

# Explore the Sacrament of Baptism

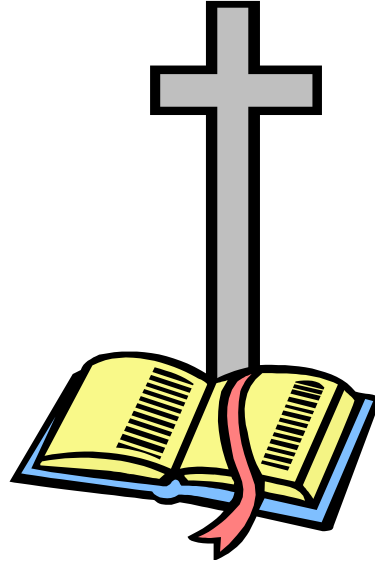
## What is a Sacrament?

(an outward sign of God's inwards love)



# Recall the 7 Sacraments

- Baptism
- Holy Communion
- Reconciliation
- Confirmation
- Marriage
- Ordination
- Sacrament of the Sick



### Key Questions:

- What happens at Baptism?
- Why? What do the words and actions symbolise?
- Does Baptism make someone a Christian?
- When should someone be baptised?

# Baptism

**Baptism is the sign that someone belongs to Christ. That is why Baptism is sometimes known as a 'Christening'.**



# Baptism in the Roman Catholic Church



In the Catholic Church, babies, children and adults can be baptised. Although a baby cannot decide to follow Christ for themselves, in the Catholic Church a baptism shows that the child is included as a member of the church community.



# Infant Baptism

Parents who want to have their baby baptised may be asked to attend Baptism preparation sessions, so that they fully understand what they are undertaking.

At an infant Baptism, the child will have **Godparents.** These are special adults chosen by the parents of the child. Godparents promise to take a special interest in the child as he or she grows up, providing essential support to the parents in encouraging the child to develop their relationship with God throughout their lives.

During the Sacrament of Baptism the Priest asks the parents and Godparents questions, and they make promises to raise the child in the faith. Baptism, like all Sacraments, is a communal celebration. Everyone present celebrates the Sacrament and benefits from the presence of Christ in the Sacrament.



When a baby is baptised, the Priest pours water on his or her head, saying the following words; *“I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”* It is at this point that the baby is officially named; establishing their identity as an individual and as a member of the Christian faith.

# Anointing with Oil

Two oils are used in the ceremony, the baby's chest is anointed with the Oil of Catechumens before the water ritual.

Oil was traditionally used to anoint soldiers going into battle to give them strength and the Oil of Catechumens is used to give the baby strength in their life as a Christian.

Following the water ritual, using the Oil of Chrism, the priest makes the sign of the Cross on the baby's forehead, as a sign of the child's new life with Christ.



# Baptism Candle

A candle is lit from the Paschal Candle during the service, and the light from the candle shows that Baptism is a symbol of a person moving from darkness (sin) into new life as a child of light. The Godparents hold this candle.

The light from the candle reminds us that followers of Jesus are called to carry the light of faith in the world. The parents and Godparents will help the child to do this.

This candle is often used for the child's Ceremony of Light while they prepare for Confirmation; the final Sacrament of Initiation.



# Why does the baby wear white?

The baby is clothed in a white garment after the water ritual, this is worn as a symbol of purity (no sin) as the child is born to a new life in Christ and will share in the glory of his resurrection.



# Believer's Baptism

In other Christian Churches, Baptism is undertaken when the person is an adult and chooses the Sacrament for himself/herself. There are no godparents at a believer's baptism. This form of baptism involves the total immersion of the candidate, and they may have some close friends who will pray for them during the service.

There is usually an opportunity during the ceremony for the candidate to talk about how and why they have chosen to become a Christian and why they are being baptised - this may be an interview, or the person may give a speech; this is called a testimony.

# Believer's Baptism

The candidate and minister descend into the water together. The Minister will usually give the candidate a verse from Bible, which may be specially relevant to them. The Minister then lowers the candidate under the water, as a symbol of their dying to their old life, and living for their own selves, and raises them back up again, as a symbol of their desire to live a new life, with Jesus as Lord!



**Believer's baptism is the name given for the baptism of adults.**

**The Baptist Church (one of the Christian denominations) perform believer's baptisms. Most Baptist churches have a baptistery – a covered pool – for this purpose.**



## **Symbols in Believer's Baptism**

The water symbolises purity and washing away sins.

Coming back up from the water symbolises being born into a new life as a Christian.



# What is the point of Baptism?

- Throughout history washing with water has been a sign of being clean in God's eyes and acceptable to God.
- Baptism is a sign that someone has repented of their sins (is sorry for the wrongdoings they have committed) and shows that they want a fresh start.
- Christians believe that being baptised is a way of publicly announcing that you are a follower of Jesus.
- Some churches see Baptism as a way of becoming an official member of the church.

# Task



Alan the Alien has come from his planet to Earth and he doesn't know anything about belonging to a community.

Use the example of Catholic Baptism to describe and explain in detail.

Make it clear to Alan what each symbol represents.

We belong to God's community/family.

Signs and symbols:

Water – clean, pure, no sin, new life

Oil – strength/Catechumens    new life/with Christ

Candle – Jesus is the light of the world/ spread the light

Cross

White garment/blanket/clothes – pure/clean we “put on” Christ

Godparents

Promises

**Challenge** – create a table that identifies the words and actions during **Baptism**

| <u>Words</u> | <u>Actions</u>                          |
|--------------|---|
|              | Sign of the cross<br>Anointing with oil |



Potential answers coming up ...



**Challenge** – create a table that identifies the words and actions during **Baptism**

| <u>Words</u>  | <u>Actions</u>                                   |
|---|--|
| “What do you ask of the Church for this child?” asks the priest.<br>“Baptism,” the parents reply. | Anointing with oil<br><br>Sign of the cross      |
| Making promises   | Sign of the cross on chest                       |
| “I baptise you in the name of the ...”  | Sign of the cross on head<br><br>Lighting candle |

Lord, thank you for the precious gift of baptism, that we can publicly declare our love and passion for you. Lord, we ask for your goodness and blessings to be poured out on this faithful servant. We pray that you would work deeply within their heart and soul to renew and refresh them each day. Come guide their footsteps, give them a hope and a vision for the future

Amen

