

Baptism and Chrismation



Sarah's Baptism

Mother and father had gotten everything ready for Sarah's baptism. Uncle Michael and Aunt Mary were going to be Sarah's godparents. Grandmother and Grandfather Minasian were preparing a party after church at their house. Grandmother and Grandfather Boyajian were bringing the special baptism cake. Everyone was excited and happy except Hagop and Miran. The twins felt left out.

"Hurry up, boys!" father called to them. "Get in the car. We

don't want to be late for church!"

As they got into the car the boys looked at each other sadly. It certainly wasn't their day. Things had changed a lot since their sister was born. Both boys liked the little one, but they were jealous of all the fuss people made about her.

"Do you remember eight years ago when we were going through all this for the boys!" mother said. She looked back at Hagop and Miran.

The boys looked at each other. "They did this same stuff for us?" Hagop asked Miran. "I don't remember," replied Miran.

Father had heard. "We sure did. We couldn't wait to get you two baptized. We were so glad you had become part of our family, we were anxious to make you part of God's family, too. Your mother and I waited a long time for you two. I remember the first time we saw you in the hospital. We knew God was giving us a double blessing. As soon as we got you home we made the arrangements for your baptism.

"You were about three weeks old. What a day. It rained and rained. But we got you both to church and you were baptized. I remember Mrs. Dabagian saying 'We have two new Christians!' over and over as we waited in the hall for the rain to let up so we could take you home."

The boys were feeling better now, especially since all the talk was about them.

"Why is it so important to get Sarah baptized?" asked Hagop.

"Isn't she one of God's creations? Won't God want her if she is not baptized?" asked Miran.

"God is our creator and he loves us all, but Jesus said, unless you are baptized, you cannot have everlasting life with him. Do you remember the story of Nicodemus?" dad asked.

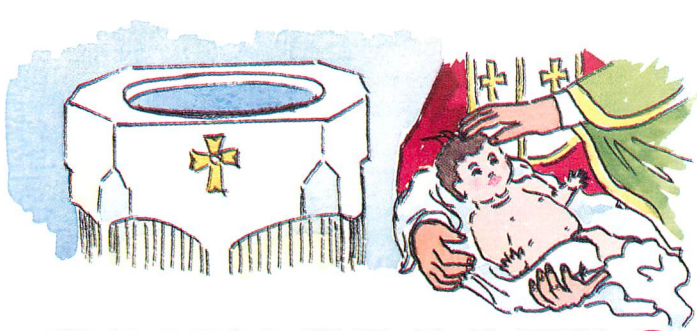
"We remember. It is one of our favorites since Uncle Nick's name comes from Nicodemus."

"Jesus gives us the chance to live again with him in the kingdom of God after our life on earth is done. If we are baptized, we can have that kingdom."

The boys thought about being with God in his kingdom. It would be awful if Sarah wasn't with them. They didn't want her to be left out of God's family.

"Let's hurry, dad. We don't want to be late," Hagop urged.

"Don't worry, Hagop," said Miran. "We have lots of time. Last night I set the clock in the kitchen ahead five minutes!"



CHRISMATION

Chrismation is the anointing of a newly baptized child with holy muron, “sealing” or marking that child as one who is special to God and loyal to God. With the chrismation, the child gets the Holy Spirit as a guide through life.

These are the blessings the priest gives on behalf of God as he anoints the child. Read them and think about how the entire child is blessed so that the child may grow up as a Christian with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Put the number of the blessing on the part of the baby that is being anointed.

1. Sweet oil is poured on the child’s forehead as a mark of heavenly gifts that cannot be spoiled or ruined or outgrown.
2. Oil is rubbed on the eyes to help the child always see Jesus’ goodness.
3. Muron is put on the ears so that they will always hear Jesus’ commandments.
4. The nose is anointed so the child may smell sweetness from this life to the next life with God.
5. The mouth is blessed so that the child will always say good things.
6. Holy oil is rubbed on both hands so that the child can grow to be one of God’s good helpers.
7. The chest is rubbed with oil over the heart so that the child will have a good spirit and a loving heart.
8. The back is blessed with oil as a protection from bad things and to make the child strong.
9. The feet are blessed so that the Holy Spirit will guide them to Jesus.

Now the Holy Spirit can help the child live the kind of life God wants the child to live. Then after death the child can have a new life with God in the kingdom of heaven.

Look at your forehead, eyes, ears, nose, mouth, hands, heart, back and feet. Can you see the mark of the holy oil? No, but like the Holy Spirit which we cannot see, we know it is there. Our bodies are invisibly marked as belonging to God.

yes under the word sacraments on the board.)

"Now we are going to read today's story. As we read, look and listen for information about the sacraments. There are seven sacraments and we will list them on the board. Keep your pencil ready and underline the names of the sacraments as they come up in the story."

Read the story by turns.

Questions for discussion:

Who did Mark want to have invited to the wedding? (God.)

Will God be there? (Yes.)

Is marriage a sacrament? (Yes. Write "marriage" on the board.)

Is God present when a sacrament is received? (Yes.)

What are the other sacraments mentioned in the story? (Communion, ordination, penance, baptism, unction, chrismation. List on board.)

(You may wish to add more questions.) (25 min.)

3. Say: "Now let's take a look at our list of the seven sacraments. Which ones have you already received?" (Baptism, chrismation, penance, communion.) "What is the purpose of each of these four sacraments?" (Accept reasonable answers—these might include: To have God be part of our lives, to become Christian, to have our sins forgiven, to renew our bond with Jesus, etc. If the children don't have any answers, you might suggest a few to them to start them talking, or you might just give them your thoughts on the answers.)

"We've listed the seven sacraments on the board. Let's put our heads together and come up with a symbol for each." Have discussion and have some of the children draw suggestions:

baptism—water

chrismation—dove

communion—cup and wafer

penance—an unhappy face

marriage—interlocking wedding rings

holy orders—a priest's crown

unction—a figure in bed (20 min.)

4. Say: "Our book has an activity to help us remember the sacraments. (Follow directions in text.) (10 min.)

5. Closing prayer: Lord, I want to always answer yes to you when you ask me if I love. Help me live the kind of life that will show you I have said yes. Amen.

Homework: Memorize the names of the seven sacraments.

Extending the Lesson

Make a banner saying: Yes, I love God!

Have the children find the names of the sacraments in an acrostic puzzle.

(You will need quadrille paper for this.)

Discuss the word "mystery," as the Church uses

it. Teach the Armenian word, *khorhoort*. Discuss the word "grace," as the Church uses it. Teach the Armenian word, *shnork*.

Vocabulary

sacrament

mystery, mystical

grace

baptism

chrismation

communion

penance

marriage, matrimony

holy orders

unction, anointing with oil

Session 2—Baptism and Chrismation

Key Concepts

1. Baptism opens the door to the kingdom of God.
2. Chrismation lets the Holy Spirit enter us to guide us into the kingdom.
3. Through the sacraments of "initiation" we become full members of the family of God who follow Jesus.

Objectives

Students will

1. Relate the concept of a key to open a door to the sacrament of baptism.
2. Write baptism on their paper keys and chrismation on their paper guidebooks.
3. Read a story about baptism and chrismation.
4. Re-enact a baptism and chrismation.

Background for Teacher

In this lesson on baptism and chrismation, the concepts expand the children's understanding of God's gift of love. Through baptism, God gives us the opportunity to enter his kingdom. Through chrismation, God gives us the Holy Spirit as a guide and helper to attain the kingdom. Through baptism and chrismation God "adopts" us as his own children. We are born again into his family and anointed with oil and consecrated to him.

You will need to re-enact the highlights of a baptism at the end of the lesson. If you are unfamiliar with the procedure or do not wish to do this yourself, ask a deacon to be present in your class for the lesson or meet with your priest and go over the procedure step by step with him. *The Sacraments: Symbols of Our Faith*, and the *Order of Baptism* books will aid you tremendously in this part of the lesson. Another option is to have a parent take over the

responsibility for this part of the lesson and prepare ahead of time for it.

To have the children share their own baptisms and chrismations with the class in a more personal way, you might ask (send a letter to) parents to bring in their children's baptismal records, outfits and pictures of the ceremony.

Also check with your priest as to when the very next baptism will take place. As this is done generally after church, you might arrange for the children to stay and witness it. (The priest may ask the parents of the child to be baptized, if it is okay with them for your class to attend. Be sure to stress good behavior in church when they do attend.)

Resources

The Sacraments: The Symbols of Our Faith by Fr. Garabed Kochakian, *Saints and Sacraments* by Abp. Shnork Kaloustian

Materials Needed

- Pencils
- Large paper keys cut from construction paper—one for each child
- Sheets of paper folded in four to resemble a book—one for each child
- Doll
- Basin
- White doll clothes or baptism outfit, if possible
- Small jar to hold "holy oil"
- Towel

Procedure

Have a large (construction) paper key and a small booklet (a piece of paper folded in four will do), labeled "Guidebook," on each child's desk. Have on hand all the materials you will need for the mock baptism, i.e., doll, basin, baptismal clothes, small jar of oil (baby oil will do), towel. If possible have these off to the side and covered so that the children will not see or touch them ahead of time. On the board have written: "Baptism is our key to . . ." and "Chrismation is our guide to . . ."

1. As the children enter, check homework and direct them to look at the two items on their desk and the unfinished sentences on the board and think about them until you are ready to begin class.

Opening prayer: When all are ready, call the class to order and read Psalm 118:19-29 from the Order of Baptism given here in simplified form:

Open to me the gates of all that is right and good; that I may enter through the gates and give thanks to the Lord.

This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it.

And I thank you, God, that you have answered my prayers; and have become my savior.

The stone which the builders didn't want (Jesus who was rejected by the people) has become the most important stone (Jesus has become most important to us).

This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous to us.

This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Save us, we beg you, Lord; O Lord, we beg you to lead us.

(There is more to the Psalm used in the baptism, but this is enough for opening.) (5 min.)

2. Say: "Today's lesson is on baptism and chrismation. I know you studied these sacraments in previous years. Tell me what you know so far about these sacraments." (Let children give as much information as they can remember. You may encourage them with suggestions such as, "What does the priest do to the baby during the baptism?", "What special clothes does the baby wear after being chrismated?")

"Today, we're going to look at the sacrament of baptism as a key and the sacrament of chrismation as a guidebook. What does a key do?" (Children will probably respond that it unlocks doors.) "What door is the sacrament of baptism a key to?" (The kingdom of God.) "Why does God give us this kingdom?" (Because he loves us.) "The kingdom is a gift from God to us because he loves us very much. God gives us the key, but we have to take it. Baptism is the key to the kingdom, but to have the kingdom, we must be baptized. We cannot enter the kingdom of God without being baptized. And chrismation, our guidebook, helps us lead a good life with the Holy Spirit as a guide. Jesus said so in John 3:1-7: There was a Jewish leader named Nicodemus, who belonged to the party of the Pharisees. One night he went to Jesus and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher sent by God. No one could perform the miracles you are doing unless God were with him.' Jesus answered, 'I am telling you the truth: no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.'

"'How can a grown man be born again?' Nicodemus asked. 'He certainly cannot enter his mother's womb and be born a second time!'

"'I am telling you the truth,' replied Jesus, 'that no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. A person is born physically of human parents, but he is born spiritually of the Spirit. Do not be surprised because I tell you that you must all be born again.'"

"You see, Jesus told Nicodemus and all of us that we have to be baptized to be able to have the Kingdom of God." Have children write "baptism" on their paper keys and "chrismation" on their paper guidebooks. (10 min.)

3. Say: "Now we're going to read a story about a family that is going to have their little girl baptized. As

we read it, listen for the reasons the parents give for wanting the baby baptized." (Read by turns.)

Questions for discussion:

What is now open to the baptized baby? (The kingdom.)

How is baptism like a key? (It opens the door to the kingdom.) (10 min.)

4. Ask: "Can anyone describe a baptism?" (Go through the steps using the doll.) "After baptism the baby is chrismated. Sometimes the word confirmed is used. It means that now that baby is baptized and a member of God's family; it is confirmed and made a member of the church.

Let's look at the sacrament of chrismation. (Continue on page 77, still using the doll.) (15 min.)

5. Text activity. Follow directions in text. (15 min.)

Closing prayer: Holy Spirit be our guide always. Help us to the Kingdom. Amen. (5 min.)

Homework: Tell students: Ask your parents to show you your baptismal records, gown, pictures, etc. If they will let you, bring something of your baptism in to show the class.

Vocabulary

baptism—mrgdootioon

chrismation/confirmation—troshm/gnoonk

holy oil—soorp muron

Session 3—Penance

Key Concepts

1. Through the sacrament of penance the sinner is granted forgiveness and is reinstated in the family of God.

2. Penance is a spiritual cleansing which follows this procedure: contrition, confession, penance, and absolution.

3. The sacrament of penance can be followed by the sacrament of communion; the penitent is cleansed as preparation for rejoining and receiving the body and blood of the Lord.

4. The priest is appointed by Jesus to hear our confession and help us resolve to be better Christians.

Objectives

Students will

1. Read and discuss a story on penance.
2. Put the parts of the sacrament of penance in order.
3. Read a penance preparation checklist.

Background for Teacher

This lesson will emphasize the steps one must follow to partake of the sacrament of penance. Too often

children think that all they have to do to receive communion is to not eat breakfast and recite the general form for confession in the chancel. This lesson will introduce to them the full meaning and procedure for the sacrament of penance.

You will need to contact your priest to make arrangements for your class to receive Holy Communion next week. You may wish to have the children use the simplified children's form for confession if permitted by the priest. You may also have to arrange this with your Sunday School Superintendent.

Parents should also be informed as to what the children will be doing during the week to partake in the sacrament of penance. The text contains a note to parents, but ask the children to be sure their parents do see it.

Resources

The Sacraments: The Symbols of Our Faith; Saints and Sacraments, your priest

Materials Needed

- Pencils
- Room divider or curtain

Procedure

Have a curtain or divider up to separate the room into two parts. This will represent the separation of man and God.

1. As the children arrive, briefly discuss homework. Direct the children to stand on either one or the other side of the curtain. They may talk quietly to each other through the curtain, but they may not touch it. You may wish to have them seated at their desks or at a table which the curtain separates.

Opening prayer: When all are assembled and you are ready to begin, start with a penitential prayer of St. Nersess (simplified #6):

God, I have sinned against you in my thoughts, my soul, and my body. Don't be hard on me for my past mistakes. Have mercy on your creatures and on me, a person who sins often. (10 min.)

2. Say: "Today we are going to learn more about the sacrament of penance. First, who can tell me what the sacrament of penance is all about?" (Accept all reasonable answers). "Most of us are familiar with the sacrament of penance but only know that you must not eat breakfast and that you stand in the chancel and recite the general form for confession. Then you receive communion. The sacrament of penance is more involved than just not eating, and reading a list of things you might have done wrong out of the Divine Liturgy book. You are getting older now and it is time you learned more about this sacrament. Let's open our text and read a story about a boy about your age who wanted to know what penance was all about." (Have children read text story