

JESUS AND THE NEW COVENANT


UNIT ONE: THE WAY IS PREPARED

Lesson 9:

Understanding Baptism [2]

CONTENT:

Through the rites (actions and words) of Baptism we discover that:

1. The waters of our Baptism wash away our sin and bring us new life.
2. The faith professed by our parents will become our own and is professed by us personally at our Confirmation.
3. We are baptised by the rite of immersion/pouring of water three times and invoking the Father, Son and Spirit. We thus become children of God and members of his Body.
4. Anointing with Chrism signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit who makes us share in the mission of Christ: to be prophet, priest and king.
5. The white garment reminds us that we 'put on Christ'.
-  6. The lighted candle reminds us that, like the 5 wise virgins of the parable, we must keep the light of Christ burning brightly till he comes to meet us.

REFERENCES: Matthew 5:14-16; 22:1-14; 25:1-13. John 8:12 CCC 1231, 1234-1243.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Handouts; bibles, a lighted candle, white garment, basin with water.

I. STARTER:

At our last class we looked at the first few steps in the sacrament of Baptism. What signs/symbols did we look at? *[Your name, a cross, the Word of God, anointing oil.]* Today we are going to try and find out the deeper meaning of 3 more symbols. These are water, a lighted candle and a white garment.

[Divide the students into 3 groups and give each group one symbol: a basin of water, a lighted candle, a white garment/ cloth. They handle the object and try to guess what it symbolises in Baptism. Allow them to share their answers without accepting or rejecting any of the ideas. This starter is just to get them thinking.]

II. DEVELOPMENT:

[Give out the handouts and go through the remaining steps together with the students. At each stage the students give the answer orally and then write it in.]

1. WATER, WATER, EVERYWHERE!

- Read the prayer over the water. How many signs of Baptism does it talk about?
[After reading the prayer aloud, students try and find the references to baptism and number them [1 to 5] After they share, bring out the following:]

The stories about water, which tell us something about baptism are:

1. The Spirit moving over the waters at the time of creation. *[Life is created]*
2. The story of the Flood and Noah's ark. *[The sinful world is destroyed, Noah and his family start a new life.]*
3. The Israelites passing through the Red Sea. *[The people are saved from a life of slavery and begin a new and free life.]*
4. Jesus' baptism in the Jordan. *[Jesus accepted his mission to die and give us new life.]*
5. Blood and water flowing from Jesus' side as he hung on the cross. *[The blood stands for the Eucharist and the water stands for our Baptism. These gifts came from Jesus' death.]*

- What do they tell you about the water of Baptism? What does the water of your Baptism do to you?

These stories tell us about something new being created, of death and new life, of being saved. So when we are baptised, we are cleansed of sin, we die to our old life and receive new life.

7. YOUR PARENTS AND GODPARENTS RENEWED THE VOWS OF BAPTISM ON YOUR BEHALF

Soon, (at your Confirmation) you will stand before the Bishop and make the same vows for yourself. *[Students fill in the names of their parents and godparents.]*

8. YOU WERE BAPTISED.

This is the most important moment in the ceremony. You now become one with Christ, a child of God, and a member of the family of God, the Church.

9. YOU WERE ANOINTED WITH CHRISM

What does the Chrism oil do for you?

- Chrism oil is the perfumed oil which is a sign of the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament days, priests, prophets and kings were anointed with oil as they received their mission and new status.
- Christ was anointed by the Holy Spirit and given the mission to be all three: prophet, priest and king.
- Now that you are a Christian, you also share the same mission.

10. A WHITE GARMENT. Why do you put on a white garment? Can you remember any story told by Jesus about a garment that must be worn?

- When Jesus rose from the dead, his friends found his white garments lying in the grave. Putting on the white garment means that we ‘put on Christ’.
- Jesus told the story of a wedding feast given by a king. [Mt 22:1-14.] There was one man who tried to come in without a wedding garment and he landed in trouble. The lesson we learn is that we can only enter God’s kingdom if we ‘put on Christ’.

11. A LIGHTED CANDLE What parable does this remind us of?

Jesus told us about the wise and foolish girls who were waiting to enter the wedding hall with the bridegroom. *[Students open their Bibles and read Matthew 25:1-13]*

- What do you think the symbol of lamps burning means for us? What do you think Jesus wants us to do in order to be welcomed by him into heaven?
[Accept the suggestions of the students and bring out:]
- Christ said, **“I am the light of the world”** [John 8:12]. All our lives we must keep in contact with Jesus, who is our light. We must believe in him and be faithful to him.
- Jesus also said, **“You are the light of the world..Let your light shine before others, so that they may... give glory to your Father!”**[Matthew 5:14-16.] We are called to give the light of Christ to others also. It is not just to keep for ourselves.

III. REFLECTION & PRAYER:

Let us focus now on the parable of the Ten Virgins. Ask God to help you keep his light burning always and so keep you ready to meet him when he comes again.

Ask him to help you to remain in contact with him and be faithful to him; also to share him with others.

[Students pray in silence. If time permits, sing prayerfully: ‘The Light of Christ’]