
PRESENTER'S GUIDE

The Sacraments

Source of Our Life in Christ



Publisher: Rev. James Socias



MIDWEST THEOLOGICAL FORUM

Downers Grove, Illinois

TABLE OF CONTENTS

vi	Abbreviations used for the Books of the Bible	18	Chapter 5: The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, Part 1
vi	General Abbreviations	22	Chapter 6: The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, Part 2
1	How to Use This Presenter's Guide	26	Chapter 7: The Sacrament of Penance
2	Chapter 1: Efficacious Signs of Grace	30	Chapter 8: The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick
6	Chapter 2: Celebrating the Sacraments	34	Chapter 9: The Sacrament of Holy Orders
10	Chapter 3: The Sacrament of Baptism	38	Chapter 10: The Sacrament of Matrimony
14	Chapter 4: The Sacrament of Confirmation	42	Chapter 11: The Liturgy
		46	Chapter 12: Sacramentals
		50	Chapter 13: Challenges To The Sacraments
		53	Art Credits
		54	Welcome to Your First Session (For Distribution to Participants)



Wife of Zebedee Interceding with Christ (detail)
by Veronese

THE SACRAMENTS Source of Our Life in Christ

PRESENTER'S GUIDE

How to Use This Presenter's Guide

Guidelines

Read these guidelines before you start to plan what you will do in each session:

Congratulations! You have been entrusted to help others grow in their love of God by growing in their knowledge of the Catholic Faith. Whether the participants in your sessions will be high-school students attending religious education classes, adults who want to learn more, or inquiring non-Catholics who want to learn about the Faith, we have made this *Presenter's Guide* to help every participant better comprehend the material in the book.

We have also designed the *Presenter's Guide* to aid you in your presentation, covering one chapter per session. We encourage you to tailor the activities and questions to your participants, taking into account their knowledge level, what they hope to get out of these sessions, and the amount of time you have to meet. For example, you might choose to forego the Opening Activity altogether if your participants have not yet read the material, or you might choose to omit some of the Focus Questions if you are pressed for time.

As the presenter, your tendency might be to schedule more activities and questions than can be completed in the amount of time that a session lasts. **Start out with less**, and have a few questions or activities in mind if there is time at the end of a session. You should have no problem, for example, introducing a discussion topic from an earlier section after having presented the whole chapter.

There is at least one exercise in each chapter, be it a Guided Exercise or Closing Activity, that is focused on helping each participant make a personal connection to the material. It is recommended that you identify this one and make time to cover that activity with the participants during the session.

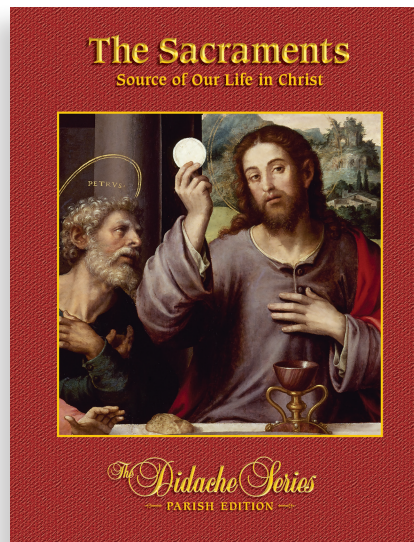
It is a good idea to open and close each session with a prayer. You might choose to use the same prayer to open and close each session, especially a popular

prayer such as the *Lord's Prayer*, the *Hail Mary*, or the *Glory Be*. If you prefer, each session has a suggested Opening Prayer that is related to the chapter.

BEFORE THE FIRST SESSION

Overview of Chapter 1

Be sure you and each of the participants have a copy of this book:



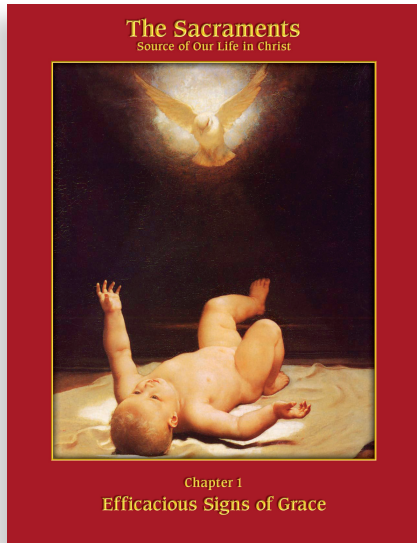
*The Sacraments: Source of Our Life in Christ,
Parish Edition*

ISBN 978-1-936045-84-6

Available from MTF at www.theologicalforum.org

At the time of registration, give each participant a summary of Chapter 1 and have him or her read Chapter 1 before the first session.

You might want your registrar to reproduce and distribute page 54 in this guide to the participants.



Chapter 1: EFFICACIOUS SIGNS OF GRACE

Key Ideas

These are reprinted from the textbook for your reference:

- A Sacrament is an efficacious sign of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us.

Vocabulary List

These are reprinted from the textbook for your reference:

- **Sacrament**—An efficacious sign of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed through the work of the Holy Spirit. There are seven Sacraments. (p. 3)
- **Ex opere operato**—A term in sacramental theology (literally, “by the work done”), meaning that Sacraments are effective by means of the sacramental rites themselves, and not because of the worthiness of the minister or recipient. (p. 5)
- **Actual grace**—This supernatural, free, and undeserved help from God is given for specific circumstances to help us choose what is good and avoid what is evil. (p. 8)
- **Sanctifying (habitual) grace**—An infused gift of the Holy Spirit by which a person receives the divine life of God in one’s soul. This grace is also called “habitual” grace, and through it a person

receives the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. Such grace enables one to live as a true disciple of Christ. (p. 8)

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SESSION

Opening Prayer

Begin the session with an opening prayer such as the following:

*O Immaculate Virgin,
mother of the true God and mother of the
Church!...*

*Our hope,
look upon us with compassion,
teach us to go continually to Jesus,
and if we fall, help us to rise again, to return
to him,
by means of the confession of our faults
and sins
in the sacrament of Penance, which gives
peace to the soul.*

*We beg you to grant us a great love for all
the holy sacraments,
which are, as it were, the signs that your Son
left us on earth. Amen.*

(St. John Paul II, from the *Prayer to Our Lady of Guadalupe*)

Overview of the Chapter

If you did not have the registrar distribute the summary to the participants, read the summary (p. 54 in this guide) to them.

Opening Activity

Have the participants complete the Opening Activity (p. 2).

Key Ideas

Have a participant read aloud the Key Idea (p. 2).

NOTES

DEFINING SACRAMENT

(pp. 2-3)

Vocabulary

Have a participant read aloud the definition of the vocabulary word on page 3.

Review

Allow some time for the participants to read or review this section.

Focus Questions

Ask the participants to reply to these Focus Questions:

1. What three things does becoming a disciple of Christ involve? Becoming a disciple of Christ involves having faith in Christ, following his teachings, and receiving the Sacrament of Baptism.
2. What is the definition of a Sacrament? A Sacrament is an efficacious sign of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us.
3. The Sacraments are the primary means by which Christ does what in the world today? They are the primary means by which Christ acts in the world today, enabling us to receive his grace.

SACRAMENTS AS EFFICACIOUS SIGNS

(pp. 3-5)

Vocabulary

Have a participant read aloud the definition of the vocabulary word on page 5.

Review

Allow some time for the participants to read or review this section.

Focus Questions

Ask the participants to reply to these Focus Questions:

4. What is a sign? A sign is a way of directing one's attention to a deeper reality.

5. What does *efficacious* mean? It means "able to produce the desired effect."

6. What is an efficacious sign? It is something that symbolizes something else (a sign), which can actually do what it symbolizes (efficacious).

7. What is an example of a sacramental sign? *Answers will vary.* Water is used as a symbol of washing in Baptism.

8. What makes Sacraments effective? Christ's action makes them able to accomplish what they promise.

9. What does *ex opere operato* mean in relation to the Sacraments? It means that as long as a Sacrament is celebrated with the intention of the Church, it is effective by the very fact of being performed.

10. What is the relationship between the personal holiness of the celebrant of a Sacrament and the ability of the Sacrament to impart grace? The power of Christ and the Holy Spirit act in a Sacrament, independently of the personal holiness of the minister.

CHANNELS OF GRACE OR DIVINE LIFE

(pp. 6-7)

Review

Allow some time for the participants to read or review this section.

Focus Questions

Ask the participants to reply to these Focus Questions:

11. What is the dictionary definition of *grace*? It means a gift or favor.
12. Why is divine grace a gift? Grace is a gift because it is free and undeserved help from God.
13. What two fundamental things does grace do for us? Grace saves and sanctifies us.
14. How could grace transform a person? Grace can make a person become a child of God and participate in the divine nature and eternal life.

Additional Activities

If there is time, have the participants complete the Guided Exercise (p. 6).

THE KINDS OF GRACE

(pp. 7-8)

Vocabulary

Have a participant read aloud the definitions of the vocabulary words on page 8.

Review

Allow some time for the participants to read or review this section.

Focus Questions

Ask the participants to reply to these Focus Questions:

- 15. What are the two basic types of grace?** They are actual grace and sanctifying grace.
- 16. What are actual graces?** They are the particular helps God gives to assist us in our conversion or sanctification. It is like a burst of God's power that can strengthen us to make good moral choices when we are faced with difficult situations.
- 17. Does God only give actual graces to the baptized?** No. God offers it to every human being so he or she might be saved.
- 18. According to *Lumen Gentium*, is it possible for the non-baptized and the non-believers to be saved?** Assisted by grace, it is possible for the non-baptized and non-believers to be saved by seeking God, doing his will as known to them through their conscience, and by striving to live a good life.
- 19. How does grace interact with human freedom?** Grace helps us seek God and do good but it never forces us.
- 20. What is sanctifying grace?** It is the grace received in the Sacraments which is a stable and supernatural disposition that perfects the soul to enable it to live with God and to act by his love.
- 21. Why is sanctifying grace also called habitual grace?** Sanctifying grace does not come and go, like actual grace, but is stable in us. It is a habitual gift for us.
- 22. Why is a study of the saints important?** Their experience shows us what it means to go beyond what is naturally possible.

INSTITUTED BY CHRIST AND ENTRUSTED TO THE CHURCH; CONCLUSION

(pp. 8-10)

Review

Allow some time for the participants to read or review this section.

Focus Questions

Ask the participants to reply to these Focus Questions:

- 23. What does it mean to say that the Sacraments were instituted by Christ?** It means that Christ established them and directed his Church to make use of them.
- 24. What is the Church's relationship to the Sacraments?** The Church is their caretaker.
- 25. What is the Church's authority in regard to the Sacraments?** The Church preserves, protects, and regulates the Sacraments.
- 26. Why was St. Maximilian Kolbe put to death?** He voluntarily took the place of another man who was selected for execution in Auschwitz.
- 27. How did St. Maximilian Kolbe behave in the underground death cell?** He tried to keep up the spirits of the other condemned prisoners by singing hymns to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Additional Activities

If there is time, have the participants complete the Guided Exercise (p. 9).



Appearance Behind Locked Doors by Duccio.

CLOSING ACTIVITIES

Closing Activities

Have the participants complete the Closure or Alternative Assessment (p.10).

Ask the participants to answer the Discussion Questions (p.10; answers below). These can be given as a quiz or used to lead a class discussion.

Discussion Questions (p.10)

1. What is the definition of a Sacrament?

A Sacrament is an efficacious sign of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us.

2. The Sacraments are the primary means by which Christ does what in the world today? They are the primary means by which Christ acts in the world today, enabling us to receive his grace.

3. What is an efficacious sign? It is something that symbolizes something else (a sign), which can actually do what it symbolizes (efficacious).

4. What does *ex opere operato* mean in relation to the Sacraments? It means that as long as a Sacrament is celebrated with the intention of the Church, it is effective by the very fact of being performed.

5. What two fundamental things does grace do for us? Grace saves and sanctifies us.

6. What are the two basic types of grace? They are actual grace and sanctifying grace.

7. What does it mean to say that the Sacraments were instituted by Christ? It means that Christ established them and directed his Church to make use of them.

8. What is the Church's relationship to the Sacraments? The Church is their caretaker.

Overview of the Next Chapter

Read this summary to the participants:

Chapter 2 looks at the how and why of celebrating the Sacraments. This chapter describes why we celebrate the visible rites of the Sacraments to receive the graces proper to them. The chapter discusses the right disposition and preparation to receive the Sacraments and understands Christ and his Church as sacraments.

Key Ideas of the Next Chapter

Have a participant read aloud the Key Ideas (p.13). These are reprinted from the textbook for your reference:

- The visible rites by which the Sacraments are celebrated, which include specific matter, form, and minister, signify and make present the graces proper to each Sacrament.
- The Sacraments bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions.
- Both Christ and his Church can be seen as Sacraments because they effect what they signify.

AT THE END OF THE SESSION

Read the Next Chapter

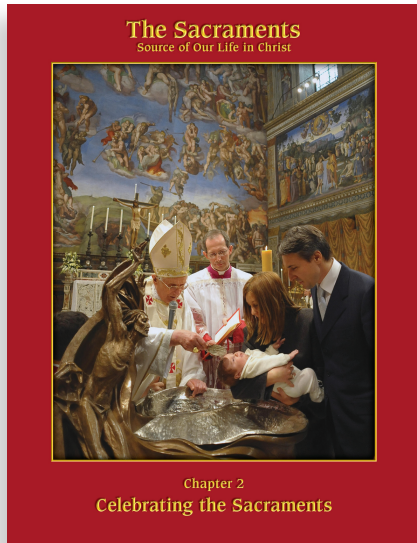
Have the participants read Chapter 2 before the next session.

Closing Prayer

End the session with a closing prayer.

Examples include the *Lord's Prayer*, the *Hail Mary*, or the *Glory Be*.

NOTES



Chapter 2: CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENTS

Vocabulary List

These are reprinted from the textbook for your reference:

- **Form**—The necessary ritual words and signs that accompany a Sacrament. (p. 14)
- **Matter**—The material or physical sign of a Sacrament. Examples include water (Baptism) and bread and wine (the Eucharist). (p. 14)
- **Minister**—The person who administers or celebrates a Sacrament. (p. 14)
- **Sacrilege**—Profaning the Sacraments or other liturgical actions, or things consecrated to God in a special way, such as priests, religious women and men, churches, shrines, convents or monasteries, icons, statues, etc. Extreme irreverence by word or deed. (p. 17)

NOTES

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SESSION

Opening Prayer

Begin the session with an opening prayer such as the following or incorporate the Scripture passage that is referenced in the Opening Activity (Jn 9:1-7; see below):

*O God,
of your mercies there is no number,
and of your goodness the treasure is infinite;
we render thanks to your most gracious
majesty
for the gifts you have bestowed upon us,
evermore imploring your clemency
that, as you grant the petitions of them that
ask you,
you may never forsake them,
but may prepare them for the rewards to come.
Amen.*

(From the *Te Deum*)

Opening Activity

Have the participants complete the Opening Activity (p. 12).

WHY WE “CELEBRATE”

(pp. 12-14)

Vocabulary

Have a participant read aloud the definitions of the vocabulary words on page 14.

Review

Allow some time for the participants to read or review this section.

Focus Questions

Ask the participants to reply to these Focus Questions:

1. What is the difference between how our culture generally uses the word *celebrate* and how the Church uses it? In our culture, a celebration refers to something festive, like a party. The Church uses this term to mean make, or do, or carry out in the correct way.