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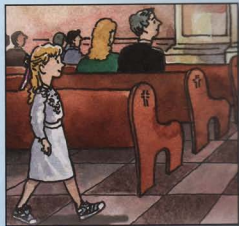


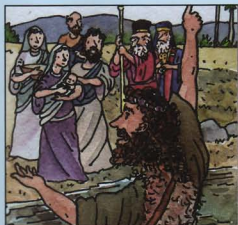
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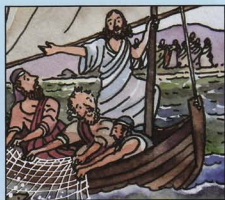


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Ages 3-4

Welcome to the Church!

Lesson Goal

The children will learn about the Sacrament of Baptism, and their own baptisms.

Key Points

- Baptism is a special celebration that welcomes people into the Church.
- Baptism includes the pouring of water (or immersion in water).

Reflection

When we are baptized, God adopts us as his daughters and sons (Galatians 4:5). We become mysteriously joined with Jesus, his Son, as we share in his death, burial, and Resurrection through our baptism. When we are baptized, we die to sin, are buried with Christ, and are raised up to live a new life in Christ (CCC, 1210–1284; Romans 6:1–4). The signs of Baptism include water, Sacred Chrism, a white garment, and light. The individual being baptized is immersed in water (or water is poured over his or her head) with the words, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” The baptized is then anointed with consecrated oil, called Sacred Chrism. This signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit and the reality that all of us who have put on Christ in baptism share in his work as Priest, Prophet, and King. We are called to serve and to proclaim the Word of God, and we are adopted sons and daughters of the King, making us part of the royal family. A white garment is placed on the newly baptized, signifying the truth that he or she has put on Christ and is now free from the stain of sin. A baptismal candle is lit from the Easter candle (which represents Christ), showing that the newly baptized has received the light of Christ and is welcomed into the Church to participate with her in being the “light of the world.”

Those who are part of the Church are connected to one another in a special, mysterious way. Saint Paul speaks about this mystical Body of Christ in I Corinthians 12:26, writing, “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.” We are not only mysteriously connected with the Church on Earth, but also with those who have gone before us (including the saints and our deceased loved ones). Not even death can separate God’s family from one another!

Reflection Questions

What do I remember (or what have I been told) about my baptism?

What does my baptism mean to me today?

Praying with the Church

God our Father, may all nations and peoples praise you. May Jesus, who is called faithful and true and who lives with you eternally, possess our hearts for ever.

Liturgy of the Hours

Lesson 6 Materials

SUPPLY LIST

Welcoming

- ☐ baby dolls
- ☐ baby items such as blanket, bottles, and rattles
- ☐ white baby clothes
- ☐ small photo album with pictures of babies being baptized

Gathering

- ☐ materials for the Sacred Space as described on page 17

Discovering

- ☐ doll dressed in white clothes
- ☐ scented oil
- ☐ electric candle
- ☐ basin with water
- ☐ volunteers to play the role of parents and godparents
- ☐ picture book about Baptism
- ☐ CD player

Exploring

Select one or more of the following activities:

1. Child/Family Activity Sheet

- ☐ crayons or washable markers

2. White Ribbon Dance

- ☐ long strips of various sizes of white ribbon
- ☐ craft sticks or small ring bracelets
- ☐ glue

3. Share the Light

- ☐ one sheet of white poster board
- ☐ marker for writing the children's responses
- ☐ stapler with staples
- ☐ two sheets of orange tissue paper

Refer to page 88 for additional activity choices.

Sending

- ☐ CD player



PROGRAM-RELATED MATERIALS

- ❑ "The Gathering Song"
(Allelu! Ages 3–4 music CD, track 2)

- ❑ "We're Baptized!"
(Allelu! Ages 3–4 music CD, track 11)

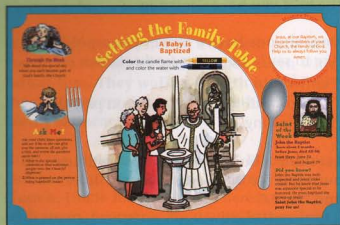
BEFORE-THE-LESSON PREPARATION

- ❑ Place the baby dolls and items out for the children.
- ❑ Place the photo album on a table where children can sit and view the photos.

- ❑ Prepare the items for the story and place them in the Discovering area.

1. Child/Family Activity Sheet

- ❑ Setting the Family Table activity for Lesson 6



1. Child/Family Activity Sheet

- ❑ Place crayons, markers, and copies of the Activity Sheets on an activity table.

2. White Ribbon Dance

- ❑ Attach ribbons to bracelets or craft sticks.

3. Share the Light

- ❑ Have the children bring in baptism photos.
- ❑ Staple the poster board into a cylinder to appear as a candle.
- ❑ Staple the orange tissue to the top of the cylinder to appear as flames.
- ❑ Place the activity items on an activity table.

- ❑ "The Sending Song"
(Allelu! Ages 3–4 music CD, track 3)

Lesson 6



Welcoming

- As the children arrive, invite them to dress and care for the “babies.”
- Also, talk about what the children see in the photo album.
- Prepare the children to transition to the next segment by informing them when there are just 5 minutes remaining.



Gathering



**SING OR PLAY “THE GATHERING SONG”
(ALLELU! AGES 3–4 MUSIC CD, TRACK 2)**

- Lead the children into the Sacred Space and sit with them around the prayer table.

Now that we are in the Sacred Space, let us find the quiet in our hearts so that we can talk with God.

- Invite the children to quiet themselves. Then sit with them for several seconds of shared silence.
- Choose two children to set the prayer table. Encourage silence as the table is being prepared.

Thank you for preparing our prayer table so beautifully.

- Stand up and go around the prayer table, blessing each child by signing a cross on his or her forehead and welcoming the child by name.

Welcome, *(child's name)*, to this Sacred Space. May you come to know how much God loves you.

- Light the candle.

We light this candle because Jesus is the Light of the World.

We’ve been talking about how God created the world. We also learned about the love God has for us. And we learned that Jesus teaches us to love one another. This week we will talk about how we are welcomed into the Church community. We will learn about Baptism. Have you seen a baptism? *(Allow the children time to respond.)* What do you remember about the baptism? *(Allow the children time to respond.)* Let’s talk to God about our baptism and our Church.

- Lead the children in making and saying the Sign of the Cross.

PRAYER

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Dear God, thank you for the Sacrament of Baptism. Thank you for the welcome into the Church community. It feels like a Church family. Since we are part of the Church, we will share with one another and we will share with the whole world the love you have shown us.

Does anyone have a prayer you would like to say? *(Allow time for the children to respond.)*

- Sign with the children as you pray the following:

Let’s finish our prayer now. We will use our signs for the words “learn,” “live,” and “love.”

Thank you, God our Father, for loving us so much! Please be with us as we learn and live and love today. Amen.

- Extinguish the candle.
- Lead the children from the Sacred Space and invite them to sit with you in the Discovering area.



Discovering

JOHN'S SPECIAL DAY

(Inspired by Matthew 3:13–17)

Today's story is about Baptism. When we are baptized, we become members of the Church. Most of you were baptized when you were very small, so you probably don't remember it. Today's story is about a little girl named Elizabeth.

Elizabeth was excited! Her baby brother John was going to church for the first time!

Elizabeth's mom dressed John in white clothes. Elizabeth got dressed in her nice clothes for church.

"Why do people get baptized, Mom?" Elizabeth asked.

"People who want to be part of the Church are baptized. Even Jesus was baptized," her mother said.

When they got to church, Elizabeth and her family waited at the back of the church with Father Tom. They walked in with him while the people were singing. Elizabeth and her family sat near the front.

After the Bible stories were read, Elizabeth and her family went to the front of the church. Uncle Joe and Aunt Theresa went with them. Everyone stood with Father Tom by the baptismal font.

Elizabeth's mother held John over the baptismal font. Father Tom blessed John and poured water over his head. Father Tom said, "John, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Elizabeth knew that John liked bath time, so she knew he wouldn't cry. He just looked surprised.

Then Father Tom put oil on John. It smelled good. Uncle Joe held a lit candle, which was very pretty.

Father Tom smiled. He said to everyone, "Let's all welcome John into our Church." Everyone clapped when Father Tom held John up.

Then Father Tom finished Mass. Elizabeth was happy that John was part of the Church now.

So, that is how someone is baptized. Let's pretend that this doll is a real baby, and I'll show you what Elizabeth saw.

- Use a doll dressed in white clothes. Have water available; if you can also provide scented oil and/or a candle, do so. With such small children, an electric candle may be preferable to a real one. Because of safety concerns, do not use candles with open flames with young children.
- Invite volunteers to be the parents and godparents. Gather them and the rest of the group around a basin of water. Play the role of the priest/deacon, and pour water over the doll's head.


While the parents hold the baby, the priest or deacon pours the water and says the words. He says, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

- Invite the children to share stories of baptisms that they have attended. If they mention parties afterward, point out that everyone is happy that someone belongs to the Church, so people want to share the happiness at a party.

Lesson 6

- In addition to or as an alternative to this activity, use a picture book of a baptism. Preview the book to be certain that the illustrations clearly show the ritual.

That is the end of the story of John's Baptism. Let's sing a song that shows how happy we are that there is a new person in our Church!

 **SING OR PLAY "WE'RE BAPTIZED!"**
(**ALLELU! AGES 3-4 MUSIC CD, TRACK 11**)



Exploring

INTRODUCING THE ACTIVITIES

- While the children are still seated, go around the room and introduce today's activity choices.

1. Child/Family Activity Sheet: A Baby Is Baptized

- Direct the children to look at the drawing in the main activity of the Activity Sheet. Invite them to describe what they see.



- Explain the activity to the children and have them complete it.

2. White Ribbon Dance

- Invite children to dance and/or move about with the ribbons to represent the Holy Spirit's movement through us during Baptism.



Special Needs

3. Share the Light

- Invite children to show and share their own baptism photos.
- On the large poster-board candle, write the children's responses to the questions, "How will you bring God's love to others?" and "What can you do every day to spread God's love?"




Refer to page 88 for additional activity choices.

- Prepare the children to transition to the next segment by informing them when there are just 5 minutes remaining.



Sending

 **SING OR PLAY "THE SENDING SONG"**
(**ALLELU! AGES 3-4 MUSIC CD, TRACK 3**)

- Lead the children into the Sacred Space and sit with them around the prayer table.
- Light the candle.

DISCUSSION

What a wonderful time we had today. We heard a story about someone being welcomed into the Church. Do you remember how people are welcomed into the Church? (*Baptism*)

We are welcomed through Baptism. The priest or deacon pours water over a person's head and says, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

PRAYER

Let us pray.

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Thank you, Jesus, for welcoming us to your Church.

Keep us close to you always.

All: Amen.

- Make the Sign of the Cross together or bless each child by tracing a cross on his or her forehead.
- Extinguish the candle.

John knew that his cousin Jesus was special—God's own Son! He tried to explain this to the people who came to him for Baptism. One day, Jesus himself came to the Jordan River for Baptism. What a surprise!

Child/Family Activity Sheet

- If you have not done so already, distribute the Child/Family Activity Sheet for this lesson.
- If there is time, you may wish to review the "Ask Me!" questions with the children.
- Remind the children to share the Activity Sheet with their families.



Baptism Water Play

- Invite the children to explore the water table or if not possible, perhaps a sink where you could safely fill tubs of water.
- Include baby dolls into this play area and allow dramatic play of a baptism to freely occur.
- Encourage and model new vocabulary into this play area, by saying things such as welcome to the church family, baptized, home God, you are a gift, and saying "YES" to God.

Note: It is through play that children learn. When you facilitate their learning with creative experiences, you will see growth.

Lesson 6 Extension Materials

(USE FOR MULTIDAY PROGRAMS OR AS ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES)



Lesson Extension 1

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS Saint John the Baptist

Read-Aloud Story and Discussion



Lesson Extension 2

Baptism Water Play

- ☐ water table or sink with water
- ☐ baby dolls
- ☐ waterproof smocks



Lesson Extension 3

PRAYER TIME

- ☐ "Prayer Time Song"
(Allelu! Ages 3–4 Music CD, track 4)
- ☐ CD player
- ☐ photo album or pictures of a Baptism



Before the lesson, have children bring in photos of their baptisms.

MUSIC/RESOURCE SUGGESTIONS



"We're Baptized!"
(Allelu! Ages 3–4 music CD, track 11)



"The Church"
God Loves Me CD & DVD
Our Sunday Visitor Curriculum Division



My Catholic ABC Book
(words: Baptism, Church, incense, Saint John the Baptist, water)
Our Sunday Visitor Curriculum Division
(You can also connect to the interactive My Catholic ABC Book at www.osvcurriculum.com)



"Birthday Blessing"
Catholic Prayer Book for Children (page 52)
Our Sunday Visitor



Lesson 6 Extensions

(USE FOR MULTIDAY PROGRAMS OR AS ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES)



Lesson Extension 1

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS Saint John the Baptist

Read-Aloud Story and Discussion

Jesus Is Baptized



Shortly before Jesus was born, his Aunt Elizabeth learned that she was going to have a baby. How joyous! She thought she would never become a mother! Elizabeth was a cousin to Jesus' mother, Mary. That means that John and Jesus were also cousins.

John's father, Zechariah, was a priest in the Temple. He also felt joyous when John was born because he had hoped for a son to help him in the Temple. And God gave him a son who helped his father serve in the temple! And when John grew up, he thought of another way to serve God. John decided to convince people to try to live the way that God wanted. John asked them to think about their lives, and to feel sorry for the mistakes they had made. He also offered to help them become better people. He would pray for them as they stood in the waters of the nearby Jordan River. This was called "baptizing." The people who went to John could expect to be "reborn" into a better life. After the baptism they would try hard to behave as better people.

John knew that his cousin Jesus was special—God's own Son! He tried to explain this to the people who came to him for Baptism. One day, Jesus himself came to the Jordan River for Baptism. What a surprise!

"I don't need to baptize you!" he told Jesus. "Please baptize me instead!" But Jesus wanted to honor God. He insisted that John pray for him as he stood in the water. Suddenly, John saw the Holy Spirit come down from Heaven and join with Jesus. From that point on, he asked people to listen to Jesus instead.

Discussion Questions

- Do you think it was hard for John to stop being the leader—and to let Jesus lead?
- Can you think of a time when you wanted to be in charge, but knew that the job belonged to someone else?



Lesson Extension 2

Baptism Water Play



- Invite the children to explore the water table or if not possible, perhaps a sink where you could safely fill tubs of water.
- Include baby dolls into this play area and allow dramatic play of a baptism to freely occur.
- Encourage and model new vocabulary into this play area, by saying things such as: *welcome to the church family, baptized, honor God, you are a gift, and saying "YES" to God.*

Note: It is through play that children learn. When you facilitate their learning with concrete experiences, you will see growth.



Lesson Extension 3

PRAYER TIME

(Lead Prayer Time in church, if possible.)



When we visit Jesus' house, the church, we are in a holy place to pray and sing.

The church is a special place where Jesus invites us to be with him. We do not see him, but we know that he is present. So let us prepare our hearts, hands, and voices to thank and praise him.



SING OR PLAY THE "PRAYER TIME SONG"
(**ALLELU!** AGES 3-4 MUSIC CD, TRACK 4)

DISCUSSION

One day a man named Philip was traveling in the desert when he met an Ethiopian man. The Ethiopian was trying to read about God, but he did not understand what he was reading! Philip taught the Ethiopian man all about Jesus. The man came to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Philip and the Ethiopian man continued on their journey, when they came across some water. The Ethiopian man wanted to be baptized, so Philip baptized the man! The man rejoiced and rejoiced!

How many of you have been to a Baptism?

(Allow the children to describe the Baptism or what they have learned from the Baptism lesson presented earlier.) Many of us were babies when we were baptized. Here are some pictures of a Baptism.

- Describe the pictures and review Baptism.

Even though we may or may not remember our Baptism, we know for sure that our families rejoiced just like the Ethiopian man did when he was baptized! It was a happy day for all. We are a part of God's family and the Church. Now that is reason to rejoice!

PRAYER

Let us pray.

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Dear God, you were pleased when your Son, Jesus, was baptized. Thank you for the gift of Baptism and thank you for being pleased with us too.

All: Amen.

- End by praying the Sign of the Cross.