

# Baptism

## PREPARATION – LITURGY OF THE WORD

If beginning with a hymn or song, see previous page for suggestions

First Reading: Rom 6:3-11

Response: Ps 33:1-5, 11-15, 18-22

Gospel: Jn 3:1-6

## PROCLAMATION

**Baptism regenerates a person as a child of God. It forgives original and all personal sin and fills the soul with grace. It confers the virtues of faith, hope, and love.**

## EXPLANATION

**The seven sacraments were instituted by Christ to give grace**

- ✦ The sacraments give us God's life and help for daily Christian living at special times in our lives
- ✦ They are dispensed and celebrated by the Church and connect us to the Body of Christ
- ✦ Sacraments consist of a specific form (rite) and specific matter (such as water or oil) or, in the broad sense of the concept of matter, it also is an action, such as the manifestation of contrition in the sacrament of Reconciliation
- ✦ God uses material things to both signify and accomplish spiritual outcomes (the sacramental principle); the sacraments therefore work *ex opere operato*
- ✦ The sacraments are necessary for our salvation — they serve the plan of the Father to transform us and be united forever in the divine life (see Jn 3:5 and Jn 6:53-58)

**Names and purposes of the sacraments**

- ✦ Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist are the sacraments of initiation
- ✦ Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick are the sacraments of spiritual and physical healing
- ✦ Holy Orders and Matrimony are the sacraments at the service of the Church

**Baptism is the first sacrament of initiation** (see Acts 2:37-38)

- ✦ Baptism was prefigured in the Old Testament
- ✦ The words from Mt 28:19 are the form of Baptism
- ✦ Water (immersion, or poured or sprinkled) is the matter of Baptism, a washing unto new life
- ✦ The rite also includes prayers, especially the Litany of the Saints, and material symbols of Baptism's effects, including anointing with the blessed Oil of Catechumens and the consecrated Holy Chrism, the giving of a lit candle, and the clothing with a white garment
- ✦ It makes an indelible spiritual mark on the soul and so is never repeated

**Baptism gives us new life in Christ** (see 2 Cor 5:17)

- ✦ It removes original sin, all personal sin, and all punishment for sin, and fills the soul with the grace and gifts of the Holy Spirit (see Col 2:13-14 and Acts 2:38)
- ✦ We die with our Lord in Baptism and are born into the new, spiritual life of Christ, and are clothed with him
- ✦ We are given access to the Father through Jesus
- ✦ We are incorporated into the Body of Christ, the Church (see 1 Cor 12:13)

**We receive the supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and charity** (see Gal 5:5, Ti 3:5-7, Gal 5:22)

- ✦ Faith is the foundation of our relationship with God
- ✦ Hope is the sure pledge of our salvation
- ✦ Charity is the vocation and strength to live the Christian life of love
- ✦ These virtues are not human, but supernatural, equipping us to become partakers in the divine nature

## APPLICATION – SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How is Baptism similar to a birthday?
2. How do the physical aspects of Baptism (for example, the water) help us to focus on the eternal meaning of the sacrament?
3. When have you been given a chance to turn over a new leaf? How is Baptism similar to this?
4. Why is Baptism so important in our spiritual lives?

## CELEBRATION – SUGGESTIONS FOR CLOSING PRAYER

1. Pray for the grace to desire Baptism and become a "new creation" in Jesus and a child of the Father.
2. Hymn or song (see previous page for suggestions)
3. Pray the Litany of the Saints (see *Participant's Book*)