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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 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, 122–33, 1275

Preparation

The materials needed for this lesson are Bibles, the unit worksheet on p. 170 of the appendix, and one sheet of paper per student (8 1/2" x 11").

Proclamation

The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the Sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life.

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

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about the ceremonies. Emphasize that an initiation is a kind of introduction or welcoming of a new member into a group.)

Have the students read and discuss textbook p. 9.

UNIT 2: THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

Vocabulary

catechumen: someone 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 VOCABULARY.

Sometimes when a person applies to become a member of a certain group or organization, that person goes through an initiation. An 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 fraternal organization. For those who are new members of the Knights of Columbus, a ceremony 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. When a person is baptized, confirmed, and receives the Eucharist, that person is initiated and is a fully initiated Catholic.

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 of Initiation do much more for us. Baptism, Confirmation, and the Holy Eucharist make us full members



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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 images of God.

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of the Church, which is both a human and a divine organization. Remember, the Church and Christ are mysteriously united as one. The Church is Jesus! Mystical Person and Jesus is both man (human) and God (divine). The Church too, then, is both human and divine.

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" (Gal 3:27-28). We are all one in Christ Jesus through the Sacraments of Initiation because through these Sacraments Christ shares His life with us.

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 all

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Application

On a white sheet of paper (8 1/2" x 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 (baptized in a hospital, etc.). 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" found on page 170 of 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 text p. 96).

Name: _____

Date: _____

Unit 2—The Sacraments of Initiation

Fill in the blanks with the names of the Sacraments and the three categories of Sacraments.

_____ BAPTISM
 _____ INITIATION
 _____ CONFIRMATION
 _____ HOLY EUCHARIST
 _____ HEALING
 _____ MATRIMONY
 _____ HOLY ORDERS
 _____ VOCATION
 _____ RECONCILIATION
 _____ ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Look up the following Bible references. After each, write the name of the Sacrament to which the passage refers.

Luke 22:14-20	Holy Orders
Acts 8:1	Confirmation
Matthew 28:19	Baptism
Mark 10:6-9	Matrimony
Mark 14:22-25	Holy Eucharist
John 20:19-23	Reconciliation
James 5:13-15	Anointing of the Sick

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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 1213–74, 1275–84

Baptism of adults: CCC 1247–49

Baptism of children: CCC 1250–52, 1282

Confirmation: CCC 1285–314, 1315–21

Holy Eucharist: CCC 1322–405, 1406–19

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

Preparation

The materials needed for this lesson are Bibles.

Proclamation

In Baptism we become children of God.

Explanation



Have students read and discuss YOUCAT 197 regarding infant Baptism.

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 are baptized as infants, and then later, at a young age, we receive Confirmation. Both sacraments 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 receive the grace of the Holy Spirit. Such neglect would betray a lack of reverence for the Sacrament and would be unfair to the children.

★ 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.

After we are in 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.

There is one more sacrament that we receive as adults. It is called the Sacrament of Holy Orders. It is the sacrament by which 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.

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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 in the Church (CCC 1252).

Sometimes people are confused about the order of the reception of first Reconciliation and First Holy Communion for children. Church law

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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.

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 several students take turns reading aloud the story "A Mother Celebrates the Sacraments of Initiation" on pp. 11-12, 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

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 she was a young child. They married and moved to the United States when Susan was five years old.

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 Confession first. Her mother would go to Confession, too. Susan was curious and asked her mother one day *why* she did that and 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 not been baptized in any religion. She had been raised in a religion different from her father's, and she had never learned about the Catholic Faith.

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 catechism program at their parish, St. Joseph's.

Susan's mother explained that the catechism program is for people 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 end of the program. Susan's mother was excited to learn that she would be able to receive the sacraments. 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 in class. Susan also prayed every day for her mother.

Susan enjoyed learning to read the Bible, but her mother was not able to attend the catechism classes. Susan's mother was not baptized, and Susan's father was not Catholic. Susan's father had been a member of the Episcopal Church, but he was not interested in becoming Catholic. Susan's father had been a member of the Episcopal Church, but he was not interested in becoming Catholic. Susan's father had been a member of the Episcopal Church, but he was not interested in becoming Catholic.

As part of the catechism program, there were several liturgical celebrations that all the catechumens attended. Susan's mother was not able to attend the catechism program, but she was able to attend the liturgical celebrations. Susan's mother was not able to attend the catechism program, but she was able to attend the liturgical celebrations. Susan's mother was not able to attend the catechism program, but she was able to attend the liturgical celebrations.

Soon Holy Saturday evening arrived. It was time to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It was a very special day for Susan and her mother. Susan's mother was not able to attend the catechism program, but she was able to attend the liturgical celebrations. Susan's mother was not able to attend the catechism program, but she was able to attend the liturgical celebrations. Susan's mother was not able to attend the catechism program, but she was able to attend the liturgical celebrations.

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.

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UNIT2: THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

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 catechumens, including Susan, stood in the baptismal font and drank the water. 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 all of whom smiled at Susan with tears in their eyes.

After the Baptism, Susan's mother and Susan were taken to the sacristy. Susan's mother was permitted to confirm her, too. This he did by anointing her forehead with chrism and saying the words of Confirmation.

After the Confirmation, Susan's mother and the others who were newly baptized and confirmed were taken to the sacristy. Susan's mother and Susan were then taken to the sacristy. 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 incredible moment for Susan and her mother.

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 bag bag. 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 joins us to Himself, the Son of the Church and makes us a part of His life with us. No other initiation can claim to do anything close to what the Sacraments of Initiation do for us!

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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 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 learning about the Catholic Faith in preparation for initiation into the Church.

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Celebration

Pray the Nicene Creed with the students (Prayers to Know, student text p. 98).

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.

Name: _____	
Date: _____	
Unit 2—The Sacraments of Initiation	
Define the following:	
1. catechumen: <u>Someone learning about the Catholic Faith in preparation for initiation into the Church</u>	
2. initiation: <u>An introduction or a welcoming of a new member into a group</u>	
Answer the following questions:	
3. The reception of the three Sacraments of Initiation initiates a person fully into the Catholic Church. What are the three Sacraments of Initiation? <u>Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist</u>	
4. To Whom are we united when we become members of the Church? <u>Jesus</u>	
Fill in the blanks with the correct answer.	
5. Parents who present their children for Baptism must promise to raise them in the practice of the _____ Catholic Faith.	
6. First Holy Communion initiates us into the reception of the Body and Blood of Jesus under the <u>appearances</u> of bread and wine.	
7. When we receive the Sacrament of _____ Confirmation _____, we make a commitment to spread and defend our Catholic Faith in a mature way.	
Answer the following essay question:	
8. Why is initiation into the Catholic Church like no other initiation? 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.	