

Proximate Preparation
for
Penance and Eucharist

Session One



JESUS CALLS US TO BE HIS FAMILY

Office of Faith Formation
Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn
Second Edition 2012

© 2012, Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, New York

Preparing the Environment:

Baptismal symbols: bowl of water, white garment, baptismal candle, chrism, bible, if possible and feasible, the Paschal Candle.

(Please give thought to a space other than a classroom, if possible.)

Part I**Introduction:**

Gather the families at the entrance of the site chosen for this session.

Prayer:

Begin by making the Sign of the Cross.

Leader: Loving God, we thank you for the gift of our children and the gift of Faith received at Baptism. Help us to realize more deeply the joy of being members of your family. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Presentation:

Invite the parents to go back in time to the day of their children's baptism.

Questions asked at the entrance of the Church:

What name have you given to your child?

What do you ask of the Church?

Do you bring your child freely to be baptized?

Our names are very important. Our name claims us. We recall that God revealed His name to Moses. Did you ever stop to think that God knows each of us by name? (John 10:3)

Let us introduce ourselves so we may come to know one another.

(Invite the families to process to the main gathering space where the above environment is prepared. Sing an appropriate hymn as they process.)

Part II**Catechesis:**

Let us examine the symbols that are used at baptism.

1) Water: The power of water to destroy and to give life (through the waters of our baptism we die with Christ; we die to the power of sin and death in our lives. Original sin is taken away and we are filled with God's grace and we are made children of God. Grace gives us God's life and love. John 14:4-7

2) White garment: This baptismal garment is an outward sign of the child's new life in Christ. The celebrant prays: "you have become a new creation, and have clothed yourselves in Christ. See in this white baptismal robe the outward sign of your Christian dignity. With your family and friends to help you by word and example, bring that dignity unstained into the everlasting life of heaven." This is why at the beginning of the Funeral Mass, the white pall is placed on the casket, the celebrant prays: "in the waters of baptism...died with Christ and rose with him to new life. May he/she now share with him eternal glory" (Order of Christian Burials 160). Galatians 3:26-27

Suggested Activity (Children with Parent Participation) Parents help the children to make a white garment. Distribute white paper, scissors and pencils.

Questions: How can we live according to Jesus' way of life so that we may keep the promises made at our baptism?

Parents help the children to identify some ways and briefly write them on the white garment. (Examples: being kind to each other, forgiving one another, daily prayer etc.)

3) Lighted candle: The candle which is given to the newly baptized through the parents/godparents is lit from the Paschal Candle which symbolizes the Risen Jesus; through baptism we come to share in the risen life of Jesus.

4) Chrism: At baptism we all were anointed with chrism which is oil mixed with perfume and blessed by the Bishop on Holy Thursday morning at the Mass of Chrism in St. James Basilica Cathedral. It symbolizes the fragrance of Christ. Our actions and words as baptized followers of Jesus should spread like perfume. At baptism the celebrant anoints us saying, "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 members of his body, sharing everlasting life" (Rite of Baptism).

Part III

Ritual:

At baptism we were signed with oil and the sign of the cross. The signing of the senses represents our commitment to give ourselves totally to Jesus and to follow him as disciples. As I proclaim each signing, I invite you, parents, to make the sign of the cross on your child's body and respond: "**Lord Jesus, help us to follow you always.**"

Leader: Make the sign of the cross on the forehead. May Christ strengthen you with this sign of his love.

All: Lord Jesus, help us to follow you always.

Leader: Make the sign of the cross on the ears, that you may hear the word of the Lord.

All: Lord Jesus, help us to follow you always.

Leader: Make the sign of the cross on the eyes, that you may see Christ in others.

All: Lord Jesus, help us to follow you always.

Leader: Make the sign of the cross on the lips, that you may always speak words of respect and love.

All: Lord Jesus, help us to follow you always.

Leader: Make the sign of the cross on the heart, that your love for God and others may always be found there.

All: Lord Jesus, help us to follow you always.

Leader: Make the sign of the cross on the shoulders, that you may be able to accept to carry the difficulties that you encounter in life.

All: Lord Jesus, help us to follow you always.

Leader: Make the sign of the cross on the hands, that Christ may be known in the work that you do.

All: Lord Jesus, help us to follow you always.

Leader: Make the sign of the cross on the feet, that you may walk in the footsteps of Christ.

All: Lord Jesus, help us to follow you always.

Leader: I place you entirely under the sign of Christ's cross, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Go forth now to be faithful followers of Jesus.

All: Amen.

5) Bible: During the celebration of baptism a scripture passage is read. The bible helps us to know how to live as a follower of Christ.

Proclaim 2 Timothy 3: 14-15

“...continue the truths that you were taught and firmly believe. You know who your teachers were, and you remember ever since you were a child you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”

It is so important to read and reflect on God's word in the Bible. The Lord's Prayer which we all know so well is found in the Bible. When the apostles asked Jesus to teach them to pray, He said (Lead all to pray the **Our Father**)

Invite one family at a time to come forward. The children will carry the baptismal garment they prepared and the parents will receive a Bible and proceed to the Church for the celebration of the Eucharist.

The families should participate in the Entrance Procession; the children should then place the baptismal garment at the foot of the altar if possible or around the Paschal Candle if it is close by.