

IMAGE OF GOD SERIES®

TEACHER'S  
MANUAL

8A

# Lord, Give Me Eternal Life

SACRAMENTS: PERSONAL  
MEETINGS WITH JESUS



Updated Second Edition

# **LORD, GIVE ME ETERNAL LIFE**

Eighth Grade Teacher's Manual



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Updated Second Edition

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# INTRODUCTION

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# INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

### **The Lord, Give Me Eternal Life Program**

The *Lord, Give Me Eternal Life* program is a Catholic religion curriculum for students in the eighth grade. The program is centered on a new approach found in the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, Saint Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis. Based solidly on Sacred Scripture, this approach stresses the dignity of each individual as a person created in the image and likeness of God. The *Lord, Give Me Eternal Life* program has as its emphasis grace and the sacraments. The material in each lesson revolves around fundamentals of our faith, stated in terms that the students can understand and remember.

*Lord, Give Me Eternal Life* consists of this teacher’s manual and a student textbook. The teacher’s manual consists of twelve units and forty-four lessons. The content of each unit is discussed in directions for the specific settings.

We strongly suggest that each student be provided with a copy of the Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version, Second Catholic Edition (RSV2CE); the *YOUCAT (Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church)*; and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)*.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the student textbook, there are numerous opportunities for students to look up various Scripture verses and topics in both the *YOUCAT* and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. It would also prove helpful to have copies of the documents of Vatican II available, along with the encyclicals of Saint Pope John Paul II.<sup>2</sup> The ample list of sources provides additional background material.

<sup>1</sup>Both the RSV2CE and the *YOUCAT* are published by Ignatius Press. For information about the *YOUCAT*, see their website at <https://www.youcat.org/>. Online, the *Catechism* can be found at <http://ccc.usccb.org/flipbooks/catechism/files/assets/basic-html/page-I.html#>.

<sup>2</sup>The documents of Vatican II and the encyclicals of Saint Pope John Paul II can be found by navigating the Vatican’s website, <http://w2.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html>.

### **Lesson Format**

Each lesson follows the ecclesial methodology outlined and discussed in *The Mystery We Proclaim, Catechesis at the Third Millennium* by Monsignor Francis D. Kelly. Ultimately, the goal of the method is to facilitate relationship with Jesus Christ and the students. The ecclesial method is especially discussed in part 4, chapter 3, of Monsignor Kelly’s book. There is detailed the lesson plan format of five steps: **Preparation, Proclamation, Explanation, Application, and Celebration**.

The **Preparation** step gives the catechist a list of the materials needed in the teaching of the lesson that follows.

The **Proclamation** is a joyful announcement of the Good News. The statement should be visually present before the students (on boards, on handouts, etc.) and reinforced throughout the lesson.

In the **Explanation** step, the Proclamation is then unpacked and explained in all its reality and reasonableness. In this step, the catechist is called to be creative and to help the students in their particular circumstances understand this truth.

In the **Application** step, the connection of this truth to the life of the student is made. The question “What difference does this make to me?” should be answered. The catechist should be trying to facilitate conversion in this step.

The **Extending the Lesson** section includes unit review worksheets, art projects, discussion questions, and other activities to extend the lesson. The unit review worksheets are in the appendix of the teacher’s manual. Other art projects and activities are described in detail in the teacher’s manual. These activities are optional and can be used at your discretion.

In the final step, **Celebration**, the truth of God is celebrated. Principally, this celebration is with a gratefulness of heart and prayerfulness.



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## **Using *Lord, Give Me Eternal Life* in a Parochial School Setting**

This teacher's manual contains twelve units and is designed for a school semester. Each unit begins with unit objectives, and most of the units have at least four or five lessons. The unit objectives give a brief summary of the main points covered in the unit. The lessons consist of the five steps of the ecclesial method, discussed earlier in this introduction. The text of the student book includes definitions for vocabulary words that are relevant to a specific unit. The definitions are formulated so that they can be understood and remembered by the students.

The student textbook includes numerous Scripture references, to provide the students with a rich scriptural foundation for the fundamentals of the faith that are being taught. Exercises and writing activities in the student book have the same purpose. This manual includes a commentary on the student textbook, along with suggestions for activities and classroom discussion. The student textbook, the commentary, and the suggestions will provide you with the material necessary to present the lesson. Copymasters for the units are included at the back of this manual.

Because prayer is essential to a follower of Jesus, we recommend that each religion period begin and end with prayer. It is important that the formal prayers of the Church are prayed, especially the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Glory Be, the Apostles' Creed, and the Act of Contrition. There should also be the opportunity for carefully prepared informal prayer.

This curriculum includes family notes and assessments for each unit, found in the appendix of this manual.

At the end of each unit, the teacher's manual will remind catechists to copy and distribute family notes to the students. These notes inform parents of the material their children have been learning, and help parents to reinforce this material at home, through prayers, activities, and conversation.

Teachers may choose how to use the unit assessments. They may be given formally as tests, or completed informally in small groups. Encourage students to share and discuss their assessments with their parents at home.

We suggest that you review an entire unit before beginning to teach it. On the basis of your review, plan how much of the unit you will cover each day of the week. There are forty-four lessons in all in this program. Sometimes you will cover one lesson a day, and other times it will take you more than a day to cover a lesson.

*Lord, Give Me Eternal Life* includes ample material for a full semester course of study. Normally, a unit should take a week or more to cover. If the Confirmation booklet is used during this semester, some of the activities can be eliminated or curtailed to allow time for its use.

## **Using *Lord, Give Me Eternal Life* in a Parish Religion Program Setting**

This teacher's manual contains twelve units. Each unit contains unit objectives, and most of the units have at least four or five lessons. The unit objectives give a brief summary of the main points covered in the unit. The lessons consist of the five steps of the ecclesial method, discussed earlier in this introduction. The student textbook includes a vocabulary list of words that are key to each lesson. The definitions are formulated so that they can be understood and remembered by the students. The student textbook also includes numerous Scripture references that provide the students with a rich scriptural foundation to the fundamentals of the faith that are being taught. Exercises also serve to reinforce the fundamentals taught. Finally, a commentary on the student textbook is given, along with suggestions for activities and classroom discussion. The student textbook, the commentary, and the suggestions will provide you with the material necessary to present the lesson. Copymasters for the units are included at the back of this manual.

The activities to extend the lesson help you to expand on what was taught in the lesson. It includes suggestions for written assignments, speakers, art projects, and various other activities that are an important part of the learning process.

Because prayer is essential to a follower of Jesus, we recommend that each religion period begin and end with prayer. It is important that the formal prayers of the Church are prayed, especially the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Glory Be, the Apostles' Creed, and the Act of Contrition. At the end of the student textbook is a

# INTRODUCTION

collection of some of the prayers the students should know. There should also be the opportunity for carefully prepared informal prayer.

This curriculum includes family notes and assessments for each unit, found in the appendix of this manual.

At the end of each unit, the teacher’s manual will remind catechists to copy and distribute family notes to the students. These notes inform parents of the material their children have been learning, and help parents to reinforce this material at home, through prayers, activities, and conversation.

Teachers may choose how to use the unit assessments. They may be given formally as tests, or completed informally in small groups. Encourage students to share and discuss their assessments with their parents at home.

*Lord, Give Me Eternal Life* includes ample material for a full year’s course of study. Assuming a one-day-per-week parish religion program, a unit should take a class period to cover. There are twelve units. We suggest that you review an entire unit before beginning to teach it. On the basis of your review, plan how much of the unit you will cover each class period. Sometimes you will be able to complete a unit during one class period, and at other times it will take more than one class period to cover a unit.

If the Confirmation booklet is used during this semester, some of the activities can be eliminated or curtailed in order to allow time for its use.

## General Instructions

### THE IMAGE OF GOD SERIES’ PRESENTATION OF *IMAGE OF GOD* IN CONFORMITY WITH THE *CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH*

The *Lord, Give Me Eternal Life* eighth-grade curriculum is a Catholic religion curriculum for children of eighth-grade age. Catechesis on the human person created in the image and likeness of God is used throughout the series. It is the intent of the authors of the Image of God Series to present the creation of man

and woman in the image of God in the series as “image of God” is defined and presented in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)*. Above all, however, it is the intent to make Jesus Christ, “the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, the visible and invisible” (Colossians 1:15–16; cf. CCC 241), the heart, center, and focus of the Image of God Series.

The impetus for the use of the theology of the “image of God” in the series is an insight of Saint John Paul II that highlights both the human dignity and proper human activity of man and woman created in the image of God. Each human being has been created by God in his image and likeness. “The divine image is present in every man” (CCC 1702). Our dignity is further ennobled by Jesus Christ, who took upon himself our human nature in order to redeem it. “Christian, recognize your dignity and, now that you share in God’s own nature, do not return to your former base condition by sinning” (CCC 1691, quoting Saint Leo the Great, *Sermo 21 in nat. Dom.*, 3: PL 54, 192C<sup>3</sup>).

Most importantly, it is Jesus who redeems the human race and reveals human beings to themselves. “It is in Christ, Redeemer and Savior, that the divine image, disfigured in man by the first sin, has been restored to its original beauty and ennobled by the grace of God” (CCC 1701). Furthermore, “In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear” (CCC 359, quoting *GS 22 § 1*). “Christ . . . makes man fully manifest to man himself and brings to light his exalted vocation” (CCC 1701, quoting *GS 22 § 1*). “Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear” (*GS 22 § 1*).<sup>4</sup>

All creation reflects God, who made all things. However, it is especially man and woman who bear a resemblance to God because they have been created in his image and likeness. “All creatures bear a certain resemblance to God, most especially man, created in the image and likeness of God. The manifold

<sup>3</sup>For a list of the spelled-out forms for all abbreviations used for the *Catechism* references, please see the appendix.

<sup>4</sup>All translations of *Gaudium et Spes* that are not part of an internal quotation from the *Catechism* are from the Vatican’s website ([http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html)).

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perfections of creatures—their truth, their goodness, their beauty—all reflect the infinite perfection of God. Consequently, we can name God by taking his creatures' perfections as our starting point, 'for from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator' (Wis 13:5)" (CCC 41).

"Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. And he is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead" (CCC 357). "In creating men "male and female," God gives man and woman an equal personal dignity' (FC 22). 'Man is a person, man and woman equally so, since both were created in the image and likeness of the personal God' (MD 6)" (CCC 2334).

The human person, both male and female, is created in the image of God. "Man and woman have been *created*, which is to say, *willed* by God: on the one hand, in perfect equality as human persons; on the other, in their respective beings as man and woman. 'Being man' or 'being woman' is a reality which is good and willed by God: man and woman possess an inalienable dignity which comes to them immediately from God their Creator (cf. Gen 2:7, 22). Man and woman are both with one and the same dignity 'in the image of God.' In their 'being-man' and 'being-woman,' they reflect the Creator's wisdom and goodness" (CCC 369; emphasis in original).

Man and woman each possess a spiritual soul. The soul is the invisible part of the human being because it is spiritual. Soul "refers to the innermost aspect of man, that which is of greatest value in him, that by which he is most especially in God's image: 'soul' signifies the *spiritual principle* in man" (CCC 363; emphasis in original).

The personal soul possesses the powers of intellect and will. The intellect is the power to know, to reason, to think, and to understand. The will is the power to choose the good and to love. "By his reason [intellect], he [the human person] is capable of understanding the order of things established by the Creator. By free will, he [the human person] is capable of directing himself toward his true good. He [the human person] finds his perfection 'in seeking and loving what is true and good' (GS 15 § 2)" (CCC 1704).

The human person is blessed by God with a free will. Freedom is an attribute of a being created in the image of God. "By virtue of his soul and his spiritual powers of intellect and will, man is endowed with freedom, an 'outstanding manifestation of the divine image' (GS 17)" (CCC 1705).

In addition to a personal soul, Adam and Eve also had bodies. "The human body shares in the dignity of 'the image of God': it is a human body precisely because it is animated by a spiritual soul, and it is the whole human person that is intended to become, in the body of Christ, a temple of the Spirit: 'Man, though made of body and soul, is a unity. Through his very bodily condition he sums up in himself the elements of the material world' (GS 14 § 1)" (CCC 364).

"The unity of soul and body is so profound that one has to consider the soul to be the 'form' of the body: i.e., it is because of its spiritual soul that the body made of matter becomes a living, human body; spirit and matter, in man, are not two natures united, but rather their union forms a single nature" (CCC 365).

In the beginning, God created man and woman (Adam and Eve) in his image and likeness. God placed them in a beautiful garden. They had a friendship or intimacy with God. They loved each other. They were integrated or experienced a wholeness or harmony within themselves. Their intellect and will governed their bodies in truth and love. They lived in true or authentic freedom, using their freedom to choose the good. They were not subject to death. They lived in harmony with all creation.

"By the radiance of this grace all dimensions of man's life were confirmed. As long as he remained in the divine intimacy, man would not have to suffer or die. The inner harmony of the human person, the harmony between man and woman, and finally the harmony between the first couple and all creation, comprised the state called 'original justice'" (CCC 376).

However, "Man, enticed by the Evil One, abused his freedom at the very beginning of history' (GS 13 § 1). He succumbed to temptation and did what was evil. He still desires the good, but his nature bears the wound of original sin. He is now inclined to evil and subject to error: 'Man is divided in himself. As a result, the whole life of men, both individual and social, shows itself to be a struggle, and a dramatic one, between good and evil, between light and darkness' (GS 13 § 2)" (CCC 1707).

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Original Sin wounded and disfigured human beings, but did not destroy them. “Disfigured by sin and death, man remains ‘in the image of God,’ in the image of the Son, but is deprived ‘of the glory of God’ (Rom 3:23), of his ‘likeness.’ The promise made to Abraham inaugurates the economy of salvation, at the culmination of which the Son himself will assume that ‘image’ (cf. Jn 1:14; Phil 2:7) and restore it in the Father’s ‘likeness’ by giving it again its Glory, the Spirit who is ‘the giver of life’” (CCC 705).

“In the act of creation, God calls every being from nothingness into existence. ‘Crowned with glory and honor’ (Ps 8:5), man is, after the angels, capable of acknowledging ‘how majestic is the name of the Lord in all the earth’ (Ps 8:1). Even after losing through his sin his likeness to God, man remains an image of his Creator, and retains the desire for the one who calls him into existence” (CCC 2566).

We inherit Original Sin and its consequences. Due to Original Sin, we are born without grace, God’s life in us. We lack the likeness to God. Also, due to Original Sin, the powers of our souls are affected. Our minds are darkened and our wills weakened. In our bodies, we suffer from concupiscence. Concupiscence means that our “human appetites or desires . . . remain disordered due to the temporal consequences of original sin, which remain even after Baptism, and which produce an inclination to sin” (see CCC, Glossary). In other words, we lack integration or wholeness. Due to Original Sin, we also suffer and we die.

Original Sin “is a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human nature has not been totally corrupted: it is wounded in the natural powers proper to it; subject to ignorance, suffering, and the dominion of death; and inclined to sin—an inclination to evil that is called ‘concupiscence’” (CCC 405).

Jesus Christ is *the* Image of the invisible God or the Perfect Image of God (uncreated, consubstantial with the Father). Jesus Christ is the second person of the Blessed Trinity, who became human without giving up his divinity. In other words, Jesus is God incarnate or the Word made flesh. “The unique and altogether singular event of the Incarnation of the Son of God does not mean that Jesus Christ is part God and part man, nor does it imply that he is the result of a confused mixture of the divine and the human. He became truly man while remaining truly God. Jesus Christ is true God and true man” (CCC 464).

On the other hand, all of us as men and women created in the image of God have the divine image in us. It is Jesus, as true God and true man, who reveals us to ourselves and makes us fully manifest to ourselves. He reveals to us our identity—that is, who we are, human beings, persons created in the image of God. “‘Christ, . . . in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, makes man fully manifest to himself and brings to light his exalted vocation’ (GS 22). It is in Christ, ‘the image of the invisible God’ (Col 1:15; cf. 2 Cor 4:4), that man has been created ‘in the image and likeness’ of the Creator” (CCC 1701).

It is Jesus who manifests to us how we should act. Jesus is our example and our model. “In all of his life Jesus presents himself as *our model*. He is ‘the perfect man’ (GS 38; cf. Rom 15:5; Phil 2:5), who invites us to become his disciples and follow him” (CCC 520). “In reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear” (CCC 359, quoting GS 22 § 1).

“It is in Christ, Redeemer and Savior, that the divine image, disfigured in man by the first sin, has been restored to its original beauty and ennobled by the grace of God” (CCC 1701). As stated earlier, “The promise made to Abraham inaugurates the economy of salvation, at the culmination of which the Son himself will assume that ‘image’ (cf. Jn 1:14; Phil 2:7) and restore it in the Father’s ‘likeness’ by giving it again its Glory, the Spirit who is ‘the giver of life’” (CCC 705).

“God is love: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God freely wills to communicate the glory of his blessed life. Such is the ‘plan of his loving kindness,’ conceived by the Father before the foundation of the world, in his beloved Son (Eph 1:4, 9): ‘He destined us in love to be his sons’ (Eph 1:5) and ‘to be conformed to the image of his Son,’ through ‘the spirit of sonship’ (Rom 8:15, 29)” (CCC 257).

Due to the Paschal Mystery—that is, the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ—grace is made available to us. Grace is God’s life in us or God dwelling in us. “For well-disposed members of the faithful, the liturgy of the sacraments and sacramentals sanctifies almost every event of their lives with the divine grace which flows from the Paschal mystery of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ” (CCC 1670, quoting SC 61).

By his Passion, Death, and Resurrection, Jesus returns the love of the Father that was rejected by Adam and Eve at the beginning. This love is returned because of



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Jesus' obedience to the Father. Out of love for the Father, Jesus said: "Not my will, but yours, be done" (Luke 22:42). "Jesus is the new Adam who remained faithful just where the first Adam had given in to temptation. Jesus fulfills Israel's vocation perfectly: in contrast to those who had once provoked God during forty years in the desert, Christ reveals himself as God's Servant, totally obedient to the divine will" (CCC 539).

Through the sacrifice of the Cross, Jesus gives us the grace to imitate him and to return the love that God has for us. "The cross is the unique sacrifice of Christ, the 'one mediator between God and men' (1 Tim 2:5). But because in his incarnate divine person he has in some way united himself to every man, 'the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the paschal mystery' is offered to all men (GS 22 § 5; cf. § 2). He calls his disciples to 'take up [their] cross and follow [him]' (Mt 16:24), for 'Christ also suffered for [us], leaving [us] an example so that [we] should follow in his steps' (1 Pet 2:21)" (CCC 618).

"We ask our Father to unite our will to his Son's, in order to fulfill his will, his plan of salvation for the life of the world. We are radically incapable of this, but united with Jesus and with the power of his Holy Spirit, we can surrender our will to him and decide to choose what his Son has always chosen: to do what is pleasing to the Father" (CCC 2825; cf. John 8:29). The power of the Holy Spirit or grace empowers us to choose what Christ chooses.

"Grace is a *participation in the life of God*. It introduces us into the intimacy of Trinitarian life: by Baptism the Christian participates in the grace of Christ, the Head of his Body" (CCC 1997; emphasis in original). Sanctifying grace "heals our human nature wounded by sin by giving us a share in the divine life of the Trinity." It makes us "holy, and Christlike" (see CCC, Glossary). Sanctifying grace comes to us through Baptism and through the other sacraments. The sacraments themselves are the fruits of the Paschal Mystery and are personal meetings with Jesus Christ through sensible signs.

"By Baptism *all sins* are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin. In those who have been reborn nothing remains that would impede their entry into the Kingdom of God, neither Adam's sin, nor personal sin, nor the consequences of sin, the gravest of which is separation from God" (CCC 1263; emphasis in original). "Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ's grace [sanctifying grace], erases original sin and turns a man back toward God,

but the consequences for nature, weakened and inclined to evil, persist in man and summon him to spiritual battle" (CCC 405).

However, sanctifying grace helps us to prevail in our spiritual battles and to overcome the consequences of Original Sin in our lives. Our likeness to God is restored by grace (see CCC 705). By the power of sanctifying grace we are enabled and strengthened to reflect God in what we think, and say, and do. Grace enables us to imitate the Perfect Image of God, Jesus Christ. As our Lord himself taught: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (CCC 2842, quoting Jn 13:34). Imitating Jesus constitutes the moral life, and through the power of sanctifying grace, we grow more loving in our relationship with God by imitating Jesus.

It is important to note, however, that "it is impossible to keep the Lord's commandment ['that you love one another, even as I have loved you'] by imitating the divine model from outside; there has to be a vital participation, coming from the depths of the heart, in the holiness and the mercy and the love of our God. Only the Spirit by whom we live (cf. Gal 5:25; Phil 2:1) can make 'ours' the same mind that was in Christ Jesus (cf. Phil 2:5)" (CCC 2842).

In other words, sanctifying grace (God's life within us) enlightens our minds, strengthens our wills, and helps us to overcome concupiscence. Sanctifying grace helps us to exercise our freedom properly—that is, to choose what is truly good. We still suffer death, but, at the end of time, Jesus will raise our mortal bodies and make them like his own. For those who are united with Jesus at their death, eternal life in heaven awaits them.

"By his Passion, Christ delivered us from Satan and from sin. He merited for us the new life in the Holy Spirit. His grace restores what sin had damaged in us" (CCC 1708). "He who believes in Christ becomes a son of God. This filial adoption transforms him by giving him the ability to follow the example of Christ. It makes him capable of acting rightly and doing good. In union with his Savior, the disciple attains the perfection of charity which is holiness. Having matured in grace, the moral life blossoms into eternal life in the glory of heaven" (CCC 1709).

God revealed his plan of salvation gradually, over time, through words and deeds. "It [God's plan] involves a specific divine pedagogy: God communicates himself to man gradually. He prepares him to welcome by stages the supernatural

# INTRODUCTION

Revelation that is to culminate in the person and mission of the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ” (CCC 53). “Indeed, ‘the economy of the Old Testament was deliberately so oriented that it should prepare for and declare in prophecy the coming of Christ, redeemer of all men’ (DV 15)” (CCC 122).

Catechesis on the image of God in the series may be summed up in the following six points:

1. the human person has been created in the image and likeness of God;
2. the fall did not destroy the image of God in us, but seriously tarnished it. The fall also deprived human beings of the glory of God, of his “likeness”. Due to the fall, we experience a divided heart, darkened mind, and weakened will and concupiscence in the flesh, as well as suffering and death;
3. Christ is *the* Perfect Image of the invisible God and has restored the likeness to God for us in principle;
4. Baptism restores the likeness sacramentally;
5. the Christian moral/spiritual life, drawing on the grace of Baptism, engages in the daily struggle to live out the restored likeness in the experience of daily living;
6. Christian daily life involves the imitation of Christ, who “in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love, makes man fully manifest to himself and brings to light his exalted vocation” (CCC 1701).



# UNIT 1: THE SACRAMENTS—PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH JESUS

## Unit Objectives

1. To learn that we meet Christ in and through the Church, and especially in the sacraments of the Church.
2. To discuss the definition of a sacrament in detail.
3. To study Christ as the source of the sacraments.

## Vocabulary

**grace:** the gift of God’s life that he shares with persons

**the Church:** the Church is “the assembly of those whom God’s Word ‘convokes,’ i.e., gathers together to form the People of God, and who themselves, nourished with the Body of Christ, become the Body of Christ” (CCC 777); the Mystical Body of Christ; “Christ and his Church thus together make up the ‘whole Christ’ (*Christus totus*) . . . . Head [Jesus] and members form as it were one and the same mystical person’ (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, 48, 2)” (CCC 795).

**sacrament:** (1) a physical sign, (2) given to us by Jesus, (3) through which Jesus meets us, and (4) gives us grace

## Correspondence to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**Christ’s work in the liturgy:** CCC 1084–90, 1111

**Church as the Body of Christ:** CCC 669, 787–95, 805–7

**God’s omnipotence:** CCC 268–78

**Grace:** CCC 1996–2005, 2021–24

**Grace conferred by the sacraments:** CCC 1127–29, 1131

**Presence of Christ in the Eucharist:** CCC 1373–81, 1410, 1418

**Sacraments:** CCC 1113, 1131–34

**Sacraments of Christ:** CCC 1114–16

**Sacraments of the Church:** CCC 1117–21

**Sacraments of faith:** CCC 1122–26

**Sacraments of salvation:** CCC 1127–29

**Sacraments of eternal life:** CCC 1130

## Preparation

The materials needed for this lesson are Bibles, the YOUCAT, and a chalkboard or dry erase board; optional: notebook (for writing a story).

## LESSON 1: MEETING JESUS

### Lesson Objectives

1. To discuss the Gospel account of the personal meeting of the rich young man with Christ.
2. To introduce the students to the concept of grace.
3. To learn that we can meet Jesus today in and through the Church, and especially through the sacraments of the Church.

## Proclamation

The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ. Christ and his Church together make up the “whole Christ”.



# UNIT 1: THE SACRAMENTS—PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH JESUS

## Explanation

Begin this lesson by writing the following heading on the board: “Important people we have met”. Ask the class to give you the names of the most important people they have met. Write the names of the important people under the heading. You may add a name or two of important people whom you have met.

Discuss with the students what they thought and how they felt when they were with an important person.

*Have the students read and discuss textbook page 1. Then have one student read aloud one of the following Scripture passages about the rich young man: Mark 10:17–31; Matthew 19:16–30; or Luke 18:18–30.*

**Ask:** What are some places where people might meet Jesus today? (Accept any reasonable responses.)

The Church can be described using a number of different, yet complementary, images. One dominant image is the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. “The comparison of the Church with the body casts light on the intimate bond between Christ and his Church. Not only is she gathered *around him*; she is united *in him*, in his body” (CCC 789; emphasis in original).

The Church is also “the assembly of those whom God’s Word ‘convokes,’ i.e., gathers together to form the People of God, and who themselves, nourished with the Body of Christ, become the Body of Christ” (CCC 777).

Stressing the intimacy of the union between Christ and the Church, the *Catechism* also states: “Christ and his Church thus together make up the ‘whole Christ’ (*Christus totus*). The Church is one with Christ” (CCC 795). Also, speaking of the Church and Christ, Saint Thomas Aquinas stresses this oneness when he writes: “Head [Jesus] and members form as it were one and the same mystical person (St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* III, 48, 2)” (CCC 795).

## UNIT 1: THE SACRAMENTS—PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH JESUS

### Vocabulary

**grace:** the gift of God’s life that he shares with persons

**the Church:** the Church is “the assembly of those whom God’s Word ‘convokes,’ i.e., gathers together to form the People of God, and who themselves, nourished with the Body of Christ, become the Body of Christ” (CCC 777); the Mystical Body of Christ; “Christ and his Church thus together make up the ‘whole Christ’ (*Christus totus*). . . . ‘Head [Jesus] and members form as it were one and the same mystical person’” (CCC 795).

**sacrament:** (1) a physical sign, (2) given to us by Jesus, (3) through which Jesus meets us, and (4) gives us grace

### LESSON 1: MEETING JESUS

One day, a rich young man ran up to meet Jesus. The young man had probably heard about Jesus from his parents or friends. He must have known that Jesus was a very special person who had great powers and who could do wonderful things for people. Obviously, he was excited to meet Jesus, because he ran up to Jesus.

The first thing that the young man did was to ask Jesus a question: “Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?” (Matthew 19:16; cf. Mark 10:17; Luke 18:18). By eternal life, the young man meant life with God in heaven. But eternal life also means sharing God’s life here on earth. We call God’s life in us grace.

So, in asking Jesus for eternal life, the young man had great expectations of Jesus. Eternal life isn’t something that people can go and buy in a store. Nor is eternal life something that people can make. Rather, eternal life is life with God, and only God can give eternal life. The rich young man was expecting much from Jesus. But he was probably expecting much because of the wonderful things he had heard about Jesus. (See Matthew 19:16–30; Mark 10:17–31; and Luke 18:18–30.)

It must have been impressive for the young man in the Gospel to meet Jesus personally. Jesus was so powerful, yet so gentle and kind. He was God himself, who became man without ceasing to be God. We know that there is no one more powerful than God. Nor is there anyone more gentle and kind than God. Meeting Jesus might be compared to meeting a very holy person, like the pope, or a great saint, like Saint Francis of Assisi, or someone you know who is close to God and who is very impressive to meet.



# UNIT 1: THE SACRAMENTS—PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH JESUS

Have the students read and discuss textbook page 2.

## UNIT 1: THE SACRAMENTS—PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH JESUS

Meeting a holy person is a great privilege, but it still isn't the same as meeting Jesus. Isn't there some way that we can meet Jesus today? Like the young man, we too really want to meet Jesus. Since Jesus is God, can't he find some way to come to us, so that we can meet him?


There is a way that we can meet Jesus, although not the same way as the rich young man met Jesus two thousand years ago. The way we meet Jesus today is in and through the Church. We can meet Jesus through the Church because Jesus and the Church form the Mystical Body of Christ. "The word 'Church' means 'convocation.' It designates the assembly of those whom God's Word 'convokes,' i.e., gathers together to form the People of God, and who themselves, nourished with the Body of Christ, become the Body of Christ" (CCC 777).

Quoting Saint Augustine, Saint John Paul II wrote, "Christ and the Church are one single mystical person."<sup>1</sup> Being an active and faithful member of the Church means meeting Christ. "The one mediator, Christ, established and ever sustains here on earth his holy Church, the community of faith, hope, and charity, as a visible organization through which he communicates truth and grace to all men" (CCC 771).<sup>2</sup>

For example, when the pope speaks on matters of faith and morality, it is truly Jesus working through him by the power of the Holy Spirit. When a baptized Christian does a kind deed for us, it is truly Jesus who is there helping us. When a priest celebrates Mass, it is truly Jesus who is celebrating the Mass. "It is Christ himself, the eternal high priest of the New Covenant who, acting through the ministry of the priests, offers the Eucharistic sacrifice. And it is the same Christ, really present under the species of bread and wine, who is the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice" (CCC 1410).

Jesus, then, is present to us in and through the Church. If we really want to meet Jesus, it is in the Church that we will find him. As Pope Francis said, "It is not possible to find Jesus [outside the Church]. The great [Saint] Paul VI said: it is an absurd dichotomy to wish to live with Jesus but without the Church, to follow Jesus but without the Church, to love Jesus but without the Church".<sup>3</sup>

The Church celebrates the sacraments. The Seven Sacraments of the Church are "places" where we meet Jesus. Like the rich young man in the Gospel, we can meet Christ, and we can ask him for eternal life. This personal meeting with Jesus happens in the sacraments.

 Learn more about the mystery of the Church by reading YOUCAT 124.

2

In order to emphasize the intimate union of Christ and the Church, have one of the students read aloud Acts 9:1–9. Have the student read verse 5 again.

**Ask:** Whom was Saul going to Damascus to persecute? *The Christians, or the Church.*

With whom does Christ identify himself? *The Christians, or the Church.*



Have the students look up and discuss YOUCAT 124 about the mystery of the Church.

### Application

The following activity should be completed by the students along with their parents: Have the students list the sacraments they have already received along with dates and the name of the church where the sacraments were received and the name of the priest that celebrated the sacraments. This exercise will encourage discussion between the students and their parents about when they received the sacraments and familiarize the students with their sacramental path, if they are not already familiar with it.

### Extending the Lesson

Have the students scan the Gospel of Saint Matthew for stories recounting the meeting of Jesus with some person or persons. Have each student choose a story to read. Have each student write a short paper recounting the purpose and the result of the encounter with Jesus. Have some of the students read their papers to the class.

### Celebration

Pray the Apostles' Creed with the students (Prayers to Know, student textbook, p. 109).

# UNIT 1: THE SACRAMENTS—PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH JESUS

## LESSON 2: WHAT IS A SACRAMENT?

### Lesson Objectives

1. To review the physical sign of each sacrament.
2. To learn that Jesus meets us in the sacraments.
3. To learn that the sign of each sacrament brings about what it signifies.
4. To discuss the grace given in the sacraments.

### Correspondence to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**Christ’s work in the liturgy:** CCC 1084–90, 1111

**Dignity of the human person:** CCC 1700–12

**Grace:** CCC 1996–2005, 2021–24

**Grace conferred by the sacraments:** CCC 1127–29, 1131

**Matrimony:** CCC 1601–66

**Sacramental signs:** CCC 1145–62, 1189–92

### Preparation

The materials needed for this lesson are the YOUCAT and a chalkboard or dry erase board.

### Proclamation

“The Sacraments strengthen faith and express it” (CCC 1133).

### Explanation

With the help of the class, list on the board the sacraments that they have received and have seen celebrated. Discuss what they remember about these sacraments—who the deacon, priest, or bishop was; where the celebration took place; who the sponsors were; and so forth.

*Have the students read textbook page 3 and the top of page 4.*

## UNIT 1: THE SACRAMENTS—PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH JESUS

### LESSON 2: WHAT IS A SACRAMENT?

By now, the names of the sacraments should be familiar. There are Seven Sacraments in the Church. They are Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. You have been present at the celebration of most of the sacraments.

**What exactly is a sacrament?** The definition of a sacrament includes four parts. A sacrament is (1) a physical sign, (2) given to us by Jesus, (3) through which Jesus meets us, and (4) gives us grace. This is a simple and compact definition. Let’s expand a little on the definition.

A sacrament is a physical, tangible sign. A sacrament is perceivable to our senses. In other words, a sacrament touches our bodies. The sacraments involve certain material elements (water, oil, bread, wine), as well as words that are spoken by the minister of the sacrament. The material elements and the words spoken touch the person receiving the sacrament. This sacramental touch is no ordinary touch. Rather, it is the touch of Jesus himself!

Through the touch of the sacraments, we meet Jesus in a physical, tangible way. Jesus is truly present in the sacrament in a way perceivable to our senses. The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) reminds us of Jesus’ presence in the sacraments when it says: “By [Jesus’] power He is present in the sacraments, so that when a man baptizes it is really Christ Himself who baptizes.”<sup>14</sup>

A sign is something external that stands for something else. For example, when we meet a friend whom we have not seen for a while, we usually shake that person’s hand or give that person a hug. The handshake or hug is a sign that we care for our friend and that we are glad to see our friend. A handshake or a hug signifies friendship.

In the same way, the physical sign of each sacrament signifies what is happening in the sacrament. For example, water is life-giving. We need water in order to preserve life. In Baptism, the use of water signifies grace, God’s life, which is given to a person through Baptism.

But the amazing thing about the sacraments is this: not only does the physical sign of each sacrament signify what is happening in the sacrament, but the sign actually brings about what it signifies. For example, in Baptism, the pouring of the water on a person’s forehead, or the triple immersion of a person in water, and the speaking of the words of Baptism actually bring sanctifying grace to a person. In this way, the sacraments are unlike any other signs that we know. The sacraments really bring about what they signify.

If the other signs that are familiar to us actually brought about what they signify, our world would change radically. Take, for example, a stop sign. When we are driving along in a car, we encounter stop signs. A stop sign signals us to stop. But what if, instead of just signaling us to stop, the stop sign actually reached out somehow and stopped us? If this were to happen, the stop sign would be bringing about what it signified—namely, stopping us. We know that the signs we encounter each day do not actually bring about what they signify. The sacraments are different. They actually do bring about what they signify.



# UNIT 1: THE SACRAMENTS—PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH JESUS

## UNIT 1: THE SACRAMENTS—PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH JESUS

Since the sacraments bring about what they signify, we can say that, through the physical signs of the sacraments, not only does Jesus meet us and touch us in a physical way, but also he “touches” us spiritually. Jesus “touches” our souls in the sacraments. Through our sacramental meeting with Jesus, he gives us eternal life.

As was mentioned above, eternal life means life with God in heaven. But eternal life also means sharing God’s life here on earth. We call God’s life in us grace. Grace brings about a loving union of our souls with God. This union is what the rich young man was seeking. What the rich young man wanted to discover, Jesus gives to us freely in the sacraments. Jesus gives us grace (eternal life) in each of the Seven Sacraments.

The grace of each sacrament helps us to fulfill the purpose of that sacrament. For example, the grace of the Sacrament of Matrimony helps a married couple to love each other as husband and wife. As each sacrament is studied, we will see what the purpose of each sacrament is in more detail.

A sacrament, then, is a “place” where a person meets Jesus and where Jesus embraces the entire person, body and soul. No part of a person is excluded from the loving sacramental embrace of Jesus. Of course, Jesus is able to embrace us body and soul in the sacraments because he is God the Son.

**Ask:** **What is the definition of a sacrament?** (Write on the board the student definition found in the Vocabulary section at the beginning of this unit. Make sure that the students include all four key points in their definition.)

Write each sacrament on the board: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony.

**Ask:** **What is the physical sign for each Sacrament?**

Sacrament	Physical Sign
Baptism	The pouring of water on a person’s forehead three times or the triple immersion of a person in water and the words “[Name], I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”
Confirmation	The anointing with sacred chrism and the words “[Name], be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.”
Holy Eucharist	The bread and wine, and the words of Consecration: “This is my Body, which will be given up for you” and “This is the chalice of my Blood”.

Reconciliation	The saying of one’s sins with sorrow and the words of absolution, “I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”
Anointing of the Sick	The anointing with the Oil of the Sick and the words “Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord who frees you from sin, save you and raise you up.”
Holy Orders	The imposition of the bishop’s hands on the head of the man being ordained and the words appropriate for the degree of the sacrament being given.
Matrimony	The bride and groom and the Yes that they say to one another through the vows.

It is important to emphasize that the reception of grace brings about a loving relationship between God and the person receiving grace. Grace isn’t a commodity that can be measured, weighed, bought, sold, or packaged. Rather, it is God himself (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) living in us.

**Ask:** **What are other examples of what would happen if ordinary signs could bring about what they signify?** *Our world would change radically. For example, think about a stop sign. When we are driving along in a car, we encounter stop signs. A stop sign signals us to stop. But what if, instead of just signaling us to stop, the stop sign actually reached out somehow and stopped us? If this were to happen, the stop sign would be bringing about what it signified—namely, stopping us. We know that the signs we encounter each day do not actually bring about what they signify. The sacraments are different. They actually do bring about what they signify.*



**Have students look up and discuss YOUCAT 338 about grace.**

# UNIT 1: THE SACRAMENTS—PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH JESUS

## Application

Have the students read “The Prison Guard” story on textbook pages 4–5 to themselves, or have various students take turns reading the story aloud.

Read this story about a man who experienced Jesus’ presence in the Sacrament of Matrimony.

### The Prison Guard

Tom was a young man who was a guard at a men’s federal prison. He was a strong, husky man who stood about six feet tall. But, despite his size, it wasn’t easy for Tom to deal with the inmates of the prison each day. Obviously, they were a tough lot.



Tom’s philosophy was to treat everyone with dignity and respect, but there were times when he had to use force to keep order. This was a part of his job that Tom didn’t appreciate.

As time went on, Tom met a young woman named Julie. He fell in love with her, and the two of them decided to get married. However, there was a problem. Tom was not Catholic, and Julie was. And Julie wanted to be married in the Catholic Church. But in order to get married in the Catholic Church, they were required to attend a lengthy marriage preparation program taught by Julie’s priest, Father Kowalski.

The prospect of attending such a program did not sit too well with Tom. “What can some priest tell me about marriage?” Tom thought. “Priests don’t marry, so what can they know about marriage? Besides, I’ve learned plenty about married life from my friends.”

But because Tom loved Julie, and because he knew it was important to her to be married in the Catholic Church, he decided to give the program a try.

After meeting several times with the priest and discussing the Church’s teaching on sexuality, marriage, and family life, Tom began to change his mind about Father Kowalski and about married life.

Tom found out that the Church has a great deal to teach about marriage and that what he had learned from his friends about marriage wasn’t always accurate.

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## UNIT 1: THE SACRAMENTS—PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH JESUS

Even though he was not Catholic, Tom valued his relationship with Jesus, and he tried to live by the Gospel. So when Tom found out that the Catholic Church considered marriage a sacrament, and that Jesus would personally meet Julie and him on their wedding day, Tom was impressed. Marriage took on a whole new meaning for him.

Tom and Julie completed their marriage preparation course with Father Kowalski, and Tom gave much thought and prayer to what was going to happen on his wedding day. He thought about meeting Jesus with Julie and how this meeting would change them for the rest of their lives.

When the wedding day came, Tom was nervous. As a tough prison guard, he wasn’t used to feeling this way. However, when the ceremony started, he had a big smile on his face. Tom knew that somehow, through the marriage vows that Julie and he would speak to one another, Jesus would meet them and unite them in the Sacrament of Matrimony.

After the ceremony, Tom talked with Father Kowalski. Tom said that celebrating the Sacrament of Matrimony was the most powerful experience he had ever had. Tom could feel Jesus’ presence and his blessing on the marriage. Tom thanked Father Kowalski for the marriage instruction and for encouraging him to think about marriage as a sacrament.

Sometimes we are like Tom. We think we know all there is to know about Jesus and the sacraments. But Jesus always has more for us to learn and experience. Jesus showed that to Tom. Like Tom, we need to be open to Jesus. If we are, we will experience Jesus’ powerful love in the sacraments just as Tom did.

★ Learn more about grace by reading *YOU CAT* 338.

*Sometimes we are like Tom. We think we know all there is to know about Jesus and the sacraments. But Jesus always has more for us to learn and experience. Jesus showed that to Tom. Like Tom, we need to be open to Jesus. If we are, we will experience Jesus’ powerful love in the sacraments just as Tom did.*

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# UNIT 1: THE SACRAMENTS—PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH JESUS

## Extending the Lesson

**Ask:** Have you or any people you know had experiences similar to Tom’s? (Use the students’ remarks as a basis for emphasizing the sacraments as “places” where we meet Jesus.)

## Celebration

Pray an Act of Love with the students (Prayers to Know, student textbook, p. 113).

## LESSON 3: WHERE DO THE SACRAMENTS COME FROM?

### Lesson Objectives

1. To learn that the sacraments come from Jesus and his sacrifice of love on the Cross.
2. To discuss the power of the sacraments.
3. To learn that, in order to receive grace through the sacraments, people must be properly disposed.

### Correspondence to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**Christ’s redemptive death in the divine plan of salvation:** CCC 599–605, 619–20

**Christ’s whole life as a self-offering to the Father:** CCC 606–18, 621–23

**Grace:** CCC 1996–2005, 2021–24

**Grace conferred by the sacraments:** CCC 1127–29, 1131

**Grace of Baptism:** CCC 265, 1262–74, 1279–80

**Heaven:** CCC 1023–29, 1053

**Jesus as true God and true man:** CCC 464–70, 480–83

**Jesus’ human nature:** CCC 470–78, 482

**Original Sin:** CCC 388–90, 396–401, 415

**Preparation for receiving the sacraments:**

**Confirmation:** CCC 1309–10, 1319

**Holy Eucharist:** CCC 1385–87, 1415

**Matrimony:** CCC 1622

**Sacraments:** CCC 1113, 1131–34



# UNIT 1: THE SACRAMENTS—PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH JESUS

## Correspondence to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (continued)

**Sacraments of Christ:** CCC 1114–16

**Sacraments of the Church:** CCC 1117–21

**Sacraments of faith:** CCC 1122–26

**Sacraments of salvation:** CCC 1127–29

**Sacraments of eternal life:** CCC 1130

**Sacrilege:** CCC 2120

## Preparation

The materials needed for this lesson are the YOUCAT and copies of the Unit 1 family notes and Unit 1 Assessment; optional: poster board (7 pieces; approximately 2" × 3"), rulers, and markers; copies of the Unit 1 Review Worksheet.

## Proclamation

“Sacraments are ‘powers that comes forth’ from the Body of Christ (cf. Lk 5:17; 6:19; 8:46), which is ever-living and life-giving” (CCC 1116).

## Explanation

In the Profession of Faith (the Nicene Creed), we say that we believe that the Church is apostolic. Among other things, this means that the sacraments come to us through the hands of the Apostles. Christ entrusted to the Apostles all that he is and all that he did (including the sacraments). In turn, the Apostles passed this on to the rest of the Church.

It is important to emphasize the apostolic nature of the Church, because sometimes people forget the irreplaceable role that the Apostles played in the Church.

★ *Have the students look up and discuss YOUCAT 137 on why the Church is called apostolic.*

*Have the students read and discuss textbook pages 6–8.*

## UNIT 1: THE SACRAMENTS—PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH JESUS

### LESSON 3: WHERE DO THE SACRAMENTS COME FROM?

The sacraments come from Jesus. The sacraments were instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Apostles. The Apostles in turn entrusted the sacraments to the Church, and today we receive the sacraments from the Church. This is why the Church is the sacrament of our salvation because she is the outward sign and instrument through which God saves us and unites us to himself and to each other. “The Church in this world is the sacrament of salvation, the sign and the instrument of the communion of God and men” (CCC 780).

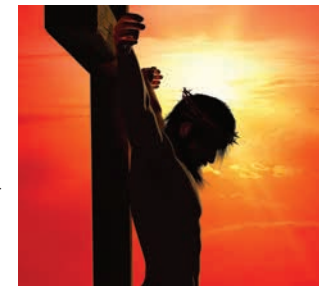
★ *Learn more about why the Church is called apostolic by reading YOUCAT 137.*

Specifically, the source of the sacraments is Jesus’ sacrifice of love on the Cross. Saint John the Apostle was present at the Crucifixion of Jesus. John tells us in his Gospel that after Jesus died, a soldier pierced Jesus’ side with a lance. “But one of the soldiers pierced [Jesus’] side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water” (John 19:34). The blood and water indicated that Jesus was indeed dead and that his sacrifice of love was complete. By dying on the Cross, Jesus had given his entire life to the Father and had therefore returned God the Father’s love. Adam and Eve had sinned by choosing not to return the love of God the Father. But “he [Jesus] it was, and he alone, [is the one] who satisfied the Father’s eternal love.”<sup>5</sup> God the Father was not compelled to send his Son to redeem us, nor did he send his Son out of necessity or some deficiency caused by sin. God the Father freely and out of merciful love sent Jesus to save us from our sins. Jesus reconciled us with God the Father, who “loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

Not only did Jesus’ sacrifice of love on the Cross return or satisfy God the Father’s love; it also helps us to return God the Father’s love. Jesus’ sacrifice helps us to return God’s love because his sacrifice gives us grace, God’s life. Through grace, we are made capable of loving God.

It is good to be reminded of the teaching of the Church concerning our relationship with the Jewish faith when speaking of Jesus’ suffering and Death on the Cross. The Jewish people, neither those at the time of Christ’s Death nor those of today, cannot be blamed for his suffering and Death. The *Catechism* teaches us that “sinners were the authors and the ministers of all the sufferings that the divine Redeemer endured” (CCC 598).<sup>6</sup>

**How does Jesus communicate his grace to us?** The answer is, of course, through the sacraments. As the definition of the sacraments tells us, the sacraments give us grace. They receive the power to give us grace from the love that Jesus showed on the Cross. The blood and water that flowed from Jesus’



# UNIT 1: THE SACRAMENTS—PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH JESUS

## UNIT 1: THE SACRAMENTS—PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH JESUS

side on the Cross also signify the sacraments. Specifically, the blood stands for the Eucharist, and the water stands for Baptism.

**How are the other five sacraments signified by the blood and water?** Because of the primary importance of the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Baptism among all the sacraments, the other sacraments are considered to be signified by the blood and water, too. (When the sacraments of the Eucharist and Baptism are discussed, we will see why they are considered of primary importance among all the sacraments.)

The sacraments show us the power of Jesus' love. Because Jesus is God as well as man, his love reaches as high as God the Father, and it stretches through space and time to us today. Through the sacraments Jesus continues to love his Father, and Jesus meets us and helps us love his Father by giving us grace. Through the grace of the sacraments, Jesus points us to the future, because it is grace that will enable us one day to share everlasting life with God in heaven. There is no love more powerful than Jesus' love!

As powerful as Jesus' love is, Jesus doesn't force his love upon us. In order to receive his grace in the sacraments, we must want to receive this grace. In other words, we must be properly disposed to celebrate the sacraments. This means that when we celebrate the sacraments, we should be prepared and ready to meet Jesus and to receive his grace. We should be open to Jesus, as Tom was in the story "The Prison Guard".

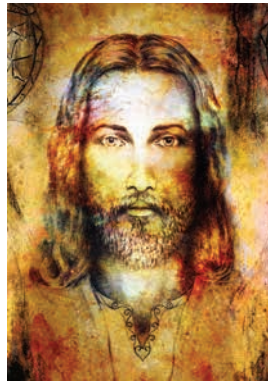
For example, in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we should be sorry for our sins, and, with Jesus' help, we should intend not to sin again. If we are not sorry for our sins, we are not properly disposed to celebrate the sacrament, and we prevent Jesus from giving us his grace and forgiving our sins.

In order to celebrate properly the sacraments of Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Holy Orders, and Matrimony, one must be in the state of grace; that is, one must already possess God's life and be in a loving relationship with him.

If one knowingly and freely chooses to receive any of these four sacraments without being in the state of grace, that person commits a very serious sin of sacrilege. Such a person is further alienated from God and is even more in need of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

In order to receive the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, and Anointing of the Sick, one need not be in the state of grace.

For example, a person about to be baptized would lack sanctifying grace because that person would still have Original Sin. Baptism takes away Original Sin and any personal sins a person might have and gives sanctifying grace. "The Most Holy Trinity gives the baptized sanctifying grace, the grace of *justification*" (CCC 1266; emphasis in original).



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## UNIT 1: THE SACRAMENTS—PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH JESUS

A person coming to confession in the state of mortal sin would be without grace. The purpose of the sacrament is to take away sin and give grace.

Finally, an unconscious person who is in the state of mortal sin and is about to receive the Anointing of the Sick would be without grace. In such an instance, the mortal sin would be forgiven by the sacrament. However, Anointing of the Sick is a sacrament of the living and should normally be received in the state of grace.

So, the rich young man chose the right person to meet and to ask for eternal life. Jesus is the One who gives eternal life, God's life. Jesus loved the young man and wanted to give him eternal life. Jesus loves us, and he wants to meet each of us and give us eternal life, too. Where does he want to meet us and give us grace? In the sacraments!

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# UNIT 1: THE SACRAMENTS—PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH JESUS

## Celebration

Pray the Nicene Creed with the students (Prayers to Know, student textbook, p. 114).

## Family Notes

Make copies of the Unit 1 family notes (in the appendix) and send them home for students to discuss with their parents.

## Assessment

Make copies of the Unit 1 Assessment for each student (in the appendix) and have students either take it as a test or work together in groups to answer the questions. After corrections are made, tests should be taken home and discussed with parents.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Unit 1—The Sacraments—Personal Meetings with Jesus*

Answer Key blocked out for online posting

# UNIT 1: THE SACRAMENTS—PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH JESUS

*Fill in the blanks with the correct answer.*

Answer Key blocked out for online posting

# UNIT 2: THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

## Unit Objectives

1. To learn about initiation into the Church.
2. To study an introduction to the sacraments of initiation.

## Vocabulary

**catechumen:** someone who is unbaptized and who is learning about the Catholic faith in preparation for initiation into the Church

**initiation:** an introduction or a welcoming of a new member into a group

**sacraments of initiation:** Baptism, Confirmation, and the Holy Eucharist. The reception of these three sacraments initiates a person fully into the Catholic Church.

## LESSON 4: INITIATION INTO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

## Lesson Objectives

1. To discuss the concept of initiation.
2. To learn that initiation into the Church is unique, because initiation into the Church means being clothed in Christ.

## Correspondence to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**Church as the Body of Christ:** CCC 669, 787–96, 805–8

**Grace of Baptism:** CCC 265, 1262–74, 1279–80

**Jesus as true God and true man:** CCC 464–70, 480–83

**Mystery of the Church:** CCC 770–76, 779

**Sacraments of Christian initiation:** CCC 1212, 1229–33, 1275


## Preparation

The materials needed for this lesson are Bibles, the YOUCAT, a chalkboard or dry erase board, and one sheet of paper per student (8½" × 11"); optional: copies of the Unit 2 Review Worksheet.

## Proclamation

“The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the Sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life” (CCC 1212).

## Explanation

 *Have the students look up and discuss YOUCAT 173 on the importance of the sacraments.*

Write the following heading on the board: “Initiation Ceremonies”.

**Ask:** **What organizations have initiation ceremonies?** (Write the names of the organizations under the heading. If some of the students have participated in initiation ceremonies, have them tell the class about the ceremonies. Emphasize that an initiation is a kind of introduction or welcoming of a new member into a group.)

# UNIT 2: THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

Have the students read and discuss textbook page 9 and the top of page 10.

## UNIT 2: THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

### Vocabulary

**catechumen:** someone who is unbaptized and who is learning about the Catholic faith in preparation for initiation into the Church  
**initiation:** an introduction or a welcoming of a new member into a group  
**sacraments of initiation:** Baptism, Confirmation, and the Holy Eucharist. The reception of these three sacraments initiates a person fully into the Catholic Church.

### LESSON 4: INITIATION INTO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

★ Learn more about the importance of the sacraments by reading **YOUCAT 173**.

Sometimes when a person applies to become a member of a certain group or organization, that person goes through an initiation. As initiation is a kind of introduction or welcoming of a new member into a group.

For example, some of you might have fathers, uncles, or grandfathers who are members of the Knights of Columbus, a Catholic men's organization. Each man who wants to become a member of the Knights of Columbus goes through an initiation. After going through the ceremony, a man is officially a full member of the Knights of Columbus.

The Church's sacraments of initiation make a person officially a full member of the Catholic Church. The sacraments of initiation are Baptism, Confirmation, and the Holy Eucharist. Once we have received or celebrated these three sacraments, we are full members of the Catholic Church. We are fully initiated Catholics.

It is important to note that being initiated into the Catholic Church is like no other initiation. Other initiation ceremonies make people members of a purely human group or organization. The sacraments



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## UNIT 2: THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

of initiation do much more for us. Baptism, Confirmation, and the Holy Eucharist make us full members of the Church, which is both a human and a divine organization. "The Church is essentially both human and divine, visible but endowed with invisible realities" (CCC 771).<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the Church is called the Mystical Body of Christ. "The word 'Church' means convocation." It designates the assembly of those whom God's Word 'convokes,' i.e., gathers together to form the People of God, and who themselves, nourished with the Body of Christ, becomes the Body of Christ" (CCC 777).

Calling the Church the Mystical Body of Christ does not exclude the other titles of the Church. Each of the titles of the Church highlights a different aspect of the relationship of Christ to the members of the Church. For example, the Church is sometimes called the Bride of Christ.

"The unity of Christ and the Church, head and members of one Body, also implies the distinction of the two within a personal relationship. This aspect is often expressed by the image of bridegroom and bride" (CCC 796). "The Apostle [St. Paul] speaks of the whole Church and of each of the faithful, members of his Body, as a bride 'betrothed' to Christ the Lord so as to become but one spirit with him" (CCC 796).<sup>2</sup>

When we become members of the Church, we are united to Jesus himself. Saint Paul tells us this in many of his writings. For example, he writes to the church in Galatia: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:27–28). We are all one in Christ through the sacraments of initiation because through these sacraments Christ shares his life with us, uniting us to himself.

So, initiation into the Catholic Church is like no other initiation because, through the sacraments of initiation, Jesus personally meets us, welcomes us as members of the Church, and makes us one with him by sharing his life with us. No other initiation can claim to do anything close to what the sacraments of initiation do for us!

As Pope Francis teaches: "The Sacraments express and realize an effective and profound communion among us, for in them we encounter Christ the Saviour and, through him, our brothers and sisters in faith. The Sacraments are not mere appearances, they are not rituals; they are the power of Christ; Jesus Christ is present in the Sacraments."<sup>3</sup>

See Lesson 1 to review the differences between Christ and the Church.

*Have one student read aloud Galatians 2:20.*

Point out that Saint Paul knew that he was so closely united to Christ that Christ was living in him. This is what the sacraments of initiation do for us. They unite each of us to our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, so that Christ lives in us and gives us the strength to live as persons created in the image of God and to reflect him in all that we think, say, and do.

# UNIT 2: THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

## Application

On a white sheet of paper (8½" × 11"), have the students record the following information about the sacraments of initiation that they have already received: Sacrament celebrated, date, celebrant, sponsors, church, and any unusual circumstances (e.g., baptized in a hospital). If appropriate, discuss the unusual circumstances.

If the class has not yet celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation, discuss how the reception of this sacrament will complete their full initiation into the Church. See Unit 4 for ideas.

## Extending the Lesson

If time permits, have students complete the worksheet titled “The Sacraments of Initiation” (the Unit 2 Review Worksheet) found on page 182 in the appendix. This worksheet may be completed in class or sent home as a family activity.

## Celebration

Pray an Act of Faith with the students (Prayers to Know, student textbook, p. 112).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Unit 2—The Sacraments of Initiation**

*Fill in the blanks with the names of the sacraments and the three categories of sacraments.*

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# UNIT 2: THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

## LESSON 5: THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

### Lesson Objectives

1. To study briefly each of the sacraments of initiation.
2. To read a story about the celebration of the sacraments of initiation.
3. To introduce the Easter Vigil.

### Correspondence to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**Baptism:** CCC 1213–84

**Baptism of adults:** CCC 1247–49

**Baptism of children:** CCC 1250–52, 1282

**Confirmation:** CCC 1285–321

**Holy Eucharist:** CCC 1322–419

**Sacraments of Christian initiation:** CCC 1212, 1229–33, 1275

### Preparation

The materials needed for this lesson are Bibles, the YOUCAT, a Roman Missal or a missalette that includes the Holy Saturday service, copies of the Unit 2 family notes and Unit 2 Assessment; optional: copies of the Unit 2 Review Worksheet (if it was not completed in the last lesson).

### Proclamation

In Baptism we become children of God.

### Explanation

*Have the students read and discuss the bottom of textbook page 10.*

#### LESSON 5: THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

For most of us, the celebration of the sacraments of initiation happens over a number of years. Most of us receive the Sacrament of Baptism as infants. Our parents and godparents bring us to church, and we are baptized either at a Mass or at a ceremony apart from Mass.

However, parents who present their children for Baptism must promise to raise their children in the practice of the Catholic faith. Parents should not have their children baptized and then neglect to educate them in the very meaning and purpose of Baptism, which is to clothe oneself in Christ and to live as a Christian. Such neglect would betray a lack of reverence for the sacrament and would be unfair to the children.

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*Have students read and discuss YOUCAT 197 regarding infant Baptism.*

Sometimes people question the Church's practice of infant Baptism.

*Have one student read aloud Acts 16:25–34.*

Point out to the class that, in this passage, Saint Paul baptizes an entire household, probably including children. Baptizing children occurred from the beginning of the Church (see CCC 1252).

Sometimes people are confused about the order of the reception of first Reconciliation and First Holy Communion for children. Church law states that children should receive first Reconciliation before First Holy Communion. See canon 914 in the Code of Canon Law.

Some of the Eastern rites of the Catholic Church celebrate Confirmation at the time of Baptism; that is, infants are baptized and confirmed at the same ceremony. You may have some students in your class who were confirmed as infants—for example, those who belong to the Maronite Rite of the Catholic Church.

## UNIT 2: THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

There are instances when an infant may be confirmed in the Western Rite, too. For example, an infant in danger of death may be both baptized and confirmed. Some dioceses in the United States also confirm students in other grades—for example, confirming students in second grade at the same time as receiving first Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. Check the policy for your diocese.

*Have the students read and discuss the top of textbook page 11.*

*Have several students take turns reading aloud the story “A Mother Celebrates the Sacraments of Initiation” on pages 11–13, or have all the students read the story silently to themselves.*

**Ask:** Why could Susan’s mother receive Holy Communion without first going to Reconciliation? Because, through Baptism, all her sins were taken away.

**Have any of you had an experience similar to Susan’s?** (You might emphasize that initiation into the Church was just the beginning for Susan’s mother. She should spend the rest of her life trying to reflect Christ in everything that she thinks, says, and does.)

### UNIT 2: THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

★ Learn more about infant Baptism by reading YOUCAT 197.

Usually we celebrate the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist for the first time when we are about seven or eight years old. This sacrament is preceded by the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. First Holy Communion initiates us into the reception of the Body and Blood of Christ under the appearances of bread and wine.

Finally, usually in junior high or high school, we receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. At this time we make a commitment to spread and defend our Catholic faith in a mature way. With this sacrament, our full initiation into the Catholic Church is completed. By the time we are in our early teens, we are fully initiated members of the Catholic Church.

As you know, the word “catholic” means “universal”. Some of the Eastern rites of the Catholic Church celebrate Confirmation at the time of Baptism; that means, infants are baptized and confirmed at the same ceremony. You may have some fellow students who were confirmed at Baptism—for example, those who belong to the Maronite Rite of the Catholic Church. This shows the unity in diversity of the Church. These rites are loyal to the Magisterium, and present the same mystery of Christ in the sacraments and show fidelity to the Sacred Tradition of the Church. These diverse traditions are beautiful examples of the catholicity of the Catholic Church, for although they might differ slightly, the Church holds them all to be equal and wishes to preserve them.

Another way of celebrating the sacraments of initiation occurs when a person becomes a Catholic as an adult. If a person who has not been baptized wants to become Catholic, that person usually receives all the sacraments of initiation on the same day. Read the following story about someone who celebrated the sacraments of initiation in just this way.

#### A Mother Celebrates the Sacraments of Initiation

Susan was born in the United States. Her father was a United States citizen, but her mother was from Japan. Susan’s father and mother met in Japan when her father was in the United States Armed Forces and was stationed in Japan. Susan’s parents fell in love and were married.

After her father’s tour of duty in the service was completed, Susan’s parents decided to settle in the United States. Susan was the first child to be born to her parents, and then came Peter and little Mary.

When Susan was old enough, she began to attend Mass on Sundays with her parents. Susan soon noticed that, when it came time to go to Communion, her father would go to Communion, but her mother would not. Susan was curious and asked her mother one day after Mass why she did not go to Communion.

Her mother answered that she was not Catholic and therefore was not able to receive Communion. In fact, Susan’s mother had





# UNIT 2: THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

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not been baptized in any religion. She had been raised in a religion different from the Catholic religion. Susan's mother went on to explain that she had learned something in Japan about the Catholic faith by attending Mass and catechism lessons with a Catholic friend of hers.

As the years went by, Susan and her family prayed together, and on Sundays they attended Mass together. One day, when Susan was just beginning eighth grade, Susan's mother had a surprise for Susan. Her mother told Susan that she was going to attend the catechumenate program at their parish, Saint Joseph's.

Susan's mother explained that the catechumenate program is for people who are unbaptized and who are interested in becoming Catholic. Through several months of instruction and liturgical ceremonies, a person is prepared to celebrate the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and the Holy Eucharist) at the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday (the evening before Easter Sunday). This year Father Hughes would be teaching the classes, which would meet every Thursday evening.

Susan was excited for her mother. Susan offered to help her father take care of Peter and Mary while her mother was at class. Susan also prayed every day for her mother.

Susan enjoyed listening to the things that her mother was learning in the catechumenate classes. Since English was not her mother's native language, Susan helped her to understand some of the ideas that Father Hughes taught in class. Susan was also able to share with her mother the things that she was learning in her religion classes at Saint Joseph's School.

As part of the catechumenate program, there were several liturgical celebrations that all the catechumens attended. These celebrations were usually during Sunday Masses. During these liturgies, the congregation prayed for all the catechumens at Saint Joseph's. Susan attended each celebration and prayed especially hard for her mother.

Soon Holy Saturday evening arrived. It was time to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It was also time for the catechumens to be initiated fully into the Church. Susan's mother was very nervous as the family prepared to go to the Easter Vigil ceremony. Susan noticed her mother's uneasiness, and, as the family left the house, Susan gently squeezed her mother's hand and gave her a big smile.

When the family arrived at church, Susan's mother went to be seated with the other catechumens. Susan and the rest of the family were seated close by the catechumens.

The Easter Vigil liturgy was beautiful. Susan was so happy for her mother. After the homily, Father Hughes called the catechumens, with their sponsors, into the sanctuary. After the litany of the saints, Father blessed the water that would be used to baptize Susan's mother. Then Susan's mother and the other catechumens expressed a desire to turn away from sin in their lives. They also made a profession of faith, proclaiming their belief in all that the Catholic Church teaches.

Finally, the moment for Baptism arrived. Tears came to Susan's eyes as she watched Father Hughes pour water over her mother's head and speak the words of Baptism. Susan looked at her father and her brother and sister, all of whom smiled at Susan with tears in their eyes.

Because Father Hughes had prepared Susan's mother for reception into the Catholic Church, he was permitted to confirm her, too. This he did by anointing her forehead with sacred chrism and saying the words of Confirmation.

## UNIT 2: THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

After the Confirmation, Susan's mother and the others who were newly baptized and confirmed returned to their pews. The Mass continued. Then the time came for Holy Communion. Father Hughes had made arrangements for the newly initiated and their families to receive Communion together.

Now, for the first time, Susan and her mother could go up to receive the Body of Christ together. Again, this was a very emotional moment for Susan and her entire family. After many months of study and prayer, Susan's mother had completed her full initiation into the Catholic Church. This was an occasion for a joyous celebration.

When Mass was over, there was a reception in the parish center for the newly initiated. Many of the parishioners came to congratulate Susan's mother. For her congratulations, Susan gave her mother a big hug. This was one of the happiest moments in Susan's life (and in her mother's as well!)

*Initiation into the Catholic Church is like no other initiation because, through the sacraments of initiation, Jesus personally meets us, welcomes us as members of the Church, and makes us one with him by sharing his life with us. No other initiation can claim to do anything close to what the sacraments of initiation do for us!*

# UNIT 2: THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

## Application

The liturgy on Holy Saturday is the most solemn liturgy of the Church year, because it celebrates the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. In order to emphasize the importance of this liturgy, complete one or more of the following activities.

1. Using a Roman Missal or a missalette, read through the Holy Saturday service with the class. Inform students about the major parts of the liturgy. From your own personal experience of the Easter Vigil, tell the class what has impressed you most about the service. If any of the students have attended the Holy Saturday liturgy, use their experiences as a basis for discussion.
2. Have a parish priest talk to the class about the parish RCIA program (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) and the Holy Saturday liturgy.
3. Have someone who was initiated into the Church at the Easter Vigil talk to the class about that experience.

## Extending the Lesson

### Discussion Questions

1. **What are the sacraments of initiation?**  
*Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist.*
2. **What does the reception of the three sacraments do for a person?**  
*The reception of these sacraments initiates a person fully into the Catholic Church.*
3. **Who is a catechumen?**  
*Someone who is unbaptized and who is learning about the Catholic faith in preparation for initiation into the Church.*

*Have the students complete the Unit 2 Review Worksheet, found on page 195 in the appendix (if it was not completed in the previous lesson).*

## Celebration

Pray the Nicene Creed with the students (Prayers to Know, student textbook, p. 114).

## Family Notes

Make copies of the Unit 2 family notes (in the appendix) and send them home for students to discuss with their parents.

## Assessment

Make copies of the Unit 2 Assessment for each student (in the appendix) and have students either take it as a test or work together in groups to answer the questions. After corrections are made, tests should be taken home and discussed with parents.

# UNIT 2: THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## *Unit 2—The Sacraments of Initiation*

*Define the following:*

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## UNIT 3: BAPTISM

### Unit Objectives

1. To learn about the physical sign of Baptism and about the usual minister of Baptism.
2. To discuss what Baptism signifies and what it brings about.
3. To study what it means to become a member of the Church through Baptism.
4. To discuss the necessity of Baptism, as well as its source, Jesus Christ.

### Vocabulary

**actual sin:** any sin that we ourselves commit

**baptismal character:** a change in us, caused by the Sacrament of Baptism, that makes us more like Christ in a permanent, indelible way. Because of the baptismal character, one is made capable of receiving the other sacraments. This indelible spiritual sign consecrates us for Christian worship, especially the Mass.

**godparent:** a member of the Church who presents a person for Baptism, and who, after Baptism, helps the person to live the Catholic faith

**indelible:** unable to be eliminated; remaining forever

**grace:** a free gift from God in which he shares his divine life and friendship with us; helps us to live as persons created in the image of God

**sanctifying grace:** “heals our human nature wounded by sin by giving us a share in the divine life of the Trinity . . . making us ‘perfect,’ holy, and Christlike” (CCC, Glossary)

**actual grace:** God’s intervention and help to conform our lives to his will

**original holiness:** the state of friendship with God shared by Adam and Eve before they sinned; Adam and Eve shared in divine life before they sinned

**original justice:** before sin, the mastery or governance that Adam and Eve experienced over themselves; freedom from death

### Vocabulary (continued)

**Original Sin:** the first sin of Adam and Eve. We inherit Original Sin and its effects from Adam and Eve. We are conceived and born in need of the grace of salvation won for us by Christ (see CCC 1250). Without the grace of salvation, we are not able to respond fully to God’s love here on earth and cannot live with God in heaven.

**consequences or effects of Original Sin:** the results of the sin of Adam and Eve. We are conceived and born without original holiness and original justice. We are in need of the grace of salvation won for us by Christ (see CCC 1250). We inherit darkened minds, weakened wills, and concupiscence (we find it difficult to express truth and love through our bodies; and we suffer and die).

**triple office of Christ:** prophet, priest, and king

**sacred chrism:** a mixture of olive oil and balsam which is consecrated by the bishop on Holy Thursday for use in the sacraments throughout the year

## LESSON 6: BAPTISM—THE FIRST OF THE SACRAMENTS

### Lesson Objectives

1. To discuss the physical sign of Baptism.
2. To discuss who can baptize in ordinary situations and emergency situations.
3. To give a specific case of emergency Baptism.

# UNIT 3: BAPTISM

## Correspondence to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**Grace of Baptism:** CCC 1262–74, 1279–80

**Minister of Baptism:** CCC 1256, 1284

**Necessity of Baptism:** CCC 1257–61, 1277

**Rite and signs of Baptism:** CCC 1234–45, 1278

## Preparation


The materials needed for this lesson are the YOUCAT and information about the life of Saint Gianna Beretta Molla; optional: DVD *Love Is a Choice: Life of St. Gianna Molla*, directed by Thomas Rosica (Ignatius Press, 2005).

## Proclamation

“Baptism is the only way to God and salvation” (YOUCAT 199).

## Explanation

*Have the students read and discuss textbook page 15 and the top of page 16.*

 *Have the students look up and discuss YOUCAT 195 regarding how Baptism is administered.*

## UNIT 3: BAPTISM

### Vocabulary

**actual sin:** any sin that we ourselves commit

**baptismal character:** a change in us, caused by the Sacrament of Baptism, that makes us more like Christ in a permanent, indelible way. Because of the baptismal character, one is made capable of receiving the other sacraments. This indelible spiritual sign consecrates us for Christian worship, especially the Mass.

**godparent:** a member of the Church who presents a person for Baptism, and who, after Baptism, helps the person to live the Catholic faith

**indelible:** unable to be eliminated; remaining forever

**grace:** a free gift from God in which he shares his divine life and friendship with us; helps us to live as persons created in the image of God

**sanctifying grace:** “heals our human nature wounded by sin by giving us a share in the divine life of the Trinity ... making us ‘perfect,’ holy, and Christlike” (CCC, Glossary)

**actual grace:** God’s intervention and help to conform our lives to his will

**original holiness:** the state of friendship with God shared by Adam and Eve before they sinned; Adam and Eve shared in divine life before they sinned

**original justice:** before sin, the mastery or governance that Adam and Eve experienced over themselves; freedom from death

**Original Sin:** the first sin of Adam and Eve. We inherit Original Sin and its effects from Adam and Eve. We are conceived and born in need of the grace of salvation won for us by Christ (see CCC 1250). Without the grace of salvation, we are not able to respond fully to God’s love here on earth and cannot live with God in heaven.


**consequences or effects of Original Sin:** the results of the sin of Adam and Eve. We are conceived and born without original holiness and original justice. We are in need of the grace of salvation won for us by Christ (see CCC 1250). We inherit darkened minds, weakened wills, and concupiscence (we find it difficult to express truth and love through our bodies; and we suffer and die).

**triple office of Christ:** prophet, priest, and king

**sacred chrism:** a mixture of olive oil and balsam which is consecrated by the bishop on Holy Thursday for use in the sacraments throughout the year.

### LESSON 6: BAPTISM—THE FIRST OF THE SACRAMENTS

Baptism is the first of the sacraments of initiation. Through Baptism, Jesus meets us and gives us God’s life (sanctifying grace). In giving us sanctifying grace, Jesus takes all of our sins away, he makes us members of the Church, and he makes us capable of living in heaven someday.

 Learn more about how Baptism is administered by reading YOUCAT 195.

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The sign of the Sacrament of Baptism is very simple. After the profession of faith is made by the person being baptized or, for infants, by the parents and godparents, water is used and words are spoken. As the water is poured three times over the forehead of the person to be baptized or the person is immersed three times in water and then raised up, the priest or deacon says at each pouring or each immersion the invocation of one of the persons of the Holy Trinity: "I baptize you in the name of the Father (pour or immerse), and of the Son (pour or immerse), and of the Holy Spirit (pour or immerse)."



The minister of the Sacrament of Baptism is usually an ordained person (deacon, priest, or bishop), but, in case of an emergency (danger of death), *anyone* can and should baptize by pouring water on the person's head while the words "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" are said. It is also necessary for the person to have the intention and "to will to do what the Church does when she baptizes" (CCC 1256). For example, hospitals usually have nurses who are trained to baptize in emergency situations. Read the following story about someone who was baptized in an emergency.

### Andrew's Baptism

Jim and Jane Lee were overjoyed when they found out that they were going to have their first baby. They had been looking forward to this for such a long time. In their excitement, they wondered if the baby would be a boy or a girl, and they wondered, "Who would the baby look like?" In their more reflective moments, they prayed that the baby would be healthy.

As the time for birth approached, Jim and Jane and their doctor decided to have some tests done on the baby in Jane's womb. They wanted to see if the baby had any health problems. If there were any, the doctor would tell them what could be done to cure the problems. When the tests were complete, the doctor asked Jim and Jane to come to the medical office to discuss the results.

After some preliminary conversation, the doctor pointed out something very disturbing about the test results. There were certain indications that Jim and Jane's baby had Down syndrome. This meant that the baby probably would develop certain distinctive physical and mental characteristics typical of people with Down syndrome. The doctor also informed Jim and Jane that their baby would most likely need minor surgery shortly after birth. The doctor indicated that, even though the surgery was minor, their baby would die without it.

As Jim and Jane left the doctor's office, they were numb. Then, after a while, they began to talk with each other about their baby. Because they were people of strong faith, they knew that each baby is a precious gift from God. Even though their baby had Down syndrome, they knew that their child was a person, created in the image of God, and that their baby was precious, too. With God's help, they resolved to accept their precious gift from God and to love their baby with both their hearts.

From the ultrasound, Jim and Jane knew that their baby was a boy. And so, even before he was born, they decided to give him a name. They named him Andrew James.

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Jim and Jane were expecting a nine-month pregnancy with Andrew, but Andrew had a different idea. He decided to come early. He was born prematurely.

Because Andrew was premature, and because of complications from his Down syndrome, the doctor was not sure if Andrew would live. When the doctor informed Jim and Jane of this, they were frightened. They were afraid for Andrew's physical health, but they were more concerned that Andrew would have a spiritual relationship with Jesus. In this regard, the first thing that they thought of was Baptism. They should have little Andrew baptized.

Immediately, Jim called his parish priest, Father Simon. Jim talked to Father and told him about little Andrew's condition. Without a moment's hesitation, Father Simon asked the name of the hospital where Andrew was and said that he was on his way.

When Father Simon arrived at the hospital, Jim met him and brought him to the hospital room where medical staff cared for all the premature infants. The room had several incubators, each with a little, premature baby inside. When Jim and Father arrived at Andrew's incubator, they saw a tiny, pink, and wrinkled baby boy, struggling to live. Jane was there, too, her eyes fixed on her baby.

Father Simon talked quietly to Jim and Jane for a few moments. Then Father Simon asked the nurse for an eyedropper and some water. After putting his stole around his neck, Father began the prayers of Baptism. When the time for Baptism came, Father filled the eyedropper with water, reached inside the incubator, and, as the water dripped from the eyedropper onto Andrew's tiny forehead, Father spoke the words of Baptism: "Andrew James, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

After he finished the prayers of Baptism, Father Simon again spoke with Jim and Jane. Then, after giving each of them a gentle hug, he left. Andrew James Lee was baptized. And Jim, Jane, and Father Simon knew that tiny Andrew had met Jesus himself through Baptism and that, no matter what happened, Andrew was in Jesus' hands.



*Have the students read the story "Andrew's Baptism" on textbook pages 16–17 quietly to themselves, or have various students take turns reading the story aloud.*

If it is appropriate, you may use this story for teaching respect for human life. Some parents, after learning that their baby has Down syndrome, choose abortion. Also, some doctors would recommend abortion in Jim and Jane's situation. The students should know that abortion is always the wrong choice, no matter what the condition of the unborn child.

Stress the point that each human life, from conception to natural death, is God's precious gift to us, to be loved and cared for, not put to death. Vatican II calls abortion an abominable crime. The same can be said of euthanasia. Euthanasia is an action or omission that causes the death of handicapped, sick, or dying

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persons—sometimes with an attempt to justify the act as a means of eliminating suffering (see CCC 2277).

When people are tempted to seek abortion or euthanasia as solutions to their problems, they need our help and support. We should help these people to choose life, no matter how difficult that might seem to them at first, and then give them the support they need to carry out that choice.

Emphasize that Jim and Jane’s response to their situation was the correct one. Whether the person in danger of death is young or old, a priest should be notified immediately.

## Application

Tell the students the story of the life of Saint Gianna Beretta Molla (1922–1962; canonized 2004), which can be found through a web search.

## Extending the Lesson

Watch the DVD *Love Is a Choice: Life of St. Gianna Molla*, directed by Thomas Rosica (Ignatius Press, 2005).

## Celebration

Pray an Our Father and a Hail Mary for the protection of the unborn (Prayers to Know, student textbook, pp. 109 and 110, respectively).

## LESSON 7: BAPTISM BRINGS ABOUT WHAT IT SIGNIFIES

### Lesson Objective

To learn that Baptism brings about what it signifies: a cleansing, life, and a participation in the Death and Resurrection of Jesus.

### Correspondence to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

#### Conformity of Baptism to Christ’s Passion, Death, and Resurrection:

CCC 628, 1214, 1225, 1239

**Grace of Baptism:** CCC 1214–16, 1262–74, 1279–80

**Forgiveness of sins:** CCC 1263–64

**“A new creation”:** CCC 1215, 1265–66

**Original Sin:** CCC 388–90, 396–401, 415

### Preparation

The materials needed for this lesson are Bibles and the YOUCAT; optional: notebooks (for writing a paragraph).

### Proclamation

“Through the Holy Spirit, Baptism is a bath that purifies, justifies and sanctifies (cf. 1 Cor 6:11; 12:13)” (CCC 1227).



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## Explanation

Remind the students that ordinary signs do not bring about what they signify. If they did, our world would be quite different. A stop sign would actually stop us, a yield sign would actually make us yield, and a green light would force us to go. (See Lesson 2 if review is needed.) On the other hand, sacramental signs do bring about what they signify.

*Have the students read and discuss textbook page 17. Then have a student read aloud Titus 3:1–7.*

### LESSON 7: BAPTISM BRINGS ABOUT WHAT IT SIGNIFIES

In the Sacrament of Baptism, water is used and words are spoken. We call the water and the words the physical sign of the sacrament. The water and the words physically touch the person being baptized.

Through the physical sign of Baptism, Jesus meets the person being baptized in a bodily way. But, in addition, through the physical sign of Baptism, Jesus meets the person being baptized in a spiritual way. Jesus blesses the person with sanctifying grace, which “touches” the spiritual part of the person—namely, the soul.

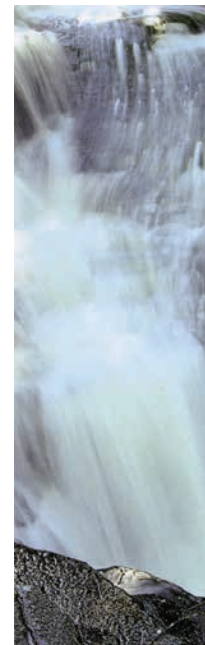
Remember that the sacraments truly bring about what they signify. The Sacrament of Baptism signifies three things: cleansing, life, and a participation in the Death and Resurrection of Jesus, which

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After the reading, point out that in this citation Saint Paul speaks of Baptism as a bath of regeneration or rebirth (see 3:5). This means that, by being bathed in the waters of Baptism, we are given God’s life. God’s life, or sanctifying grace, is a new and infinitely more powerful life given to us. “Sanctifying grace is the gratuitous gift of his life that God makes to us; it is infused by the Holy Spirit into the soul to heal it of sin and to sanctify it” (CCC 2023).

*Have the students read and discuss textbook pages 18–19.*

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means an insertion into the life of the Trinity. Baptism signifies these things and actually brings them about.

First of all, in Baptism, water is used. Water signifies a cleansing. In everyday life, we use water to clean our bodies. However, the water in Baptism is a sign of a different kind of cleansing. Baptismal water signifies a spiritual cleansing from sin. But not only does the water used in Baptism signify a cleansing from sin, it actually brings about such a cleansing. Through the sanctifying grace of Baptism, all of our sins are taken away, both Original Sin and any actual or personal sins that we might have committed.

Second, in addition to cleansing, water also signifies life. Living beings on this earth need water to live. As human beings, we need water to sustain our human life. The water in Baptism signifies life, but a different kind of life. Baptismal water signifies God’s life, sanctifying grace. However, the water used in Baptism not only signifies sanctifying grace; it truly brings sanctifying grace into our lives. Through Baptism, we come to share God’s life. We receive sanctifying grace, which heals our human nature wounded by sin by giving us a share in the divine life of the Trinity. Sanctifying grace makes us holy and Christlike. As Saint John Paul II wrote, “Baptism [is] the Sacrament in which the element of water symbolizes and realizes in man *the unspeakable gift of trinitarian life* [God’s life].”<sup>11</sup>

In a sense, Baptism is like being born a second time. We can say that the first time we were born, we began to live a new life outside of our mothers’ wombs. Through Baptism, we begin to live a new life, too. We begin to live the life of God, because in Baptism we receive God’s life. So Baptism is like being born for a second time.

Third, in addition to cleansing and life, Baptism signifies and brings about a participation in the Death and Resurrection of Jesus. One of the ways that a person can be baptized is by immersion in water. In this form of Baptism, a person is completely immersed in a pool of water and then brought up out of the water. This type

of Baptism clearly signifies what happened to Jesus. Jesus died on the Cross and was buried in a tomb. But, three days later, Jesus rose from the dead to new life. When a person being baptized is immersed in a pool of water, that person signifies Jesus’ Death and burial in a tomb. The person “dies” and is “buried” under the water. And then, when the person rises up out of the pool of water, Jesus’ rising to a new life is signified.

But not only are Jesus’ Death and Resurrection signified by the person’s being immersed; that person actually participates in Jesus’ Death and Resurrection. The sacrament brings about what it signifies. How? By going under the waters of Baptism, a person does really die, but not in a physical way. The person dies to sin. Sin is truly put to death, or taken away, by Baptism. By coming up out of the water, the person being baptized truly rises to a new life. The person shares God’s life, which

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means an insertion into the life of the Trinity and a participation in it, something that the person did not share before Baptism. In Baptism, it is as if Christ personally takes us by the hand and brings us with him on a journey from the Cross, through the grave, to the Resurrection. (It should be noted that the most common form of Baptism is for water to be poured over the head of the person being baptized. This form of Baptism also signifies dying and rising with Christ, but not so clearly as does immersion.)

Dying and rising with Christ in Baptism is what Saint Paul writes about when he says, “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3–4).

Baptism brings about what it signifies. The sacrament signifies a cleansing from sin, the reception of God’s life, and participation in the Death and Resurrection of Jesus, which means an insertion into the life of the Trinity. Thus Baptism actually brings about these realities in us through a personal meeting with Jesus.

★ Learn more about what happens in Baptism by reading *YOUCAT 200*.

★ *After reading pages 18–19, have the students look up and discuss **YOUCAT 200** about what happens in Baptism.*

### Application

Baptism is the first sacrament we receive, and it takes away Original Sin and all actual sins (if any). Through Baptism, we receive sanctifying grace. We shine brightly as persons created in the image of God, and we are enabled to act as persons created in the image of God and to imitate the perfect image of God, Jesus Christ. Imitating Jesus constitutes the moral life, and through the power of grace, we grow more loving in our relationship with God.

**Ask:** Do you think Baptism is magic?

Are we cleansed from sin, given God’s life, and enabled to participate in the Death and Resurrection of Christ through some stupendous act of magic? *No. Magic is a trick. Magic appears to make something happen—for example, a rabbit coming out of a hat. On the other hand, Baptism (like the other sacraments) really does make things happen. Baptism truly changes us.*

### Extending the Lesson

Have the students look up the following Scripture references. After reading the references, they should write a paragraph about how these events “foreshadow” Baptism.

1 Peter 3:20–21—Reference to Noah’s Ark

Exodus 14:1–31—Crossing the Red Sea

Joshua 3:1–17—Crossing the River Jordan

### Celebration

Lead the class in saying the thanksgiving and praise prayer found in Isaiah 12:1–6.

# UNIT 3: BAPTISM

## LESSON 8: MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

### Lesson Objectives

1. To learn that in Baptism people become prophets, priests, and kings. (Explain to the students that with regard to the priestly office of Jesus, there is an essential difference between the priesthood of the faithful, conferred by Baptism, and the ministerial [ordained] priesthood, conferred by Holy Orders. Each has a share in the one priesthood of Jesus, but in different ways.)
2. To learn that grace gives people the power to act as prophets, priests, and kings.
3. To study about the sacramental character of Baptism.

### Correspondence to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**Baptism as source of grace and participation in Christ's prophetic office:** CCC 1262–74, 1277

**Bearing witness to the truth:** CCC 2471–74, 2506

**Common good:** CCC 1905–12, 1924–26

**Communal character of the human vocation:** CCC 1877–85, 1890–92

**Grace conferred by the sacraments:** CCC 1127–29, 1131

**Incorporation into the Church through Baptism:** CCC 1267–71, 1277

**Indelible baptismal character:** CCC 1272–74, 1280

**Living in the truth:** CCC 2465–70, 2505

**Our share in Jesus' kingly office:** CCC 783, 786, 871, 873, 897, 908–13, 943, 1268, 1546

**Our share in Jesus' priestly office:** CCC 783–84, 871, 873, 897, 901–3, 941, 1268, 1546–47, 1591

### Correspondence to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (continued)

**Our share in Jesus' prophetic office:** CCC 783, 785, 871, 873, 904–7, 942, 1268, 1546

**Sacrifice:** CCC 2099–100

**Self-control:** CCC 2339–42

### Preparation

The materials needed for this lesson are Bibles and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*; optional: one sheet of paper per student (8½" × 11").

### Proclamation

“By Baptism [the baptized] share in the priesthood of Christ, in his prophetic and royal [kingly] mission” (CCC 1268).

### Explanation

Baptism identifies a person as a follower of Christ and a member of the Church.

**Have one student read aloud *Ephesians 4:1–5*.** In this portion of his letter, Saint Paul mentions Baptism.

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Have the students read and discuss the bottom of textbook page 19 and top of page 20.

## LESSON 8: MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

When Jesus meets us in Baptism, he also makes us members of the Church. We are not fully initiated members of the Church through Baptism; yet, we are members. As members of the Church, we have clothed ourselves with Christ, and we have taken on the responsibility to act like Christ. Oftentimes, after being baptized, the person is clothed in a baptismal garment (usually white) that symbolizes that the person has been clothed with Christ.

How have we clothed ourselves with Christ through Baptism? How have we put on Christ? We are made prophets, priests, and kings through Baptism, in a way similar to Christ, who is a prophet, a priest, and a king. We call prophet, priest, and king the “triple office of Christ”. By Baptism, we share in the triple office of Christ, and we have the responsibility of acting as Christ acts. We have the responsibility of acting as prophets, priests, and kings. As a sign of being made prophets, priests, and kings by Baptism, the newly baptized person is anointed with sacred chrism on the crown of the head. Just as Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit (see Acts 10: 38), so is the newly baptized anointed and made a sharer in Jesus triple office.



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**Ask:** What are some examples of Jesus acting as a prophet? For example, Jesus’ many encounters with those who had a difficult time accepting him (see John 8:12–47).

What are some examples of Jesus acting as a priest? For example, Jesus’ Agony in the Garden (Luke 22:39–42).

What are some examples of Jesus acting as a king? For example, Jesus’ fasting in the desert (Matthew 4:1–11) or Jesus’ feeding the five thousand (John 6:1–13).

Read to the class the following quotes from Vatican II’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium* (November 21, 1964) about our baptismal share in Christ’s triple office. Discuss the meaning of the quotes with them.

**Prophetic office:** “The holy people of God shares also in Christ’s prophetic office; it spreads abroad a living witness to Him [the Truth]” (no. 12). Ask the students to state some of the practical ways that they can exercise their baptismal prophetic office—for example, following the Eighth Commandment and standing up for the Catholic faith when others ridicule it. (See CCC 785, 904–7, 942.)

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As a prophet, Christ always tells the truth. In fact, Christ called himself “the truth” (John 14:6). As the truth, Jesus witnesses to the whole truth about God and us. As a priest, Jesus offered sacrifices to God the Father to show his love for God the Father and us. By his sacrifice of love on the Cross, Jesus manifested his great love. Finally, as a king, Jesus exercises discipline over himself, and he uses the things of the world for the benefit of others. Jesus’ ability to undergo his Passion and Death willingly, without running from them, shows us his tremendous self-discipline. The use of things, such as bread and wine, for the sacraments, shows that Jesus used things to benefit people. As a king, Jesus exercises his dominion over creation.

It is important to note that, free from Original Sin, Jesus was free from its effect of concupiscence. So Jesus’ self-discipline was not to overcome concupiscence, but to give us an example of how to overcome sin and its effects in our lives. “By his obedience unto death (cf. Phil 2:8–9), Christ communicated to his disciples the gift of royal freedom, so that they might ‘by the self-abnegation of a holy life, overcome the reign of sin in themselves’” (CCC 908).<sup>2</sup>

Having become members of the Church and having clothed ourselves with Christ, we share in the triple office of Jesus. This means that we should try our hardest to live out this office—to imitate Jesus and to act as prophets, priests, and kings. As prophets, we should be witnesses to the truth about God and ourselves. As priests, we should offer sacrifices to God to show our love for God and others. As kings, we should be self-disciplined and use the things that we possess for the common good of others, and in these ways exercise dominion over creation.

The grace of the Sacrament of Baptism helps us to act as prophets, priests, and kings. This is the purpose of the sacrament. Jesus doesn’t give us a share in his triple office and then expect us to exercise these offices without his help. Rather, Jesus meets us and makes us prophets, priests, and kings in the Sacrament of Baptism, and then he shares his life with us to help us live as prophets, priests, and kings. Strengthened by grace and living our share in the triple office of Jesus, we, like Christ, are called to be a light for the world. “I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (John 8:12). To symbolize this, a candle lit from the Easter candle is presented to the newly baptized or, in the case of an infant, to a member of the family or a godparent.

We say that we receive a special character with Baptism. The baptismal character changes us and makes us more like Christ in a permanent way. This is another way of saying that, through Baptism, we become members of the Church and we are made capable of receiving the remaining sacraments. This indelible spiritual sign consecrates us for Christian worship, especially the Mass. Receiving the special character of Baptism also means that, once we are baptized, we are baptized forever. Christ will never forsake his baptismal meeting with us. Consequently, we receive this sacrament only once.

★ Learn more about the baptismal character by reading CCC 1272–74.

**Priestly office:** “The baptized, by regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated as a spiritual house and a holy priesthood. . . . Therefore all the disciples of Christ, persevering in prayer and praising God (cf. Acts 2:42–47), should present themselves as a sacrifice [of love], holy and pleasing to God (cf. Rom 12:1)” (no. 10). Ask the students to state some of the practical ways that they can exercise their baptismal priestly office; for example, by following the first three Commandments, we show our love for God; and by following the last seven Commandments, we show our love for neighbor. (See CCC 901–3, 941.)

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**Kingly office:** The disciples of Christ, “by true penance and a holy life”, may “conquer the reign of sin in themselves (cf. Rom 6:12)” —that indeed by “serving Christ in their fellow men they might by humility and patience lead their brethren to that King for whom to serve is to reign” (no. 36). (See CCC 908–13, 943.)

Further, the Council states, “The faithful [laity], therefore, must learn the deepest meaning and value of all creation, as well as its role in the harmonious praise of God. They must assist each other to live holier lives even in their daily occupations [i.e., use the things that we possess for the good of others]” (no. 36). Ask the students to state some of the practical ways that they can exercise their baptismal kingly office—for example, not being wasteful with the goods of the earth, being serious in their studies so they can develop and use their talents for others, and learning to recognize God the Creator in the nature they study.

Point out to the class that the Catholic Church recognizes as legitimate the Baptism of anyone in any Christian church, as long as that person was baptized with water while saying the words “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Such a person can be received into the Catholic Church without being baptized again.

 *Have the students look up CCC 1272–74 and discuss the baptismal character.*

### Application

Prayer is one of the most important ways to strengthen our ability to act as prophets, priests, and kings. Have the students compose a prayer asking God to help them to exercise their share in Christ’s triple office. If they are willing, have some of the students share their prayers with the class.

### Extending the Lesson

Andrew’s Baptism was unusual. Ordinarily, the Sacrament of Baptism takes place in a church, either during Mass or at a separate ceremony. Have the students write a one-page paper summarizing what happened at their Baptisms (from talking to their parents, godparents, or family members), or have them write about a Baptism that they have seen. Ask the students to include as many actions of the priest as they can remember.

### Celebration

Pray the Our Father with the students (Prayers to Know, student textbook, p. 109).

# UNIT 3: BAPTISM

## LESSON 9: MORE ABOUT BAPTISM

### Lesson Objectives

1. To study the importance of Baptism, even for infants.
2. To discuss the question of the salvation of nonbaptized persons.
3. To study Jesus Christ as the source of Baptism.
4. To learn about the responsibilities that parents and godparents have toward the infants whom they present for Baptism.

### Correspondence to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

**Baptism in the Church:** CCC 1226–28

**Baptism of Jesus:** CCC 535–37, 565

**Faith and Baptism:** CCC 1253–55

**Grace of Baptism:** CCC 1262–74, 1279–80

**Heaven:** CCC 1023–29, 1053

**Jesus as our teacher and model of holiness:** CCC 468–69, 516, 519–21, 561

**John: forerunner, prophet, and baptizer:** CCC 523, 717–20

**Necessity of Baptism:** CCC 1257–61, 1277, 1281, 1283

### Preparation

The materials needed for this lesson are Bibles, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, a prayer candle, and copies of the Unit 3 family notes and Unit 3 Assessment; optional: a sheet of paper for each student and copies of the Unit 3 Review Worksheet.

### Proclamation

“In Baptism we become members of the Body of Christ, sisters and brothers of our Redeemer, and children of God” (YOUCAT 200).

### Explanation

*Have the students read and discuss the bottom of textbook page 20 and page 21.*

Questions about the salvation of nonbaptized people are often asked. Make sure that the students understand that God gives all persons the opportunity to be saved.

“The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation (cf. Jn 3:5)” (CCC 1257). But God works in many ways so that people can come to share his life here on earth and in heaven. As the *Catechism* teaches: “*God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments*” (CCC 1257; emphasis in original). He works with those who are baptized, but he does not abandon those who are not baptized.

### LESSON 9: MORE ABOUT BAPTISM

As members of the Church, we hope to share God’s life here on earth and someday in heaven. Baptism makes heaven possible for us. The Church wants everyone to share God’s life here on earth and to share heaven together someday. Sharing God’s life here on earth and sharing his life in heaven are

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possible even for the tiniest of persons (as we read in “Andrew’s Baptism”). Consequently, the Church advises parents to have their babies baptized within the first weeks after birth, so that their babies will begin to share God’s life as soon as possible.

Jesus himself pointed out the importance of Baptism to a Pharisee named Nicodemus. Nicodemus recognized that Jesus was a great teacher and that Jesus was from God. One night, Nicodemus came to Jesus to talk with him. In their conversation, Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). In other words, Jesus was telling Nicodemus that, in order to share God’s life here on earth and someday in heaven, Baptism was required.

“The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation” (CCC 1257).<sup>3</sup> The necessity of Baptism raises some important questions. If Baptism is required to share God’s life here on earth and someday in heaven, what about all the people who have never been baptized? Can they ever share God’s life? Can they ever live in heaven? The best way to answer such questions is to say that Baptism is the usual or ordinary way in which one is initiated into God’s life. That is why the Church, like the Apostles, goes out to all people to bring them the Gospel and to encourage them to be baptized. “The Church on earth is by her nature missionary since, according to the plan of the Father, she has as her origin the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit.” The ultimate purpose of mission is none other than to make men share in the communion between the Father and the Son in their Spirit of love” (CCC 850).<sup>4</sup>

But God works in many ways so that people can come to share his life here on earth and in heaven. As the *Catechism* teaches: “God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments” (CCC 1257; emphasis in original). He works with those who are baptized, but he does not abandon those who are not baptized.

If people have never had the opportunity to be baptized, if they recognize that there must be a God, and if they try to follow their consciences, God shares his life with them and they can come to live with him in heaven. “Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his

*Have the students read and discuss textbook pages 22–23. Then have one student read aloud Matthew 3:1–17, about Jesus’ baptism by John the Baptist in the Jordan.*

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Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience—those too may achieve eternal salvation” (CCC 847).<sup>5</sup> Even little infants who die without the benefit of Baptism are taken care of by God in a way known only to him. “With respect to children who have died without Baptism, the liturgy of the Church invites us to trust in God’s mercy and to pray for their salvation” (CCC 1283). Still, Baptism is the necessary, usual, or ordinary way in which God wants to share his life with us and make us his children.

Through the water and words of Baptism, we begin our initiation into the Church. Through Baptism, Jesus meets us and welcomes us for the first time into his family. He makes us like himself, because in Baptism we are clothed with Christ. But, as we have seen, Baptism carries with it certain responsibilities. These are the responsibilities of acting as Christ acted—namely, as prophet, priest, and king. Yet Christ does not expect us to bear these responsibilities on our own. He shares his life with us to help us to imitate him and to help us come to the life of heaven someday.

Where does the Sacrament of Baptism come from? It comes from Christ himself. Jesus showed us the importance of Baptism when he was baptized by John the Baptist at the River Jordan (Matthew 3:1–17). John’s baptism was not the Sacrament of Baptism. But the people who chose to be baptized by John were showing that they wanted to be cleansed from their sins.

Even though Jesus is totally free from sin, he submitted to the baptism of John as an example for us. By being baptized, Jesus was showing us that we too should be baptized. But, unlike Jesus, we do have sin, which is taken away by Baptism.

Baptism was given to us by Jesus after his Resurrection from the dead, but before his Ascension into heaven. Jesus took the Apostles up on a mountain and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Matthew 28:18–20).

The Sacrament of Baptism, like each of the other sacraments, comes from Jesus. He instituted Baptism and entrusted it to his Apostles. The Apostles, in turn, entrusted Baptism to the Church, and today Baptism is celebrated by the Church. The Church is apostolic. She is built on a lasting foundation: “the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (Revelation 21:14).

The power of Baptism to give sanctifying grace comes from Jesus’ sacrifice of love on the Cross. Remember, the water that flowed from Jesus’ side when he was pierced by the soldier’s lance symbolizes Baptism.

Great importance is attached to Baptism because it is the first of the sacraments received and it introduces us into a close, personal relationship with God. Consequently, if a person is being baptized as an adult, that person should be well-prepared and open to meeting Jesus in the sacrament (as Susan’s mother was in the story in Unit 2, “A Mother Celebrates the Sacraments of Initiation”). On the other hand, if a baby is being presented to the Church for Baptism, the parents and godparents should be aware of their serious responsibility to educate the baby in the Catholic faith as the baby grows and matures. Usually parents give their child the name of a saint in order to encourage their child to develop a special friendship with a saint.

Baptism is the first of the sacraments of initiation. Through Baptism, Jesus meets us and gives us God’s life (sanctifying grace). In giving us sanctifying grace, Jesus takes away Original Sin and



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all actual sins (if any), he makes us members of the Church, and he makes us able to live in heaven someday. We are enabled to act as persons created in the image of God and to imitate the image of the invisible God, Jesus Christ. Imitating Jesus constitutes the moral life, and through the power of grace, we grow more loving in our relationship with God. Because Baptism does all this, it is easy to see why Baptism is included with the Eucharist as a sacrament of primary importance among the Seven Sacraments of the Catholic Church.

In the Eastern rite churches, such as the Maronite Rite Church, the three sacraments of initiation are celebrated in the same ceremony, even if the one receiving the sacraments is an infant. This means that an infant brought for Baptism is baptized, but is also confirmed and receives the Eucharist, all in the same ceremony. "The Eastern Churches maintain a lively awareness of the unity of Christian initiation by giving Holy Communion to all the newly baptized and confirmed, even little children, recalling the Lord's words: 'Let the children come to me, do not hinder them' (Mk 10:14)" (CCC 1244; see CCC 1318).

### Activity

On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following question.

The following items can be seen at a Baptism. Of what does each item remind us, or what does the item symbolize?

sacred chrism  
candle  
water  
white garment  
Sign of the Cross

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Point out that all three persons of the Blessed Trinity manifested themselves on this occasion, highlighting the significance of Jesus' baptism for him and for us.

See Lesson 3 for a discussion of Jesus as the source of the sacraments.

Discuss canons 849–79 of the Code of Canon Law (Church law) on the Sacrament of Baptism with the students. These sections of the code cover the celebration of Baptism, the minister of Baptism, those to be baptized, sponsors, and the proof and record of conferred Baptism. See CCC 1229–33, 1246–51, 1256.

## Application

The encounter of Nicodemus with Christ is very significant for the theology of Baptism.

***Have one student read aloud the entire account in John 3:1–21. Discuss this passage with the students.***

Point out that Nicodemus' first statement shows he still trying to figure out who Jesus is. Nicodemus doesn't understand what Jesus is saying because he is thinking in human terms, while Jesus is speaking in spiritual terms.

**Ask:** What verse in this passage is a reference to Christian Baptism? *Verse 5.*

## Extending the Lesson

***Have the students complete the activity on textbook page 23, using a separate sheet of paper.***

Suggested answers:

sacred chrism: anointing as prophet, priest, and king

candle: Jesus as the light of the world

water: cleansing; new life

white garment: purity; all sins removed

Sign of the Cross: baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit



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Have the students complete the Unit 3 Review Worksheet, found on page 183 in the appendix.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Unit 3—Baptism*

Answer Key blocked out for online posting

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## Celebration

### Prayer Service to Renew Baptismal Promises

Light a candle (if permitted). Have the class stand. Open with the Sign of the Cross. To each of these questions, have the students reply, “I do.”

- Teacher: Do you renounce Satan?  
Students: I do.
- Teacher: And all his works?  
Students: I do.
- Teacher: And all his empty show?  
Students: I do.
- Teacher: Do you renounce sin, so as to live in the freedom of the children of God?  
Students: I do.
- Teacher: Do you renounce the lure of evil, so that sin may have no mastery over you?  
Students: I do.
- Teacher: Do you renounce Satan, the author and prince of sin?  
Students: I do.

Close with the Apostles’ Creed (Prayers to Know, student textbook, p. 109).

## Family Notes

Make copies of the Unit 3 family notes (in the appendix) and send them home for students to discuss with their parents.

## Assessment

Make copies of the Unit 3 Assessment for each student (in the appendix) and have students either take it as a test or work together in groups to answer the questions. After corrections are made, tests should be taken home and discussed with parents.

# UNIT 3: BAPTISM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Unit 3—Baptism

Match the vocabulary word in column A with the correct definition in column B.

Answer Key blocked out for online posting

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Fill in the blanks with the correct words.

Answer Key blocked out for online posting

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