

Worksheet 16
The Sacraments - Part 1
Reading and Worksheet

What Is a Sacrament?

A sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace. Through water, oil, bread, wine, spoken words, and human gestures God communicates His grace. Just as invisible realities in the natural world often require a visible means to be accessed (i.e. wireless internet, cellphone signals, radio wave), so too **God's invisible grace is made tangible through sacramental signs.** The spiritual and the physical are not opposed to one another. God uses created things to make his grace present to us.

A sacrament should not be considered as just a symbol. A symbol points to something beyond itself, but a sacrament truly brings about what it signifies. For example, water naturally cleanses the body. In Baptism, water not only remains a sign of cleansing, but through God's power it also becomes the means by which the soul is cleansed from sin and reborn in Christ. **The sacraments are both signs and effective instruments of grace.**

Grace is not an abstract idea. God does not save us from a distance. He meets us concretely — through water, oil, bread, wine, human words, and sacred gestures — and in doing so draws us into communion with himself.

Watch this short video which outlines the meaning and purpose of Sacraments [Here](#)

The Catholic Church recognizes **seven sacraments** grouped into three categories:

Sacraments of Initiation

Baptism

Confirmation

Holy Eucharist

Sacraments of Healing

Reconciliation

Anointing of the Sick

Sacraments at the Service of Communion

Matrimony

Holy Orders

This lesson will focus on the last four of the seven sacraments: Marriage, Holy Orders, Reconciliation, and Anointing of the Sick.

Marriage

The account of Adam and Eve reveals that marriage is not merely a human arrangement but part of God's design for human life, love, and family. In the creation account in Genesis, God made man and woman for one another and blessed their union. Marriage is rooted in God's plan for humanity from the beginning. Sacramental marriage is a covenant in which a man and a woman freely give themselves to one another for life. The bride and groom are the ministers of this sacrament to one another, and the priest or deacon serves as the Church's official witness.

The outward sign of the sacrament is expressed above all in the marriage vows by which they give themselves to each other before God and the Church

- Key Point: Marriage is a lifelong covenant of faithful love, rooted in God's design and elevated by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament.

Holy Orders

Holy Orders is the sacrament through which Christ continues the apostolic ministry in the Church. From the earliest days of Christianity, the apostles appointed leaders to shepherd the community, preach the Gospel, and celebrate the sacred mysteries. **Over time, this ministry developed in the threefold structure of bishops, priests, and deacons.** The Acts of the Apostles shows the calling of deacons for service, and the New Testament also bears witness to the appointment of presbyters through prayer and laying on of hands. **Through apostolic succession, this ministry has continued in the Church down to the present day.**

Bishops, priests, and deacons are ordained to serve the Church in distinct ways through preaching, sanctifying, and pastoral care. Through their ministry, Christ continues to gather, teach, and shepherd his people. **The outward signs of Holy Orders is the laying on of hands by the bishop and sacred chrism as a sign of consecration.** Sacred chrism is not used in the ordination of deacons. Instead, vesting with the stole and dalmatic and handing on of the Book of the Gospels replaces the use of chrism.

- Key Point: Holy Orders configures a man to Christ for ordained ministry in the service of the Church.

Reconciliation

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is the sacrament of God's healing mercy for those who have sinned after Baptism. Its biblical foundation is found in Christ's words to the apostles:

- "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:22–23, RSV-2CE)

- “Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matthew 18:18, RSV-2CE)

In this sacrament, the priest does not forgive the sins, but acts in the person of Christ. God is the one who forgives sins; the priest is the sacramental instrument through which God’s forgiveness flows. **The outward sign of Reconciliation is found in the prayer of absolution and the priest’s spoken words of forgiveness.**

- Key Point: In Reconciliation, Christ heals the sinner through the ministry of the priest and restores the penitent to communion with God and the Church.

Anointing of the Sick

Anointing of the Sick is the sacrament by which Christ strengthens those who are seriously ill.

It is rooted in the Church’s obedience to the instruction found in the Letter of James:

- “Is any among you sick? Let him call for the presbyters of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord” (James 5:14, RSV-2CE).

This sacrament is not only for those at the point of death. It may be received by those suffering from serious physical illness, those weakened by old age, or those preparing for major surgery.

The primary grace of the sacrament is spiritual healing: union with Christ in suffering, forgiveness of sins, and strength to endure illness or frailty. Sometimes, if it is God’s will, physical healing may also occur. **The outward sign of the sacrament is the anointing with the Oil of the Sick on the forehead and hands,** together with the liturgical prayers of the priest. Oil is a fitting sign because it soothes, strengthens, and heals.

- Key Point: Anointing of the Sick brings Christ’s healing, strength, and peace to those who suffer from serious illness or the frailty of old age.

Conclusion

The sacraments reveals to us that God uses created things to communicate divine life. Through visible signs, he gives invisible grace. He strengthens married love, ordains ministers for service, forgives sinners, and comforts the sick. In every sacrament, God comes near to his people. **The sacraments are encounters with Christ, who uses visible signs to communicate invisible grace.**

Worksheet 16 Questions

If you need help answering the questions you may look at the answer sheet but please put it in your own words, and do not copy word-for-word what is on the Answer Sheet

What is a Sacrament?

What is Sacramental Marriage?

What is Holy Orders?

What happens in the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

What happens in the Anointing of the Sick, and what grace does it give?

What do the Sacraments reveal about God?