulness. Jesus knew this. That is why he made powerful human actions—washing, eating, touching, anointing—signs of God’s love. When we celebrate the sacraments, God’s grace—God’s own life—is real for us.
- Brainstorm a list of other symbolic actions (e.g., a handshake; a kiss; a salute; a hug). Ask: “What is the value of symbols and symbolic actions?” Help the teens recognize that symbols and symbolic actions allow us to transcend time and space, to make connections that would otherwise be impossible, and to express things that would otherwise be inexpressible.

- Invite the students to describe initiation rituals by having them brainstorm about groups to which they belong: e.g., family, school, church, team, activity (chess club), friends. Choose one of these groups and ask questions like the following to have the students tell about the ways they were initiated or welcomed into it:

- How were you welcomed into that group—any special words, gestures, activities?
- How were you taught to behave in that group?
- What traditions does the group have? (e.g., family reunions, pre-game activities, pep rallies)?
- How do these traditions communicate the identity of the group to its members?

Help students recognize the importance of initiation—formal or informal—in developing a group that possesses spirit and identity.

- Tell the teens that the Church has its own important initiation rituals. Write the words “**Sacraments of Initiation**” on the board. Ask the students to name these sacraments. List on the board (**Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist**). Take a moment to review briefly the history of adult initiation and the meaning of terms such as *neophyte*, *catechumen*, and *catechumenate* (see pages 150–51). (*Note: If you were able to have someone come to class who has either personally experienced or has helped lead others through the steps of the catechumenate and celebration of the initiation sacraments at the Easter Vigil, have that person share his or her experience with the class.*)
- Before moving on to the individual sacrament of Baptism, stress to the teens that the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA) is normative for celebrating the initiation sacraments. That is, the periods and stages of the RCIA shape the way we are to view and celebrate the initiation sacraments separately.
- Introduce Baptism by distributing copies of the activity sheet “Belonging” from the end of the lesson. Point out the blank space (*name of group*) in the first column on the sheet. Direct the students to choose one of the groups to which they belong that they brainstormed earlier and to write its name in the space. Point out the item headings in each column that outline how every group—including the Church—has certain signs of belonging: places or times where members **gather** or meet; items members **wear**; **activities** members share; **membership** qualifications; and someone(s) or something(s) to which members owe their **loyalty and respect**. Have the teens list signs of belonging to the group they listed in column one. For example, a marching band might **gather** twice a week after school; members **wear** blue and gold uniforms; they share **activities** such as music practice, marching drills, and band competitions; **members** must earn a spot through auditioning; members are **loyal and respectful** to the band leader, the school, and one another. Have the students work through the same elements for the Church in column two. Those who are members of the Catholic Church: **gather** regularly on Sunday, for religion class; they may **wear** a cross on a chain; they share worship and service **activities**; **membership** is “catholic”—open to all; members owe **loyalty and respect** to the Trinity, the Gospels, and to the Church. After the students complete the sheet, invite sharing.
- Ask the students to name the various symbols used in Baptism. List them on the board (water, oil, white garment, lighted candle). Call on volunteers to explain what each symbol represents.
- Go on to explain that in the sacrament of Baptism we become part of a new group by plunging into Christian life. In the waters of Baptism we die with Christ then rise to new life with him. Make sure the students recognize that Baptism washes away sin and its due punishment; makes us new creatures—children of God and temples of the Holy Spirit; welcomes us as members of the Church, the Body of Christ; and grants us a share in the common priesthood of all believers and in Christ’s mission of justice and peace. Then, to further summarize the effects of Baptism, ask:
  - What is forgiven in Baptism? (original and personal sin and all due punishment)
  - What is conferred in Baptism? (sanctifying grace)
  - What is re-born? (the baptized person as a child of God and Temple of the Holy Spirit)
  - What is Baptism’s challenge? (to live out the Gospel by serving others)
  - What is Baptism’s guarantee? (We are not alone in life or in living out the Gospel; we have the Holy Spirit and the Christian community to guide us.)
- Write the phrase “**Baptism begins at the font. It doesn’t end there.**” on the board and ask the students to copy it in their journals. Ask the students what they think this phrase means. Accept all reasonable replies, only pointing out that Baptism is for growth into union with all others who have been baptized. Baptism leads, in other words, to communion. Finally, call attention to the two questions in the section “Writing

Assignment” on page 153. Rather than having the students write their answers to the queries, have them discuss them aloud.

- Summarize the opening text section under “Confirmation” (pages 154–55). List the requirements for celebrating the sacrament on the board:
  - **Profess the faith.**
  - **Be in the state of grace.**
  - **Intend to receive the sacrament.**
  - **Be prepared to witness to Jesus Christ.**

Ask the teens to tell what these requirements mean in their own words. Expect responses similar to the following:

- Believe in God and Church teachings and be willing to live according to that belief.
- To be free of serious unconfessed sin.
- To want to receive the sacrament—not simply “going through the motions.”
- Our faith is not a private affair but something we witness to in word and example; e.g., tutoring children, helping with a food drive, peer counseling, visiting the elderly or infirm, helping out a homebound neighbor, coaching younger kids.
- Distribute copies of the activity sheet “Prayer for the Spirit,” which comes from the Rite of Confirmation. Invite the class to read the prayer aloud together. Ask if anyone knows where this prayer finds its origin. Ask another volunteer to read Isaiah 11:1–3. Afterward, point out that these “gifts” are qualities of the Messiah—the anointed one—who will be guided by God’s own Spirit. The relation of these gifts to the sacrament of Confirmation becomes clear when we remember that the Hebrew word “Messiah” (*Christos* or Christ in Greek) means “anointed.” Explain that we call ourselves “Christians” because we are the anointed ones too; God’s “well-oiled people,” as it were.
- Explain that the rite of Confirmation consists of the following:
  - anointing on the forehead with oil (sacred chrism);
  - the bishop’s laying on of hands;
  - the recitation of the words “Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.”
- Ask the students what symbolism oil holds for them. What do we use oil for? For example, to keep our engines running smoothly, to soothe skin, to use as a perfume, to add luster to wood. Go on to remind the teens that from ancient times, oil has been a symbol of abundance, joy, strength, healing, agility, and cleansing. For Jews, our ancestors in the faith, oil is the sign of God appointing someone to be a priest, prophet, and king—a special anointed one, a messiah, who would come to announce God’s kingdom. Once again, remind the students that the Hebrew word *messiah* means “anointed.” Remind them, too, how Jesus was “anointed”—filled with the Holy Spirit at his baptism.
- Conclude your consideration of Confirmation by having the students respond to the second and third “Discussion Questions” on page 157. For the second question, look for answers that center around concrete ways to practice the faith (e.g., going to Mass, doing works of service, forgiving enemies, etc.). For the third question, make sure the students understand that, like Baptism, Confirmation confers an indelible character on the person who celebrates it. Finally, encourage the students to keep their copies of the “Prayer for the Spirit” for use at home.

### **Break/Writing Exercise (10 minutes)**

- Join the students in a break with refreshments.
- Ask the teens to write in their journals responses to the following questions:
  - What are some reasons teens go to Mass?
  - What are some reasons teens don’t go to Mass?
  - Why do I/don’t I go to Mass?

### **Part 2: Lesson (25–30 minutes)**

**Text Reference: Eucharist; The Liturgical Year (pages 158–167)**

- Write the word “Eucharist” on the board. Ask:

- What does “Eucharist” mean? (*Thanksgiving*)
- Do you think “giving thanks” is the proper name for what we gather to do together each Sunday? Why or why not?

Go on to remind the teens how they discovered that both Baptism and Confirmation lead to communion—to Eucharist, the sacrament that “completes Christian initiation.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1322)

- Distribute the activity sheet “Names for the Eucharist.” Have the students work with a partner to match the names to their meanings. (Correct answers: 1-F; 2-E; 3-I; 4-H; 5-A; 6-C; 7-D; 8-B; 9-G.) Use the following as discussion points as you check the students’ answers:
  - *Eucharist*: What are some things for which you are thankful?
  - *Lord’s Supper*: Describe a meal you shared at which you experienced the presence of someone not physically present.
  - *Breaking the Bread*: What do you think it means to be “broken” for others?
  - *Eucharistic Assembly*: Why is the assembly lacking when members are absent? (Note: Take a moment to refer the teens back to the writing exercise about teens’—including their own—participation at Mass they did earlier. Stress that people gathered for Sunday Eucharist are a vision of what Church is. Remind the students how the Church is a sacrament that makes visible the unity between God and us *and* the unity that God wants for all humankind. When people are missing from the Eucharistic Assembly, that unity is weakened.
  - *Holy and Divine Liturgy*: When are times during Mass you feel closest to Christ? To others?
  - *Most Blessed Sacrament*: When is a time you can sit in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament?
  - *Holy Sacrifice*: The most ancient meaning of *sacrifice* is “to make holy.” How do you sacrifice for others? What sacrifices do others make for you?
  - *Holy Communion*: What are some of the benefits of receiving Holy Communion? (See page 160.)
  - *Holy Mass*: The Mass ends with a command: “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.” What is one way you can respond to that direct charge?
- Divide the group into dyads or triads. Give each small group a copy of the activity sheet “Mass Match.” Direct the students to arrange the cards in the order they come in the Mass. Offer help were necessary. Check results.
- Go on to distribute copies of the activity sheet “The Eucharistic Liturgy.” Use the sheet to present the two major parts of the Mass. Go through each part, briefly explaining each one (see also pages 160–162).
- Explain to the teens that the Church celebrates the Mass each Sunday to celebrate the Paschal mystery. The Church requires its members to gather, to listen to God’s Word, and to share the Eucharistic meal in memory of Jesus each Sunday—the Lord’s Day. Then, go on to explain that the Church also uses the rhythm of the seasons to celebrate God’s saving love for us. Provide a brief overview of the liturgical year using the chart on the Eucharistic Liturgy handout and the material on pages 162–164. Just for fun, ask the students if they know the traditional colors for each Church season: Advent=deep blue or violet; Christmas=white; Lent=purple; Easter=white; Ordinary Time=green.
- Write the word “**Sacramental**” on the board. Ask the students to tell what it means. See to it that the teens recognize that sacramentals provide occasion for an encounter with Christ. Invite the students to offer examples of each kind of sacramental:
  - *Objects*: altar, ambo or pulpit, icons, Easter candle, votive candles, baptismal font, stained-glass window, holy water
  - *Actions*: standing, kneeling, genuflecting
  - *Prayers*: blessing prayers, e.g., blessing of throats on the feast of St. Blaise (February 3); grace before meals
  - *Places*: national shrines, Holy Land, Fatima

Invite the teens to tell if and how they use sacramentals to help them grow as a person of faith.

**Prayer Experience (5 minutes)**

- Have the students gather in a circle around the Paschal (Easter) Candle. Light the candle. Observe a moment or two of silence.
- Lead the students in praying the prayer attributed to St. Patrick (page 167).

**Conclusion (1–2 minutes)**

- Direct the students to read Chapter 7: The Sacraments of Healing and Ministry (pages 168–191) in preparation for the next session. As they read, tell them to write down any questions they have about these sacraments.

Tell the students to complete the “Talents to Serve” activity on page 171 of Chapter 7, and be ready to share their written work at their next session.

If possible, arrange to have the pastor or another priest visit class to speak to the teens about the sacraments of Penance, Anointing of the Sick, and Holy Orders. Tell the priest you would like him to share how each sacrament is celebrated (see the lesson plan for Chapter 7). Also, gather numerous copies of Catholic magazines or periodicals or past issues of your diocesan newspaper or any Catholic newspapers that contain examples of what bishops, priests, and deacons do.

# Belonging

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*(name of group)*

## **Gathers**

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## **Wears**

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## **Shared Activities**

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## **Who Can Be a Member?**

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## **Loyalty & Respect**

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## ***The Catholic Church***

## **Gathers**

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## **Wears**

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## **Shared Activities**

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## **Who Can Be a Member?**

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## **Loyalty & Respect**

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## ☀ Prayer for the Spirit



All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
by water and the Holy Spirit  
you freed your sons and daughters from sin  
and gave them new life.

Send your Holy Spirit upon them  
to be their helper and guide.

Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of right judgment and courage,  
the spirit of knowledge and reverence.

Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.

# Names for the Eucharist

1. Eucharist \_\_\_\_
  2. Lord's Supper \_\_\_\_
  3. Breaking the Bread \_\_\_\_
  4. Eucharistic Assembly \_\_\_\_
  5. Holy and Divine Liturgy \_\_\_\_
  6. Most Blessed Sacrament \_\_\_\_
  7. Holy Sacrifice \_\_\_\_
  8. Holy Communion \_\_\_\_
  9. Holy Mass \_\_\_\_
- A. The supreme worship we can give God
  - B. The real presence of the Body and Blood of Christ
  - C. The consecrated Eucharistic species
  - D. Jesus' self-offering that makes us holy
  - E. Memorial of the Last Supper and Passover meal
  - F. Our great thanksgiving
  - G. Being sent forth to act as Christ for others
  - H. The gathering of God's people for worship
  - I. Symbol of sacrifice and sharing—sign of our willingness to sacrifice ourselves for others.





# Mass Match

Cut out the cards and mix them up. Work with a partner to match the cards to the order in which they take place at Mass.

<b>Memorial Acclamation</b>	<b>Glory to God</b>	<b>The Lord's Prayer</b>	<b>Creed (Profession of Faith)</b>
<b>Opening Prayer</b>	<b>Responsorial Psalm</b>	<b>Final Blessing</b>	<b>Breaking of the Bread</b>
<b>Dismissal</b>	<b>Eucharistic Prayer</b>	<b>First Reading</b>	<b>Great Amen</b>
<b>Greeting</b>	<b>Memorial Acclamation</b>	<b>Greeting of Peace</b>	<b>Entrance Procession</b>
<b>Second Reading</b>	<b>Closing Prayer</b>	<b>Preparation of the Gifts</b>	<b>Gospel Acclamation</b>
<b>General Intercessions</b>	<b>Lamb of God</b>	<b>Penitential Act/ Sprinkling</b>	<b>Preface/Holy, Holy, Holy</b>

# The Eucharistic Liturgy



*The Mass is our most important public worship together. The Mass has two major parts. The first part is called the Liturgy of the Word. It includes a celebration of the Word of God and concludes with an affirmation of community faith. The second part is called the Liturgy of the Eucharist, which is a remembrance of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. The following chart shows how there is a gradual building up to the highpoints of each part.*

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

Entrance Rites  
Readings & Psalm  
Gospel  
Homily  
Creed  
General Intercessions

## LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Preparation of Gifts  
Eucharistic Prayer  
Communion Rite  
Closing Rites

The highpoint of the Liturgy of the Word comes at the proclamation of the Gospel. Every other part of the "Word" liturgy leads up to or away from this key moment. While the other parts are important, they are less climatic. The Gospel is so important, it even colors and focuses the Liturgy of the Eucharist that follows. In the Liturgy of the Word, Christ is really present for us in his Word, just as he is really present for us in the signs of bread and wine during the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The highpoint of the Liturgy of the Eucharist comes at the great prayer of praise and thanksgiving called the *Eucharistic Prayer*. Each *Eucharistic Prayer* follows a four-fold design:

1. An opening exclamation of praise and invocation of the Spirit (*epiclesis*)
2. A remembering (*anamnesis*) of God's loving action—Institution Narrative
3. An intercession for God's continuing kindness
4. A closing summary exclamation of praise and Great Amen.

During the *Eucharistic Prayer* we recall the story of the Last Supper and Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. We pray for the Church and the world. We give thanks for all God's blessings and love. Every other part of the Eucharistic liturgy leads up to or away from this key moment.