

PART ONE

SESSION 6

BAPTISM

OBJECTIVES OF THIS SESSION:

1. To identify the changed condition of those who have accepted Jesus as Lord as nothing less than “new life or eternal life.”
2. To bring about an understanding of God’s grace.
3. To begin to build an awareness of how God gives grace through the sacraments.
4. To make the connection between the Death and Resurrection of Jesus and Baptism.

TO THE LEADER

You have spent the past five sessions taking your group from understanding separation and alienation from God to what God intends - reconciliation to God the Father through Jesus Christ. In the last session, your students shared their struggles with sin, and perhaps shared how God has brought reconciliation to them. It was mentioned that the three elements of conversion - conviction of sin, faith in Jesus Christ, and new life in Christ - are all tied together in the sacrament that Jesus gives to His Church - Baptism.

Christian Formation places a strong emphasis upon the Sacraments, not only to teach what they are, but to teach that they give grace which sustains us in ordinary life. This session provides a time to introduce the concepts of Sacraments and Grace, but also to talk about how a life of conversion is summed up in, and begun in Baptism.

MATERIALS NEEDED FOR THIS SESSION

For the first activity, you will need lots of paper and markers, pens, and colored pencils.

Begin the session in prayer, encouraging one of the students to lead the prayer.

ACTIVITY: SUPERHEROES

Begin with a question: “If you could have any super power, what would it be?” Give the group some time to ruminate over this question. Then, go around the group and ask them to share what their super power would be and why. Ask them how this super power would help them in daily life.

Next, pass out the markers, pens, pencils and paper. In this activity, the students are going to draw each other as superheroes. Have them pair up into groups of two. Tell them this:

- You are going to draw your partner doing something heroic, using his or her superpower.

- Some of you are not the best artists and this is ok!
- You are not to reveal your drawing until the end of this session.
- At the end of the session, you are to take your partner aside and show them the drawing.
- This is supposed to be meaningful.
- There is one stipulation: if you disagree with your partner's chosen superpower, and believe it should be something else - something that would really help them in their lives, then you have a duty to come up with something better for them.

Note: Although this activity may seem silly, it is not meant to be. Remember that last time the group shared their struggles with sin. Some of the youth in your group will be going through terribly hard times. During this session, your youth have an opportunity to give a great deal of grace to each other. LMN+

When the group is finished drawing, ask them to fold up the drawings and put them someplace safe.

THE LESSON: GRACE

SCRIPTURES FOR THIS LESSON:

1. John 1:17
2. Acts 14:3 (signs and wonders were done by their hands.)
3. Acts 20:32
4. Romans 5:20
5. 2 Corinthians 12:9 (my grace is sufficient for you...)
6. Ephesians 2:8 (by grace you have been saved)

After reading these passages, write on a dry erase board or large piece of paper, the basic teaching about God's grace and what it does. By the time you're finished, it look something like this:

Grace

- Comes through Jesus Christ
- Gives supernatural power
- Builds us up, give us an inheritance
- Is God's solution for sin
- It is all we need in our struggles

- It leads to our salvation

Point out that God gives us grace even before we know it, preparing us for our own “fullness of time.” God was preparing to give us supernatural power. The long and the short of it is that **we can’t do it on our own.** We need God to help us to live as He intends. This help is called grace - and we don’t deserve it. God gives us His grace in many ways, but He has a special way that He gives us grace, a way called a sacrament.

The Book of Common Prayer teaches us this about sacraments:

“The sacraments are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as sure and certain means by which we receive that grace.”

Take some time to go through this definition, perhaps writing it down first. Be sure to focus on the phrase “sure and certain means.” This is what really defines a sacrament as a sacrament.

Once this is completed ask: “What is the first sacrament?”

The answer is Baptism.

BAPTISM

SCRIPTURES FOR THIS LESSON:

1. Matthew 28:19
2. Mark 16:16
3. Acts 2:38
4. Romans 6:3-5
5. 1 Corinthians 12:13
6. Ephesians 5:25-26

Just like you did with the passages about grace, begin to write the characteristics of baptism, found in the Scriptures, asking the group to tell you what baptism does, according to the Scriptures.

Three essential things need to be brought out:

- Baptism cleanses us from sin, uniting us to Jesus in His Death and Resurrection
- Baptism gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit
- Baptism makes us members of Jesus Christ’s Body - the Church

For some of you, you were baptized when you were babies - you don't remember a thing. For some of you - you were baptized when you were old enough to remember, but not old enough to understand it. Some of you haven't been baptized yet. But, for all of us, baptism is the beginning of something supernatural taking place in us. It is something that **God does**.

Through Baptism, God begins the process of converting us from the Kingdom of Sin and Death to the Kingdom of Heaven. Through our baptism, we receive real grace, grace that leads to our salvation, grace that cleanses us from sin, and grace that enables us to live as God intends.

In the early Church, candidates for Baptism were told to show up at the church wearing old clothes. They were Baptized by full immersion in the water, as if drowning and then being rescued from the water. After this, they were put in new white clothes and fed milk and honey. For them, it was very clear that a new life had begun - new life in Christ.

Baptism is a very real way in which we become disciples of Jesus, who take up their crosses and follow Him.

Allow time for discussion and questions.

Then, close in prayer. Make sure that the youth share their superhero drawings. It is helpful to draw their attention to the fact that Grace is like a superpower, allowing us to do things which we couldn't otherwise do with our own strength.