

Baptism – Welcome to God’s Family

In Part 1 of this unit students learn about Jesus Christ as one who welcomes, loves and includes them. They are people who enjoy a relationship with Jesus Christ and the kingdom. In Part 2 they are introduced to Baptism as a sacrament of initiation into the Church community. They explore sharing in the new life of Christ and learn about the symbols and actions used in the Rite of Baptism.

DOCTRINAL FOCUS

In planning to teach this unit the following references from the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church are recommended:

#1275 Christian initiation is accomplished by three sacraments together: Baptism, which is the beginning of new life; Confirmation, which is its strengthening; and the Eucharist, which nourishes the disciple with Christ’s Body and Blood for his transformation in Christ.

(See Compendium #251 How is Christian initiation brought about?)

#1267 Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ: ‘Therefore ... we are members one of another.’ Baptism incorporates us *into the Church*.

(See Compendium #156 In what way is the Church the body of Christ?)

#1271 Baptism constitutes the foundation of communion among all Christians.

(See Compendium #263 What are the effects of Baptism?)

SPIRITUAL REFLECTION FOR TEACHERS

Sometimes in a society that values security and privacy, people find it challenging to offer the hand of welcome and hospitality, especially to the stranger. Have you ever felt truly welcomed in an unfamiliar place, among new people? What happened? What was it that helped you feel at home? What have you learned about welcome and hospitality from this experience? Is your classroom welcoming and hospitable?

What can new students or refugee families teach you and your students about being welcomed and having a sense of belonging in the school or the local community? What is your experience of hospitality and feeling at home in the local parish, or a church community significant to you?

LINKS WITH STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCES

Belonging to special groups involves important acts of initiation such as baptism. *What stories and memories do students have of family or friends’ baptisms? What objects or symbols do they have at home from their own baptism, e.g. baptismal candle, prayer book, certificate, photos? How can students be made aware of the significance of baptism as part of initiation into the Church?*

In the class there will be a diversity of experiences of parish. Through school and family, students have opportunities to experience church and parish life. *How do*

students experience and understand the local parish? Do they have experiences of parish welcome and hospitality? What experiences will enhance students' knowledge and understanding of belonging to a church community?

Celebrations involve welcoming, gathering as a community, and giving and receiving. *How can students explore these aspects of celebration in relation to their own baptism and/or that of others?*

EXPLANATION OF SCRIPTURE

Mk 10: 13–16 Jesus Christ and the Children

This text is about the Kingdom of God and who is part of it. Those who recognise and receive it as a gift can expect to be part of this kingdom. The kingdom is for those who make no claim to power or status, and it must be received as a gift, for no human power or status can create it. In this passage children enjoy a relationship with Jesus Christ and the kingdom. It is important for children to feel they belong to God's family. When Jesus grows indignant with the disciples for not accepting the children, he is using them as a foil for his positive teaching 'for such is the Kingdom of God'.

POSSIBILITIES FOR PRAYER AND WORSHIP

Part A

- Decorate the prayer place with a large picture or icon of Jesus and the children. If you have nothing available the following site has an image that may be helpful for this purpose: <<http://www.nowtrygod.com/presentation/scr25.html>>. Use the image as a focus for class prayer.
- Read the story of Jesus and the children (Mk 10: 13–16) from the class Bible. Respond with a song, e.g. 'Jesus Loves the Little Children' (Christopher Walker and Paul Freeburg, *Stories and Songs of Jesus*, OCP Publications). This may be accompanied by clapping, dance or percussion.
- Lead the children in a guided meditation based on the scripture story, or use 'Visualisation 2' in *To God on a Magic Carpet* (Sr Anthony, Spectrum Publications).
- Encourage the children to keep a prayer journal or 'Jesus' book in which they record drawings, pictures, words or prayers about Jesus Christ.

Part B

- Arrange a large white cloth and the symbols of Baptism in the prayer place: candle, white garment, bowl of water, oil. Use these symbols for class prayer during this part of the unit. Simplify the prayers from the Rite of Baptism and use these as 'echo' prayers, e.g.:

Leader: See this white garment (*all repeat*)

Leader: You have put on Christ! (*all repeat*)

or

Leader: This light is given to you (*all repeat*)

Leader: Keep it burning brightly! (*all repeat*)

- Invite a mother and/or father to visit the class with their baby who is soon to be baptised into the family of the Church (or who has recently been baptised). Prepare a class prayer celebration with a scripture reading, song and ritual gesture, e.g. the children trace a Sign of the Cross on the baby's forehead, or light a candle to give the parents.
- Suitable songs for this unit include: 'You Have Called Us', 'Share the Light', and 'There is Someone' (Bernadette Farrell, *Share the Light*, OCP Publications).

Related Chapters – *KWL*, 2nd edition, Book 1: Chapter 10, Jesus and the Children; Chapter 11, Baptism.

Faith concepts: belonging, initiation, church, celebration, ritual, symbol.

Understandings:

Jesus welcomed children.

At baptism people are welcomed into God’s family.

Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist.

Baptism celebrates people belonging to the Church community.

Baptism is a sacrament of initiation.

Baptism has symbols, rituals, actions and prayers that are signs of being welcomed into the Church.

Unit specific learning:

Students will learn about <i>Knowledge & Understanding</i>	Students will learn to <i>Reasoning & Responding</i>	Students will undertake to <i>Personal & Communal Engagement</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The symbols used in baptism – candle, oil, white robe and water.• Actions of baptism, including anointing, blessing and the pouring of water.• Baptism as a sacrament of initiation.• Jesus’ baptism in Mark’s Gospel.• Belonging to God’s family through baptism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make links between their experiences of initiation and the sacrament of Baptism.• Reflect on their experience of baptism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participate in meditation.• Participate in prayer rituals.

Part 1: Jesus Christ and the Children

Additional Reading for Teachers	Learning & Teaching Sequence	Assessment
<p>The scripture story for this part of the unit has the theme of children being welcomed and loved by Jesus Christ. It is important that the students are given the opportunity to engage with and reflect on this scripture story from Mk 10: 13–16. It will lay the foundations for them to develop an understanding of Jesus Christ as a friend who will always welcome and affirm them. Thus, they will develop a relationship of love and trust with Jesus.</p>	<p>Telling the Story Use concrete materials to tell the story of Jesus and the Children (Mk 10: 13 – 16).</p>	
<p>The story of Jesus and the Children highlights the importance of being like little children in order to enter God’s kingdom. At the time of Jesus, children were at the bottom rung of the social ladder. They had no status or importance. However, Jesus is saying that, most particularly, the least and last and littlest person is most important and deeply loved by God. Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, welcomes children, and they respond to his love. To such as these belongs the Kingdom of God</p>	<p>Wondering I wonder what that story reminds me of? I wonder what time in my life the story made me think of?</p>	
	<p>Responding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In small groups students read the story ‘Jesus and the Children’ from <i>KWL</i>, 2nd edition, Book 1, Chapter 10, p. 74. • As a whole class students complete a character map on the image of Jesus Christ portrayed in the story ‘Jesus 	

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	<p>and the Children'. What was Jesus thinking, feeling, seeing, saying, hearing, doing during the story?</p> <p>Ask students to imagine what the children were thinking, feeling, saying etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through discussion students identify what Jesus' goal was in this story (to welcome the children), what action he took and what the outcome of the action was. <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px; text-align: center;">Picture of Jesus</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px; text-align: center;">Goal or purpose of Jesus' actions</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px; text-align: center;">Action: What he did</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Outcome: What happened?</div> </div>	
<p>Guided meditation with children Meditation is another form of prayer. In prayer we raise our minds and hearts to God. Meditation engages thought, imagination, emotion and desire. It is a quiet time of focus on the words of Scripture, holy icons, music,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are invited to share their responses, thoughts, insights and ideas from the above activity. Record any discoveries in class discovery book/journal/wall chart, etc. 	<p>Assessment of Learning This activity will indicate students' understanding of the story of Jesus welcoming the children.</p>

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<p>symbol, the word of a mantra or the repetition of the prayers of the Rosary. The method is a tool which leads to an encounter with God. Meditation stirs the heart so that we may discern the will and presence of God</p>		
	<p>Praying the Word Students engage in a guided meditation based on 'Jesus and the Children' (Mk 10: 13–16).</p> <p>Respond with a song, e.g. 'Jesus Loves the Little Children' (<i>Stories and Songs of Jesus</i>). This may be accompanied by clapping, dance or percussion.</p>	

Part 2: Baptism

Additional Reading for Teachers	Learning & Teaching Sequence	Assessment
<p>In this part of the unit students are introduced to the sacrament of Baptism as the sacrament of welcome, or initiation into the Church community. Through baptism we are welcomed into the Body of Christ. This means we are united with Jesus Christ and with all other baptised persons. 'For by the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body' (1 Cor 12: 13).</p>	<p>Telling the Story Students identify their own experiences of welcoming or being welcomed, e.g. visiting someone's house, joining a sporting group, starting school, etc. Discuss.</p>	<p>Assessment for Learning This task will indicate students' prior knowledge and experience of being welcomed.</p>

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<p>The sacrament of Baptism is a community celebration and follows a pattern of liturgical gestures, rituals and words. It is best celebrated at the heart of the parish community, when the whole community is gathered for the Eucharist. Baptism celebrates the central mystery of Christ's death and resurrection. The person is plunged into the water (just as Christ entered into the tomb of death) and brought out of the water into a new life (resurrection).</p> <p>Most commonly baptism is celebrated in the parish community to which the person belongs.</p> <p>Baptism is the first sacrament of initiation. The other sacraments of initiation are the Eucharist and Confirmation. Through Baptism we become members of the eucharistic community. We are baptised with water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We have responded to God's gift of relationship.</p>	<p>Wondering</p> <p>I wonder how you felt when you began/joined the group? I wonder if you felt welcomed? I wonder what made you feel welcomed? I wonder if there were any signs or symbols that helped you to feel welcomed and a part of the group/activity?</p> <p>Invite students to share any of their own wonderings.</p> <p>Responding</p> <p>Teachers put words, symbols and gestures of welcoming, gained from the students' responses, into a Grab Bag titled 'Initiation'. These might include an item of uniform; a badge; a certificate; a motto; pictures of gestures, e.g. handshake; words, e.g. hello, welcome, etc. Each item is removed from the bag and discussed.</p> <p>Telling the Story</p> <p>Read <i>KWL</i>, 2nd edition, Book 1, Chapter 11, pp. 80–85 as a shared reading experience with the whole class. Focus particularly on the images in the text, identifying the symbols, gestures and words. Invite students to share their reflections, photos, etc. from their home activity.</p>	

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<p>The key signs and symbols of the sacrament introduced at this foundational stage are:</p> <p>Water – the matter of the sacrament is poured over the person’s head three times, or the person is plunged into it. Water is the sign of new life and cleansing.</p> <p>Oil of Chrism – perfumed oil used to anoint the person being baptised. Royal persons and priests (and prophets in ancient times) are anointed with oil to strengthen and consecrate them for their particular mission. At Baptism this anointing means that we are being strengthened and consecrated for our particular mission – the mission of Jesus Christ.</p> <p>White garment – a sign that the baptised person has ‘put on Christ’ (Gal 3: 27). It is an outward sign of the newly-baptised person’s dignity.</p> <p>Lighted candle – lit from the Easter candle which represents Christ, the Light of the World. It is given to the baptised person as a reminder to keep the flame of faith always alive in his/her heart.</p>	<p>Suggested Home Activity</p> <p>Families discuss/share their own experiences of baptism through sharing their symbols, videos, photos, etc.</p>	

Additional Reading for Teachers	Learning & Teaching Sequence	Assessment						
<p>Everyone who is to be baptised is required to make a profession of faith. In infant baptism the parents, godparents and the parish community make the profession of faith on behalf of the child. They share the responsibility for the development and understanding of the child's growth in a life of faith.</p>	<p>Responding Organise the students' thinking in a grid.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Symbols</th> <th>Gestures</th> <th>Words</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>This is how we welcome or initiate families into the Church through the sacrament of Baptism.</p> <p>Telling the Story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take students to visit the church and show students the baptismal symbols in the church, e.g. Paschal candle, baptismal font, etc., and explain the role of the godparents and act of baptism. • Use 3D materials to tell the story of Jesus Christ's baptism. 	Symbols	Gestures	Words				
Symbols	Gestures	Words						
	<p>Responding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the symbols, words and gestures found in Jesus' baptism and compare with their baptisms. Record on a Venn diagram. Share discoveries. • Students demonstrate their understanding of baptism and the associated symbols through a chosen medium: collage, paint, clay, writing, roleplay, using 3D materials, etc. 	<p>Assessment of Learning These tasks demonstrate what students know about the symbols and actions of baptism.</p> <p>Assessment of Learning This activity will demonstrate students' knowledge and understanding of the symbols, words and gestures of baptism.</p>						

Additional Reading for Teachers	Learning & Teaching Sequence	Assessment
	Praying the Word See 'Possibilities for Prayer & Worship', Part B.	

RESOURCES

To Know, Worship and Love, 2nd Edition

Book 1: Chapter 10, Jesus and the Children; Chapter 11, Baptism.

Teacher Resources

Ryan, M 2001, *Teaching the Bible*, Social Science Press, Katoomba.

Walker, C & Freeburg, P 1994, *Stories and Songs of Jesus*, OCP Publications, USA.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STANDARDS

This unit may be used to assess some of the Level 2 standards.

Students interpret biblical stories and stories in Church Tradition by making a response and expressing their own ideas, feelings and perceptions. Students distinguish the key objects, signs, symbols and actions of the sacraments of initiation and seasons of the Church by explaining what they mean.