

LESSON 14: Baptism in Scripture



REFERENCE

Page 200 [THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION]



WHAT YOU NEED

- (2) Bibles
- (3) TSM: 'Adult Baptism'

AIMS

- To reflect on Scripture readings related to Baptism
- To understand the historical development from Adult to Infant Baptism.

OUTCOMES

- KUI Learners understand the origin and meaning of Baptism
- KUI Learners understand the historical development of the Sacrament of Baptism.

TEACHER'S NOTE

Lessons 14-15 deal with Baptism, the first of the Sacraments of Initiation. It would be a good experience at some point for the class to attend an actual Baptism ceremony with one of the school's families. If not, then watching a video of a Baptism, or a priest/deacon enacting a ceremony would serve.

LESSON OUTLINE

1 Introduction

Introduce this lesson by asking learners to answer the questions below:

- What is a sacrament?
- Name the seven sacraments.
- Which sacrament precedes all other sacraments?

Then tell them that the focus of this lesson is on Baptism.

2 Scripture on Baptism

- Divide the class into groups of about 4 or 5 learners and give each group a selection of 4 Scripture passages from those listed below. Let each group read the passages and discuss what these passages say about Baptism.
- Ask each group to provide feedback of their discussion.

The following Scriptural texts are about Baptism

- Key New Testament texts: Gal 3:26-28; Romans 6:3-5; Acts 2:38; Titus 3:5; Jn 3:1-21
- See also: Mk 16:16; 1Cor 12:13; Mt 28:18-20
- From the Old Testament: Ezekiel 36:25

3 Development and History of Baptism

Introduce the students to the development of Baptism. The central issue is the way that the norm of Adult Baptism gave way to Infant Baptism, and today's renewed emphasis on the essentially adult aspects of the Sacrament. Note especially:

- The customs involved in olden-day Adult Baptism – particularly the period of preparation (Catechumenate)
- The role of parents of an infant, from the initial request for their child to be baptised till (by word and example) they have carried out their responsibility of guiding their child, with the help of the parish community, to the Confirmation-decision for lived profession of the faith
- Baptism is not complete unless it is appropriated to oneself – the Baptismal promise cannot be imposed upon anyone – where parents take responsibility for Infant Baptism, their assumption is not that the baby wants it (how could it?), but that God wants it for the baby.

Use the Lesson Materials page 'Adult Baptism' to shape your input.

4 Adult or Infant Baptism?

- i. Divide learners into two groups.
- ii. One group will investigate reasons for restricting Baptism to adults; the other will look for reasons to practice Infant Baptism.
- iii. Each group then presents its findings.
- iv. Learners consider the two sides individually and formulate their own position.
- v. Encourage sharing of individual positions, but insists that learners state their reasons.

OTHER IDEAS

5 Infant Baptism

Ask learners, where applicable, to ask their parents why they had them baptized. Invite learners of other faiths to share the rituals that they might have undergone at birth, such as naming ceremonies.

6 Scenarios

Pose the following scenarios:

- i. You are a young priest. Your brother is married and has a new baby. You know that your brother and his wife never go to church anymore. They come to you and want you to baptise the baby. You ask them if that means they are promising to raise the child in the faith, to see that he learns his religion, and goes to church regularly. They have to admit that the baptism doesn't really mean that to them. They really want the baby baptised because that's what their parents expect them to do. Will you baptise the baby or won't you?
- ii. It is 10 years from now and you have your first child. Will you have him baptised, or wait and let him choose? (Direct this question especially toward those who have been arguing for delaying baptism.)

(Kieran Sawyer. 1978. Unit 4 Session 10, *Developing Faith*, p 52)

MATERIALS

TEACHER

- Kieran Sawyer. 1978. 'Unit 4, Session 4: 'Adult Baptism' in *Developing Faith*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, p 47



Lesson Materials



Adult Baptism

- A. To understand adult baptism, refer back to the earliest days of the church when the baptism of adults was the common practice. Review the definition of a sacrament learned earlier: A sacrament is a symbolic action that externalizes an experience of God and that deepens and intensifies the experience.

What was the *experience of God* that led a person to seek baptism in the early church? (The person had come in contact with a community of Christians whose lives showed that they were close to God, that they loved one another, that they believed that Jesus had died and risen from the dead. The person was convinced that God loved him, also, in a special way, and that God wanted him to be a part of this group of people who called themselves Christians. He was willing to live the style of life they lived, and to give up anything in his life that was contrary to that way of life.)

Once the young man or woman had made a decision, he or she was ready to go through the *symbolic action* of baptism. This included:

- 40 days of prayer and instruction in the faith (This is where our present practice of Lent originated.)
- An all-night prayer vigil on Holy Saturday night. The baptism took place that night. Ask the students why.
- Questioning by the bishop or priest to see if the candidate was really ready for baptism and knew what he was getting into.
- The baptismal promises. A public promise to give up Satan and all his evil ways.
- The candidate stripped off all his clothes as a sign that he was giving up his old way of life.
- He went down into the water. Usually he was completely immersed. The celebrant pronounced the words of baptism: I baptize . . .
- When he came out of the water his body was anointed with oil, and those present prayed that he would be filled with the Holy Spirit. (It is this part of the ceremony that is now called confirmation.)
- He was given a new white garment, as a sign of the new life in Christ that was now his.
- He was given a candle, lighted from the Easter candle, as a sign that he was now filled with the light of Christ.
- He was led in procession to the church where the Easter Mass was celebrated and he received his first communion.

Direct questions/...

Lesson Materials

ADULT BAPTISM (cont)

- B. Direct questions such as these to individuals in the class:
- 1) What do you think about this complex kind of symbolic action?
 - 2) If you weren't a Christian now, would you go through such a set of symbols to become one?
 - 3) What part of the ceremony would you find frightening? difficult? exciting?
 - 4) Can you think of any experience in your world that compares to this?
 - 5) Should the church return to this kind of rich symbolic action?
 - 6) Explain how this total experience would lead to the *deepened experience* of one's Christian faith.

© Kieran Sawyer.1978. 'Unit 4, Session 4: 'Adult Baptism' in *Developing Faith*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, p 47

LESSON 15: Signs and Symbols in Baptism



REFERENCE

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WHAT YOU NEED

- (1) TSM: 'Baptismal Symbols'
- (2) LSM: 'Signs, Symbols, Effects'
- (2) Sets of flash cards

AIM

- To deepen understanding and appreciation of Baptism through an exploration of the symbolic dimension of the sacramental rite.

OUTCOMES

- KUI Learners understand the symbolism used during the Rite of Baptism.

TEACHER'S NOTE

In the previous lesson we concentrated on the text of the rite. Here we look specifically at the rich symbolic content of the rite. Again, it will greatly enhance the impact of this lesson if the learners have had a recent opportunity to experience an Infant Baptism, either live, on film, or acted out.

LESSON OUTLINE

1 Water, Fire and Oil

Divide the class into six groups. Two groups each will explore one of the major symbols used in Baptism, namely water, fire, and oil. The groups have a threefold task:

- i. They call to mind both positive (life-giving) and the negative (life-threatening or diminishing) aspects of the symbol.
- ii. They explore what the symbol signifies in Scripture.
- iii. They report back.

Round off the discussion with some additional reflections they may have missed. You will find extensive coverage of these three symbols together with Scripture references for each, (to use in ii. above) in the Lesson Materials page 'Baptismal Symbols'.

2 Signs, Symbols and Effects

- i. Distribute the Lesson Materials page 'Signs, Symbols, Effects'.
- ii. Invite learners to read through it.
- iii. Clarify any item that is necessary, paying attention to identifying the effects of the symbols, or, in other words, the invisible action that each symbol is pointing to.
- iv. Display key words as flash cards. (Have sets available for each group.)
- v. Ask groups to arrange the flash cards in such a way as to bring out the meaning of Baptism as clearly as they can.
- vi. Groups display their arrangements.
- vii. The class visits the arrangements, while each group has the opportunity to explain briefly how they have arranged the items.
- viii. Add any comments that you think will be helpful

OTHER IDEAS

3 School Display

Choose one of the symbol arrangements for display in the school. You might have the class vote on this. The arrangement could also be used at an appropriate time as an input at a school assembly.

4 Other Religions

Learners research how Buddhism, Hinduism or Judaism uses water, fire, and oil in its communal worship.

5 Original Sin

Link the discussion of Baptism to the theological concept of 'original sin', which is dealt with in the Theological Education process in Grade 8. The symbolism of Baptism indicates a release from humanity's shared (inherited) guilt, and new life to combat the disordered tendencies that result from original sin. This will be dealt with in more detail in the next lesson.

MATERIALS

TEACHER

- Michael Pennock. 1981. 'Baptismal Symbols' in *The Sacraments And You*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, p 65-75

LEARNER

- Michael Burke. 1991. 'Sacrament of Baptism – signs, symbols, effects' 155 in *Connections*. Pietermaritzburg: Centaur Publications, p 138



Lesson Materials



Baptismal Symbols

For us to appreciate the rich meaning of the sacrament of baptism, it is necessary to reflect on the meaning of some of the symbols used in the baptismal ceremony.

Water and the Spirit. The most important baptismal symbol is water. What does water make you think of? If you are of a scientific mind, you may have written the symbol H₂O. Perhaps you answered that water quenches thirst and thus gives life. It makes plants grow. It cleanses us, our clothes and the things we use. On the other hand, you may have mentioned that water is sometimes a destructive force. Floods, torrential rains, destructive tides represent the awful force of water. Both good - like cleansing rains and cool drinks - and evil - like shark-infested seas or polluted rivers - are associated with water. Water is one of those universal symbols that carries rich meaning. It has been adopted in the sacrament of baptism by the church to represent some realities of our initiation into the Christian community. The meaning of water in the sacrament of baptism relies heavily on both Old Testament and New Testament sources. Let us turn to some of these scriptural "fountainheads" of the sacrament.

1. *Old Testament.* Water meant both destruction and life for the Jew. In Genesis (1:1-2), water is described as the primeval chaos, a hostile element. The story of the great flood in Noah's time prompted the Psalmist to petition Yahweh:

Save me, God! The water
is already up to my neck;
I am sinking in the deepest swamp,
there is no foothold;
I have stepped into deep water
and the waves are washing over me (Ps 69: 1-2).

This passage clearly describes the destructive force of water.

But the Old Testament depicts God's power as bringing life through water. God's spirit hovering over the watery chaos in Genesis was responsible for the order of creation. The waters of the Red Sea saved the fleeing Jews from the pharaoh at the time of the Exodus. In the 40-year sojourn in the desert, the Jews were refreshed with water from a rock. Joshua crossed the waters of the Jordan River and led the exiled Jews to a land "flowing with milk and honey." Time and again the Old Testament writers describe water as life-giving and renewing. Witness this quote from Ezekiel:

Then I am going/...

Lesson Materials

BAPTISMAL SYMBOLS (cont)

Then I am going to take you from among the nations and gather you together from all the foreign countries, and bring you home to your own land. I shall pour clean water over you and you will be cleansed; I shall cleanse you of all your defilement and all your idols. I shall give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you; I shall remove the heart of stone from your bodies and give you a heart of flesh instead (Ez 36:24-26).

The quote from Ezekiel brings together in a beautiful way the theme of water and the Spirit. God's Spirit is associated with water as in Genesis when it is God's breath (*ruah* or Spirit) which dries the lands. The wind (*ruah*) blowing from the ocean brought with it water and coolness, refreshment and rain. It came to be associated with the life-giving breath and saving waters of God who cared for his people.

The ancient Jews also used water in their rituals. They used water to cleanse believers from impurities. They also had a kind of baptism for Gentile converts to Judaism. Converts were baptized in Jordan's waters to symbolize their entry into the freedom of the Promised Land.

2. *New Testament.* Water was used in John the Baptist's ritual baptism. His baptism called for people - both Jews and Gentiles - to turn from their sins forever in expectation of God's kingdom. John's baptism was followed by serious demands that the baptized live their lives in accordance with God's law. Thus, it meant death to an old life of sin and a conversion to a new life of expectation of the Messiah.

Water and the Spirit also have an important role to play in Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist. (See, for example, Lk 3:21-22.) The theologian Bernard Cooke asserts that Jesus' baptism symbolized three things: that Jesus is the *new Israel*, the *new Adam*, and the *Messiah* (Christ). First, Jesus, though without sin, freely entered the Jordan River to symbolize that a new era had begun. Just as the Jews had passed into the Promised Land through the Jordan, Jesus passed through the waters of the Jordan to indicate that through his passion and death we will arrive at the Promised Land of salvation won by his resurrection. Second, just as the Genesis account had God bringing human life out of the watery chaos symbolized in the creation of Adam, the baptism of Jesus tells us that God (symbolized by the dove) has created a new life, a new humanity through his Son, Jesus. Third, the Jews had waited for the fulfillment of the promises of the Messiah, he who would restore Israel to its rightful place among the nations. At Jesus' baptism we hear the words: "You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you" (Mk 1: 11). Jesus accepted his commission and ushered in the new age of God's salvation. Note again how water and the Spirit (symbolized by the dove) converge at the baptism of Jesus.

Besides symbolising/...

Lesson Materials

BAPTISMAL SYMBOLS (cont)

Besides symbolising the fact that Jesus is the new Israel, the new Adam and the promised Messiah, Jesus' baptism is a prefiguring of his passion, death and resurrection. Jesus' descent into the waters of the Jordan with all their potential to destroy pointed to his passion and death. But when he emerged from the waters, there was a pointing to his resurrection, to new life. God's Spirit is poured out on Jesus at his baptism just as his Spirit is given to the Christian community after his resurrection from the dead.

3. *Baptismal Waters Today.* This rich symbolism of water and the Spirit is evident today when the Christian is baptized. To be baptized is to go into the destructive waters which signify that we have died to evil and sin and rise with Jesus to be anointed with his Spirit. To say it another way, the one who is baptized "converts" or turns from sin to begin a new life with the Lord. St. Paul stresses this point when he says that the baptized are no longer slaves to sin but slaves to God (Rom 6) and that we put off the old man and put on the new (Col 3:9). This dress imagery was symbolized in the early church by the baptized person undressing before entering the baptismal waters and dressing again in a white robe when he or she emerged with Christ. In today's baptismal liturgy a white cloth is given to the infant to remind us of our transformation in Christ. Finally, the water used in baptism suggests a new birth through the action of the Spirit. The person is initiated into the Christian family. As an interesting aside, some of the early baptismal fonts were in the shape of a womb to suggest that the waters of baptism were like the waters that surrounded the baby in the mother's womb.

Exercises:

1. Have you ever felt the destructive forces of water? its life-giving properties? What did you think at the time of your experiences? Were life and death prominent in your mind?
2. *Reading deeper.* Check out the following scriptural passages and discuss how they fit into the discussion of the symbolism of water treated above.
Ex 17:3-7 Rom 6:3-5 Rv 22:1 Jn 4:5-42 Ez 47:1-9,12 1 Cor 12:12-13 Ps 23:1-4

Fire.

One of the most fascinating universal symbols is fire. Perhaps it is so fascinating because it combines both beauty and danger; it draws us near, yet frightens us away at the same time. One of the important lessons of childhood is learning that the beautiful flame hurts if one gets too close.

Even with the wonders of electricity and other forms of energy, people love fireplaces and campfires. There is nothing quite like a warm fire on a cold winter's night. And gathering around a campfire is one of the prime symbols of human fellowship and friendship.

1. *Old Testament/...*

Lesson Materials

BAPTISMAL SYMBOLS (cont)

1. *Old Testament.* For the ancient Israelites, fire stood for the presence of God. You might recall that Yahweh appeared to Moses in the middle of a burning bush (Ex 3:5). When the Israelites wished to picture God's presence among them, they spoke of the cloud of Yahweh covering the tabernacle by day and fire covering it by night (Nm 9: 16). For the Jews, God was fire because without him they felt lost in a dark night. Also, fire gives the appearance of being alive but without a fixed or final form. The living God Yahweh is alive but always free and unpredictable. Finally, fire is all-consuming. Nothing can survive its intense heat. So, too, the Jews rightly believed that God's love is irresistible and all-consuming.

2. *New Testament.* The New Testament speaks of fire symbolically, too. For example, John the Baptist says to the crowds about Jesus, ". . . but the one who follows me . . . will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Mt 3: 11). In addition Jesus says this about his mission: "I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already!" (Lk 12:49).

One of the most important characteristics of fire is that it gives light. Jesus used light imagery extensively in his teaching about himself. John's Gospel not only images Jesus as the Passover lamb and the manna in the wilderness but as the pillar of fire: "I am the light of the world; anyone who follows me will not be walking in the dark; he will have the light of life" (Jn 8: 12). We confess in our creed at Mass that Jesus is light that came into the world and that he is light from light. Those who don't recognize Jesus prefer the darkness of sin to the light of Christ.

A second important characteristic of fire is warmth. Love and affection are sometimes spoken of as "warm." Loving people are sometimes described as having "warm" personalities. It is the Spirit of Jesus and his Father who warms people's hearts with love. On Pentecost Sunday the Spirit was represented as tongues of fire which descended on the apostles who were to preach and live the love of Christ. Acts records the founding of the church this way:

When Pentecost day came round, they had all met in one room, when suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven, the noise of which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; and something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak foreign languages as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech (Acts 2:1-4).

3. *Fire and baptism.* What does fire have to do with baptism? Well, in the baptismal liturgy, after being clothed with the white garment symbolizing the new Christian dignity of being clothed with Christ, the newly baptized Christians are given lighted candles. At that time the following prayer is recited:

Receive the light of Christ/...

Lesson Materials

BAPTISMAL SYMBOLS (cont)

Receive the light of Christ. Parents and godparents, this light is entrusted to you to be kept burning brightly. This child of yours has been enlightened by Christ. He (she) is to walk always as a child of the light. May he (she) keep the flame of faith alive in his (her) heart. When the Lord comes, may he (she) go out to meet him with all the saints of the heavenly kingdom.

What this means is that a new Christian is to be the light of Christ, shining before men and women so that they can see Christ working in the world. The new Christian is to burn with the love of Christ, with the love of Jesus' forgiveness and service to all. His or her vocation is to be a beacon that points to the good news of Jesus.

The Oil of Christ. The rite of baptism for a child includes two anointings with holy oil. The first takes place before baptism and the second takes place immediately after the pouring on or immersion into the baptismal waters. With the second anointing with the holy oil, called *chrism*, the celebrant says:

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin, given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and welcomed you into his holy people. He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation. As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as a member of his body, sharing everlasting life. Amen.

The holy oil used in baptism is an important symbol with profound meaning. Before we discuss the interpretation of this symbol recall what you wrote about its uses. Perhaps you noted that oil is used in cooking; without it, many of our foods and salads would taste quite bland. Oil is also an important ingredient in many cosmetics and medicines. For example, think about the agony sunbathers would suffer without its soothing effects. Athletes in the ancient world (and weight lifters today) used it to lubricate their bodies before contests. In today's world, oil is vitally important as a fuel and as a lubricant for machinery, as well as playing an essential part in the production of plastics, fertilizers and many other goods. Our whole economy is tied to its availability. Without it, the Western world would grind to a halt. In a real way today, oil is *the* symbol for wealth.

1. *Biblical meaning of oil.* In scriptural times olive oil was mixed with an aromatic substance called balsam. It was used to anoint. For example, balsam-perfumed oil was used to anoint the heads of guests at dinner parties to show respect and esteem. You might recall from Luke's Gospel how the Pharisee Simon failed to extend this courtesy to Jesus, but the notorious woman who was a sinner rushed in from off the street to do so (Lk 7:36-50). Dead bodies were also anointed with oil as a preparation for burial. This was the task the women went to perform on Jesus' body Easter Sunday morning (Mk 16: 1).

The Jews also/...

Lesson Materials

BAPTISMAL SYMBOLS (cont)

The Jews also used to consecrate their altars and priests with holy oil to symbolize God's sweet, continuous presence. But the most important use for oil in biblical times was the anointing of kings by either priests or prophets. One of the most striking examples of this is David's anointing by Samuel as described in 1 Samuel, Chapter 16. In time, anointing of the king - God's servant or son - took on special significance. In Israel there arose a belief that a special "anointed one" of God would come at the end of time to overcome the world. The title *Messiah* meant 'anointed one' and designated this anointed redeemer.

Christians, of course, believe that Jesus is the "anointed one of God, the Messiah." His anointing by God's Spirit was pictured at his baptism. His mission was foretold in Isaiah. Here, the Messiah was not seen as a glorious king to be served by the nations of man, but as a Suffering Servant. Read the marvellous words of the prophet:

Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen one in whom my soul delights.

I have endowed him with my spirit .
that he may bring true justice to the nations.

He does not cry out or shout aloud
or make his voice heard in the streets.
He does not break the crushed reed
nor quench the wavering flame.

Faithfully he brings true justice;
he will neither waver, nor be crushed
until true justice is established on earth
for the islands are awaiting his law (Is 42: 1-4).

2. *Anointed With Christ.* When the Christian is anointed with chrism, he or she takes on Christ. "Christians" get their name because they are anointed followers of the Anointed One, *Jesus Christ*. (*Khristos* is the Greek word for "Messiah-Anointed One.") Each Christian is called on to be another Christ, to share in his role of Suffering Servant for all peoples. Baptism is sometimes called "christening" to underscore this reality. The rich symbolic anointing with chrism reminds the Christian that his or her task is to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. It stresses symbolically that to be anointed with Jesus Christ means to serve as Jesus served, to wash the feet of others as Jesus demonstrated (In 13:1-17).

Lesson Materials



Signs, Symbols, Effects

- the meaningfulness of the old name 'Christening'
- Sunday (the day of the Resurrection), or Easter Vigil, as the time for Baptism
- the community's presence
- the baby (the symbolism of birth; the heart of Baptism is celebrating birth into God's life)
- the mother and father
- the godparents
- the Scripture-reading (symbolising the path into which the child is being initiated)
- the hand laid on the head (symbolising the receiving of the Holy Spirit, enabling the person to be radically different to what s/he might otherwise have been)
- the water, and the pouring/immersion (symbolising cleansing from sin; immersion also symbolises the disappearance of the old person and the emergence of a new person)
- Sign of the Cross (seal of preservation of body & soul)
- the oil (Chrism and Oil of Catechumens), and the anointing (Symbolising the consecration/dedication of the new Christian)
- the 'Christian name' (its associations and symbolism)
- the white garment (symbolising the unstained dignity of the new Christian; also, where a family Baptismal Garment is used, symbolising the family's Christian faith)
- fire: lighted candle (symbolising the light of Christ)
- the ear & mouth of the baby (note how the special prayer over these highlights their symbolism)
- the 'Our Father' (symbolic of our common faith).

LESSON 16: Confirmation in Scripture



REFERENCE

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WHAT YOU NEED

- (1) LSM: 'Confirmation in Scripture'
- (1) Bibles
- (2) TSM: 'Short History of Confirmation'

AIMS

- To reflect on scriptural passages that form a background to the Sacrament of Confirmation
- To understand the historical development of Confirmation.

OUTCOMES

- KUI Learners understand the scriptural background to Confirmation.
- KUI Learners understand the historical development of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

TEACHER'S NOTE

As we did with in the first lesson on Baptism, we first consider the scriptural roots of the sacrament, and then develop a sense of the sacrament's history.

LESSON OUTLINE

1 Scripture Study

- Divide learners into five groups.
- Distribute the Lesson Materials page 'Confirmation in Scripture'
- Ask each group to discuss the series of Scripture passages.
- Ask each group to give the feedback on their discussion.
- Conclude by addressing any misunderstandings and questions that may arise during the feedback.

2 History of Confirmation

Provide a brief history of the Sacrament of Confirmation, using the Lesson Materials page provided. You might choose to give a presentation, or distribute the page to learners for group study and guided feedback. If you choose the latter option a suitable division would be:

- Period 1 (First to Fifth Centuries)
- Period 2 (Sixth to Twentieth Centuries)
- Period 3 (Twentieth Century)
- Today

OTHER IDEAS

3 Who Is the Holy Spirit?

Learners explore biblical texts with a view to building up a profile of the Holy Spirit. Here are some suggested texts:

- Genesis 1:1-2
- Genesis 2:7
- Ezekiel 37:1-14
- Joel 3:1-2
- Luke 1:26-35
- Matthew 3:13-17
- John 14:16-17
- John 19:30
- Matthew 28:18-20
- Acts 2:32-33
- Romans 5:5

MATERIALS

TEACHER

- Michael Pennock. 1981. 'Short History of the Sacrament of Confirmation' in *The Sacraments And You*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, p 99-101

LEARNER

- Michael Pennock. 1981. 'Important Scripture Assignment' in *The Sacraments And You*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, p 102-103



Lesson Materials



Confirmation in Scripture

Confirmation - besides being called the sacrament of Christian maturity - is in a unique way the sacrament of the Holy Spirit. At confirmation the bishop lays hands on the candidate, anoints the forehead with chrism and recites the important words: "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy spirit." Sealing in the Holy Spirit binds the confirmed Christian to spread, defend and witness to the faith in both word and deed.

But who is the Holy Spirit and what influence does he have on the Christian? Read the following scriptural passages on the Holy Spirit and briefly state the main point of the passage.

What the Bible Says about the Holy Spirit

Reference

Summary

I THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

1 Is 61:1-3,6,8-9	
2 Ez 36:24-28	
3 Jl 2:23; 3:1-3	
4 Jn 14:15-17	

II THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT

1 Acts 2: 1-6	
2 Acts 8:14-17	
3 Acts 19: 1-6	
4 Mk 1:9-11	

III THE ROLE OF THE SPIRIT

1 Rom 5: 1-2, 5-8	
2 Rom 8: 14-17	

IV GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

1 1Cor 12:4-13	
2 Gal 5: 16-25	

V RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHRISTIAN IN RESPONSE TO THE SPIRIT

1 Eph 4: 1 -6	
2 Mt 16:24-27	
3. Jn 14:23-26	

© Michael Pennock.1981. 'Important Scripture Assignment' in *The Sacraments And You*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, p 102-103.

Lesson Materials



Short History of the Sacrament of Confirmation

It is worthwhile to take a brief look at the history of confirmation to better understand some of the debates over the sacrament today.

Period 1 (first to fifth centuries).

In the early church what we today call confirmation was united with the baptismal liturgy of the Easter Vigil. You might remember from the last chapter that in the first century of the Christian era, the adult member was initiated into the Christian community after a long period of preparation. The baptism took place on the Saturday before Easter and included a number of symbolic actions.

Let's review the sacramental actions in the early initiation rite: 1) The candidate renounced Satan. 2) A priest anointed the candidate for a first time. 3) A deacon led the candidate to the baptismal pool. 4) The three baptismal questions were asked. 5) After the person was baptized and emerged from the pool, another anointing took place. 6) White garments were put on. 7) The new Christian then entered the church. 8) The bishop then laid on hands, prayed for the Holy Spirit and its gifts and anointed the new Christian with the oil of thanksgiving. 9) The bishop kissed the new Christian and welcomed him/her into the community. 10) After the kiss of peace was shared with the congregation and the prayers of the faithful, the Eucharist was celebrated. At this time the newly adopted child of God received Holy Communion for the first time.

All these actions constituted the liturgy for receiving new members into the early church. What we now call confirmation was part of the liturgy and specifically included the laying-on of hands, the anointing by the bishop and the prayer for the Holy Spirit (see eight above).

This ancient practice of the church has been restored today and is called the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults. During this Eastertime ceremony, converts receive the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and Eucharist simultaneously as they are welcomed into the church. Including confirmation stresses the intimate connection between the sacrament and initiation into the community.

Period 2 (6th to 20th centuries).

When the church was numerically small, it was possible for the bishop to be present at each baptismal ceremony. But when the church grew in numbers, the bishops were unable to be present in all their parishes for the initiation ceremonies.

However, the bishops wished to retain some role in the ritual of initiation. Thus, around the sixth century; they began to reserve for themselves the right of anointing after baptism and the various prayers for the coming of the Spirit. As leaders of the Christian community and the successors of the apostles, they wished to "confirm" the initiation of the candidates. Gradually, then, confirmation was separated from the baptismal ceremony so the bishop could administer the sacrament at a later time.

As Christianity spread/...

Lesson Materials

SHORT HISTORY OF THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION (cont)

As Christianity spread so did the custom of infant baptism. By the 13th century church leaders saw a need for youngsters to learn about their baptismal commitment. Confirmation became a logical event for catechetical instructions and an opportunity for young people to say "yes" to the faith they received at baptism.

Confirmation, then, was administered usually to young people from the ages 7 to 12. (In 1566, the Catechism of the Council of Trent stated that after baptism confirmation should be given to all, but that it was best to wait 'until children reached the age of reason.) However Holy Communion was not received until around age 14. The ancient order of receiving the sacraments - baptism/confirmation/Eucharist - was retained, but they were administered over a span of years rather than in one ceremony.

Period 3 (20th century).

Perhaps you were confirmed in the seventh, eighth or ninth grade. Your parents were probably confirmed in the fifth or sixth grade. But most of you and your parents were confirmed *after* first Holy Communion. Why this change from Period 2? In the early part of this century (1910), Pope Pius X wished to foster devotion to the Eucharist, and he made it possible for Catholics to receive Communion when they reached the age of reason (around seven years of age). He believed that once a child knew the difference between ordinary bread and wine and the consecrated bread and wine (the body and blood of Christ) the child should not be deprived of the special help and closeness to the Lord given in this sacrament. So, for most of us who were baptized as infants, confirmation was administered after first Holy Communion.

Today.

As we look at the history of this sacrament we can conclude that the time of its administration has changed over the centuries. But today, people are debating just when confirmation should be celebrated.

Some think that we should go back to the way it was done in the early church. As a matter of fact, the Eastern Catholic churches do allow priests to baptize, confirm and give Communion to infants. Others argue solely for adult baptism and want to retain the ancient order of administering the sacraments of initiation. Still others, who stress the theme of confirmation as the sacrament of Christian maturity, want the sacrament delayed until a much later time, perhaps either late high school years or early adulthood (19-25 years of age).

When should confirmation take place? What do you think? Before formulating an answer, read the next section of the chapter which discusses some of the theology of the sacrament, and which might influence your decision.

© Michael Pennock.1981. 'Short History of the Sacrament of Confirmation' in *The Sacraments And You*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, p 99-101.

LESSON 17: Signs and Symbols in Confirmation



REFERENCE

Page 203 [THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION]



WHAT YOU NEED

- (2) LSM: 'Signs, Symbols, Effects'

AIM

- To deepen understanding of the Sacrament of Confirmation through an examination of the signs and symbols encountered in the liturgical rite.

OUTCOMES

- KUI Learners are familiar with the signs and symbols used in Confirmation, and express their meaning clearly.

TEACHER'S NOTE

This lesson follows on from Lesson 16. In that lesson we concentrated on the scriptural basis of the sacrament and the history of its celebration: here, we take a closer look at the signs and symbols employed in the liturgical rite.

LESSON OUTLINE

1 Recalling the Confirmation Ceremony

Ask the learners if they have ever attended a confirmation ceremony. Ask those who have attended one to name the signs and symbols they might recall. Invite a few learners to share their experience with the class. List the signs and symbols they recall, then ask them to say what each one signifies.

2 Signs and Symbols

It is likely that many will not have experienced a Confirmation, so the first exercise will form an introduction to a more extensive study of the signs and symbols. Give the learners (in groups) the following list of aspects of the ceremony, and ask them to discuss the significance of each:

- (a) The name 'Confirmation'
- (b) The age of the candidate
- (c) Celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit
- (d) Confirmation as a public act
- (e) The context of the Mass
- (f) The presence of the Bishop
- (g) The presence of the community
- (h) The sponsor
- (i) The sponsor's hand on the candidate's shoulder
- (j) The laying on of hands
- (k) The anointing with chrism
- (l) The Sign of the Cross
- (m) The candidate's name
- (n) The word 'Amen'

The Lesson Materials page 'Signs, Symbols, Effects' can be distributed to the groups after some discussion has taken place. The groups use this page to confirm their understanding.

3 Feedback

Take some feedback and clarify any items in the above list that are not clearly understood.

OTHER IDEAS

4 Fruits of the Spirit

The idea of the 'fruits of the Spirit' will be dealt with more extensively in Lesson 18, but you may want to introduce it here. Galatians 5:22-23 lists these fruits. Learners read the text slowly. Allow for a few quiet moments and then ask them to reflect on the following questions:

- Which of these fruits do I show most clearly in my life?
- Which do I lack?
- How can I grow in my weaker areas?

Invite the learners to write a short reflection. They might also work in pairs, asking one another to help them identify their response to the first question.

5 Coming of Age in Other Faith Communities

Learners from faith backgrounds other than Christian could share key symbols in the ceremonies that accompany their 'coming of age' in their faith communities. They could also relate the 'fruits of the Spirit' to the values, attitudes, and dispositions encouraged in their own religious practice. Key texts from scriptural traditions that list these could be shared with the rest of the class.

MATERIALS

LEARNER

- Michael Burke. 1991. 'Sacrament of Confirmation – signs, symbols, effects' 157 in *Connections*. Pietermaritzburg: Centaur Publications, p 203-204



Lesson Materials



Signs, Symbols, Effects

- the name 'Confirmation' (suggesting a " Yes ", a strengthening, a solidarity)
- the age of the candidates (Bishops have come to prefer an older age to ensure that Confirmation really involves a considered personal decision; some Bishops actually require from each candidate a personal letter of application and motivation...)
- the occasion (a celebration/marketing of the coming of the Spirit into our lives; Confirmation doesn't start with the ceremony - it is, rather, the culmination of a long process; and Confirmation doesn't end with the ceremony - rather, it unfolds all through life)
- the fact that Confirmation is a public act (signifying the assumed commitment and responsibility of living one's Baptismal Vows fully by witnessing publicly - that is, teaching by our lives what it means to be a follower of Christ)
- the context of Mass (stressing that Confirmation initiates us into Eucharist)
- the presence of the Bishop (leader of the whole local Church, to which each individual's Confirmation is important)
- the presence of the community (Confirmation is not a private matter, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are gifts to the community through the individual)
- the Sponsor (who stands in the name of the community and of the family; note that the filling of this role is not a mere formality; the parent or Baptismal godparent is the obvious choice)
- the sponsor's hand firmly on the candidate's shoulder (symbolising the community's pledge of support)
- the imposition ('laying on') of hands (symbolic of receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit; a sealing with the gifts of the Holy Spirit - God equipping us for our lives by giving us the presence and power of his Holy Spirit)
- the anointing with Chrism (sealing God's choice of ME; Chrism always symbolises consecration, and sometimes mission too - cf. Chrism's use in Baptism, in Ordination, for the five Crosses of a consecrated Altar and twelve places in a consecrated church)
- the Sign of the Cross (it is in this that we are Confirmed - this is shorthand for the whole pattern of Christian life)
- the name (traditionally a personally-selected Saint's name, symbolising the example of the Saints before us; nowadays this is often an affirmation of the Baptismal Saint's name, rather than an adding of another name)
- "Amen" (a commitment word, carrying a symbolism similar to that of one's signature; by their "Amen " the candidates commit themselves
 - to a person (Jesus)
 - to a community (Jesus' Church)
 - to a lifestyle (Jesus' path);the congregation, in its turn, seals its acceptance of the candidates by its Amen")

LESSON 18: Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit



REFERENCE

Page 205 [THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION]



WHAT YOU NEED

- (1)(3) Bible
- (1) LSM: 'Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit'
- (4) LSM: 'Self-Reflection'

AIM

- To help learners realise the relevance of the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

OUTCOMES

- KUI Learners are familiar with the gifts and fruits of the Spirit
- DAP Learners appreciate the power of the Holy Spirit to transform a person's life.

TEACHER'S NOTE

This lesson focuses on the theme: "Confirmation celebrates the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the gifts the Spirit bestows upon us." It also looks at the results or fruits that a commitment to these gifts brings about in a person's life.

LESSON OUTLINE

1 Gifts of the Spirit

- Invite learners to read the following scripture passage: [Isaiah 11:1-2]. What qualities are mentioned of the person on whom the Spirit of God rests? Draw up a list together with the learners. Compare this list with the one given on the Lesson Materials page 'Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit'.
- Now, either in groups, or as a whole class, clarify the meaning of each gift. Learners write agreed definitions in the space provided on the Materials page. The last one on the list – fear of the Lord – is more commonly rendered today as 'awe in God's presence'.
- Finally, learners suggest practical examples of how each of the seven gifts can be used in living out a Christian life.

2 Gifts and Fruits

Use the analogy of a tree to distinguish between the gifts and the fruits of the Holy Spirit. If the person is the tree, and the gifts are things like soil, rain, sunlight, and nutrients that encourage growth, then what are the fruits? Clearly, they are the results of the tree's growth to maturity. In a similar way, developing the gifts of the Spirit brings to fruition in the person certain qualities. Jesus' saying, "By their fruits you will know them" [Mt 7:20] comes to mind.

3 Fruits of the Spirit

Ask learners to read Galatians 5: 22-23. In this passage, fruits of the Spirit are listed.

4 Self Reflection

Distribute the Lesson Materials page 'Self-Reflection'. Create a quiet atmosphere, possibly with background music, and give the learners time to respond to it. The exercise will help the learner to realise more clearly how much a difference the Spirit's presence in one's life can make.

OTHER IDEAS

5 Charismatic Gifts

A distinction is made between the 'seven gifts' highlighted in Confirmation, and other gifts – ones we might call charismatic – which are given to certain individuals for the benefit of the whole community. I Corinthians 12: 4-11 mentions some of these.

6 What Are My Gifts?

Learners complete the questionnaire on the Lesson Materials page 'Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit'. Through this exercise, they identify their personal gifts. Invite them to relate these gifts to the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

7 Rainbow

Learners use the image of the rainbow – seven colours – to express in some art form the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

MATERIALS

LEARNER

- Michael Pennock.1981. 'More on the Gifts' in *The Sacraments & You*. Notre Dame, Indiana, Ave Maria Press, p 104-105
- CIE. 2005. 'Self-Reflection'



Lesson Materials



Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

One of the main functions of the sacrament of confirmation is to celebrate the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The traditional list of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is found below. Briefly define each gift and then give an example of how you have used or can use that gift in living out a Christian life. (See 2 Pt 1:3-8.)

Gifts	Definition	Example
Wisdom		
Understanding		
Knowledge		
Counsel		
Fortitude		
Piety		
Awe and Wonder		

Your Gifts/...

Lesson Materials



SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (cont)

Your Gifts

I Corinthians 12:4-13 stresses the fact that the Holy Spirit gives different gifts to each Christian, though the purpose of 'the gifts is to build up the body of Christ. The theme of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is "unity in diversity." What are your gifts? The following exercise is designed to help you discover the special gifts or talents which have been given to you to serve others.

What are my gifts?

(Write A, B, or C to the left of each numbered statement.)

A - This description fits me most of the time: (I seem to have this gift.)

B - This describes me some of the time.

C - This doesn't seem to be me.

1. When someone is having a tough time, I can cheer the person up.
2. I communicate what's on my mind well.
3. I know when someone is hurting.
4. I'm an optimist. (I tend to say a glass is half filled with water rather than say it is half empty.)
5. I'm willing to take risks.
6. I'm a good listener.
7. I'm a hard worker who sticks to a task. –
8. I accept cheerfully what happens to me.
9. I respond with compassion when others suffer misfortune.
10. I'm a leader.
11. I'm not afraid to challenge an irresponsible statement.
12. I would be willing to die for someone or something I believe in strongly.
13. I genuinely like to learn.
14. I seek advice for difficult decisions and make decisions thoughtfully.
15. I value friendships more than money.
16. I understand and respect others' opinions.
17. I pray often.
18. I do not fear change and new challenges.
19. I accept people as individuals and reject others' stereotypes.
20. I can handle disappointments

Lesson Materials



Self Reflection

To help you to see what sort of difference the Holy Spirit can make in your life, take each "fruit of the Spirit" and check yourself on a scale of 1 – 10, where 1 is very low and 10 is very high.

LOVE Unconditional acceptance of others, no strings attached, no payoff' anticipated, no attempt to control or manipulate others, especially those you love the most.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

JOY Spontaneous, effervescent cheerfulness, flowing from the deep spiritual reservoirs- especially in time of strain, stress and heartache.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

PEACE Inner harmony, soundness, well-being, at-one-ment with God that makes a spirit of reconciliation possible in the midst of conflict – especially in your own family

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

PATIENCE Strength of will amidst trying circumstances and exasperating people – not easily threatened when things don't go your way.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

KINDNESS Sensitivity and compassion for those who are hurting, sympathy and empathy for those who are having a bad day – especially those in your own family

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

GOODNESS Disposition to do what is right, fair, honourable, and honest; integrity, 14-carat character, champion of truth, justice and principles – even if you have to stand alone.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

FAITHFULNESS/...

Lesson Materials 
SELF REFLECTION (cont)

FAITHFULNESS Unwavering, constant, genuine fidelity to what you value, believe and cherish – being true to yourself at the cost of friends, job, reputation.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

HUMILITY Genuine meekness (not weakness), gentleness, tenderness. Healthy self-esteem that does not have to put on airs or try to impress anyone – especially those you are thinking of right now.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

SELF-CONTROL Aware of your strength and weaknesses; in control of your doubts or illusions of grandeur; open to the spirit but suspicious of your motives; master of your physical desires.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

If you have been honest, you have probably felt a sense of “what’s the use of trying”. This is healthy. It shows you are sensitive ... and open to the new thing that God is doing in you by speaking about spiritual yearning.

Now take a few minutes and feast on the scripture below, and turn these words into your own prayer.

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.