



FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Find time to explore these questions as a family after each session.

Session 1

- What is the definition of *sacrament*?
- Why do different churches celebrate baptism and communion differently?
- What do the differences teach us about what a sacrament is?
- How would you respond if someone asked you, "Why do we have only two sacraments when some churches have seven?"

Session 2

- As followers of Jesus Christ, why should we regularly participate in the sacraments?
- How does knowing you are baptized or witnessing a baptism help you feel connected to other Christians and to God?
- In what ways does participating in the Lord's Supper help you feel connected to Jesus and to the body of Christ?
- How could being connected to one another through Christ help a faith community respond to conflict or natural and human-made disasters today?
- How would you respond if someone asked you, "What's the big deal about the sacraments?"

Session 3

- What's the purpose of baptism?
- How does the purpose of baptism affect your understanding of who can be baptized?
- What responsibilities come with participating in a baptism?
- How could our family life change if baptism became a more central part of our life together?
- How would you respond if someone asked you, "Why do we get baptized as babies instead of waiting until we're old enough to decide for ourselves?"

Session 4

- What is the purpose of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper?
- Why is it important to understand the meaning and purpose of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper?
- How would you respond if someone asked you, "During the Lord's Supper, are we really sharing Jesus' body and blood?"



SESSION 1 FAITH STATEMENT

. . . so do we acknowledge and confess that now in the time of the gospel we have two chief sacraments, which alone were instituted by the Lord Jesus and commanded to be used by all who will be counted members of his body, that is, Baptism and the Supper or Table of the Lord Jesus, also called the Communion of His Body and Blood.

—Scots Confession (3.21)

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SACRAMENT CARDS



Baptism

**Communion
Table**

**Bread and
Cup**

**Lord's
Supper**

Sacrament

**Unity with
Christ**

**Baptismal
Font**

**Water
Pouring**

**Communion
with Others**



LECTIO DIVINA GUIDELINES

Lectio divina ("divine reading") is an intentional, contemplative way to connect with God's Word. This ancient spiritual practice involves listening to multiple readings of the same Scripture passage interspersed with short periods of silence.

Relax in God's Presence

Dim the lights. Light a candle or an oil lamp. Sing a song or play contemplative music. Take a few minutes to relax in God's presence and to open the group members' hearts and minds.

Listen for God's Word

First Reading

Have a group member slowly read the Scripture passage out loud while the rest of the group members listen for a word that "jumps out" at each of them. Give each person an opportunity to share his or her word (without comment or explanation) with the rest of the group. Allow a time of silence before the next reading.

Second Reading

Invite each group member to think about his or her word during the next reading, exploring the question "How does this word and this Scripture passage connect with my life?" Have a second reader slowly read the Scripture passage out loud to the group and allow for a time of silence after the reading. Give each person an opportunity to share his or her response to the question.

Third Reading

Invite each group member to think about the question "What is this passage calling me to do?" or "Who is this passage calling me to be?" during the next reading. Have a third reader slowly read the Scripture passage out loud to the group and end with a time of silence. Give each person an opportunity to respond to the question "What have you heard from God in this Scripture passage?"



SESSION 2 FAITH STATEMENT

Question 52. What do you affirm when you speak of “the communion of saints”?

All those who live in union with Christ, whether on earth or with God in heaven, are “saints.” Our communion with Christ makes us members one of another. The ties that bind us in Christ are deeper than any other human relationship.

Question 53. How do you enter into communion with Christ and so with one another?

By the power of the Holy Spirit as it works through Word and Sacrament. The Scriptures acknowledge two sacraments as instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ—baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

—*Study Catechism: Confirmation Version*

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SESSION 3 FAITH STATEMENTS

Question 166. Unto whom is Baptism to be administered?

Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, and so strangers from the covenant of promise, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but infants descending from parents, either both or but one of them, professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are, in that respect, within the covenant, and are to be baptized.

—Larger Catechism (7.276)

Both believers and their children are included in God's covenant love. Children of believers are to be baptized without undue delay, but without undue haste. Baptism, whether administered to those who profess their faith or to those presented for Baptism as children, is one and the same Sacrament. The Baptism of children witnesses to the truth that God's love claims people before they are able to respond in faith.

—*Book of Order* (W-2.3.008a–b)





GOD'S PROMISE

Still your inner thoughts and take a moment of silence. Read Acts 2:37–42 and then write responses to the questions below.

In what daily activities are you most conscious of God knowing your name? In what activities are you most conscious of God calling you to be part of God's family (as in v. 39)?

The new disciples responded to God's gift of the Holy Spirit in various ways (v. 42). What responsibility do we have to respond to this gift in similar ways? God's gifts of life, creation, and the promise in the same ways?

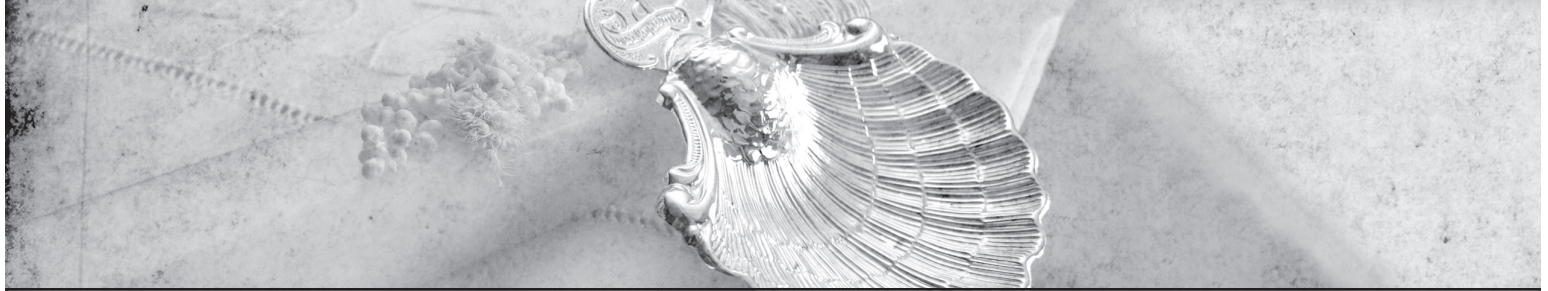
What actions could we take in response to God's gifts? What actions could we take that would most identify us as part of God's family?

How could your daily routine change by acting on God's call to you? What ripples of Spirit might (or have) come about from listening for God's call?

God calls each of us in our baptisms to a life of discipleship that shows the love and grace of Jesus Christ at church and in our daily lives. How have you listened for God's call in your life? How can you continue to listen?



LESSON PLANNER



Opening Prayer

Write a short opening prayer for the lesson.

Hearing God's Word

Read a Scripture passage together.

Learning about God's Word

Create a learning activity that helps children understand the Scripture that includes a visual way to learn about infant baptism.

Closing Prayer

Write a short closing prayer for the lesson.



SESSION 4 FAITH STATEMENT

The outward elements in this sacrament, duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to him crucified, as that truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ; albeit, in substance and nature, they still remain truly, and only, bread and wine, as they were before.

—Westminster Confession of Faith (6.165)

PARAPHRASE:

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GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Check out the *Book of Common Worship* for examples of Great Prayers of Thanksgiving!

The prayer begins with thankful praise to God
for God's work in creation and providence, and in covenant history;
for the witness of the prophets;
for God's steadfast love in spite of human failure;
for the ultimate gift of Christ;
and for the immediate occasion or festival.

The prayer continues with thankful recalling of the acts of salvation in Jesus Christ:
redemption;
Christ's birth, life, and ministry;
Christ's death and resurrection;
his present intercession for us and the promise of his coming again;
the gift of the Sacrament.

The Holy Spirit is called upon
to lift all who share in the feast into Christ's presence;
to make the breaking of the bread and sharing of the cup a participation
in the body and blood of Christ;
to make us one with the risen Christ and with all God's people;
to unite us in communion with all the faithful in heaven and earth;
to nourish us with the body of Christ so that we may
mature into the fullness of Christ;
to keep us faithful as Christ's body, representing Christ in
ministry in the world, in anticipation of the fulfillment of the
kingdom Christ proclaimed.

There follows an ascription of praise to the triune God.¹



1. From the *Book of Common Worship* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), p. 156. Used by permission.