

Session 1



THE SACRAMENTS

BAPTISM & CONFIRMATION

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THE SACRAMENTS

Baptism & Confirmation

INTRODUCTION

In the Catholic Church, there are seven sacraments that are part of a Christian's spiritual life from birth to death. They are signs of grace instituted by Christ to give his divine life to us through the work of the Holy Spirit.

But what are these sacraments? Why are they necessary for a relationship with Jesus? And how do the sacraments affect our lives on a daily basis?

These are some of the questions we will be talking about this week. We will be looking at the seven sacraments recognized by the Catholic Church in general, and then we will focus more specifically on two Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism and Confirmation. Along the way, we will see how the sacraments are part of our “toolkit” as we grow and mature in our faith and our relationship with the Church.

THIS SESSION WILL COVER:

- **What is a sacrament?**
- **The different kinds of sacraments**
- **How the sacraments are a key part of the Christian life**
- **Why Baptism is considered the “gateway” to the Christian life**
- **Why Catholics baptize infants**
- **The significance of Confirmation and its relationship to Baptism**



OPENING PRAYER

Praise the Lord!

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart,
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

Great are the works of the Lord,
studied by all who have pleasure in them.

Full of honor and majesty is his work,
and his righteousness endures for ever.

He has caused his wonderful works to be remembered;
the Lord is gracious and merciful.

He provides food for those who fear him;
he is ever mindful of his covenant.

He has shown his people the power of his works,
in giving them the heritage of the nations.

The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy,
they are established for ever and ever,
to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

He sent redemption to his people;
he has commanded his covenant for ever.

Holy and awesome is his name!

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;
a good understanding have all those who practice it.

His praise endures for ever! —Psalm III

“These three things God requires of all the Baptized: right faith in the heart, truth on the tongue, temperance in the body.”
—St. Gregory Nazianzen



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you respond to someone who asks: “Why have you Catholics made Christianity so complicated with all your rules and rituals?”
2. What are some of the outward signs and symbols used in Baptism, and what do they represent?
3. Why is it significant that in Confirmation we are anointed with Sacred Chrism?

CALL TO CONVERSION

After spending a few moments in prayer, write down your thoughts and reflections on the following questions:



#1 In the video, we are told that the sacraments are “our toolkit as we step out every day as a believer.”

What does this mean to you? How can Baptism be a tool for daily life? If you have been baptized, what does this mean to you? If you are anticipating Baptism, what are you looking forward to? In what other ways can the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, become your “toolkit” for your spiritual life?

#2 Consider the following quote from St. Diadochos of Photiki:

“Before holy baptism, grace encourages the soul towards good from the outside, while Satan lurks in its depths, trying to block all the intellect’s ways of approach to the divine. But from the moment that we are reborn through baptism, the demon is outside, grace is within. Thus, whereas before baptism error ruled the soul, after baptism truth rules it.”

What does it mean that after Baptism “grace is within”? How does the knowledge that through Baptism you have the power and the ability to resist temptation affect you? If you truly acted as if you knew you had that power, how would your life be different from now on?

#3 In the video, we heard that the sacraments fill us with Christ's life and draw us deeper into communion with God. When we want to grow spiritually or morally, we need to go to the sacraments where Jesus waits to heal, sanctify, and restore us. The presenter then asked questions that we must all answer: Will you make it a priority to frequent the sacraments? Are you willing to make the sacraments an essential part of your life? How can you begin to encounter Christ in the frequent reception of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and make this encounter a main emphasis in your life?



CLOSING PRAYER

Renewal of Baptismal Promises

(If you have not yet been baptized, silently reflect on these words and the Christian life you may soon be entering.)

V. Do you reject Satan?

R. I do.

V. And all his works?

R. I do.

V. And all his empty promises?

R. I do.

V. Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

R. I do.

V. Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

R. I do.

V. Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

R. I do.

V. God, the all-powerful Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and forgiven all our sins. May he also keep us faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ forever and ever.

R. Amen.

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THE WEEK

Here is a verse from the Bible that you can memorize and reflect on this week to help you apply today's session to your daily life:



“For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.”

—1 Corinthians 12:13

DO YOU WANT TO MAKE THE SACRAMENTS AN IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR LIFE?

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Where you'll find helpful videos, audio presentations, ebooks, and feature films from the most trustworthy presenters in the Catholic world.

For Further Reading:

For more in-depth reading about the sacraments, see the following *Catechism* passages:

- *The Sacraments: CCC 1210–1211*
- *Baptism: CCC 1214–1284*
- *Confirmation: CCC 1285–1321*

Other Resources:

- *The United States Catechism for Adults, Chapters 15–16*
- *Sacraments in Scripture* by Tim Gray
- *Living the Sacraments: Grace into Action* by Bert Ghezzi
- *Swear to God: The Promise and Power of the Sacraments* by Scott Hahn