

Worksheet 17
The Sacraments - Part 2
Reading and Worksheet

What Are the Sacraments of Initiation?

The Sacraments of Initiation are Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist and they lay the foundation of the Christian life. Through these sacraments, we are born again in Christ, strengthened by the Holy Spirit, and nourished by the Body and Blood of the Lord. They initiate us into the life of grace and incorporate us more fully into the Church, the Body of Christ. The Church calls these Sacraments of Initiation because through them we are drawn into the full life of the Church.

Baptism frees us from sin and makes us members of Christ and his Church. **Confirmation** strengthens us with the Holy Spirit for Christian witness and discipleship. **The Holy Eucharist** (Communion) is the source and summit of the Christian life, from which the entire sacramental life of the Church flows.

- Key Point: The Sacraments of Initiation begin, deepen, and nourish our life in Christ.

Baptism

Through Baptism, we become members of Christ and of his Church, and we begin to share in the divine life of the Trinity beginning our participation in the life of grace. Baptism unites us to the saving mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, so that we may die to sin and rise to new life in Christ. Before ascending into heaven, Jesus commanded his apostles:

- “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19, RSV-2CE).

The Church also sees Baptism prefigured throughout the Old Testament, especially in the many ways God uses water as an instrument of life, judgment, and deliverance. Here are three important examples:

Creation: At creation, the Spirit of God moved over the waters. *Water is therefore associated from the beginning with life, blessing, and the creative action of God.* In Baptism, the Holy Spirit is again invoked over the water, bringing about new creation in Christ.

The Flood: In the flood, *water became an instrument of judgment against sin*, while also preserving Noah and his family for a new beginning. The Church sees in this a foreshadowing of Baptism, by which sin is destroyed and new life begins.

The Crossing of the Red Sea: When Israel passed through the Red Sea, they were *delivered through water from slavery and led toward freedom.* In the same way, through Baptism we pass from slavery to sin into the freedom of the children of God.

- Key Point: The waters of Baptism fulfill what God had already been revealing through the element of water in salvation history.

Original Sin and the Grace of Baptism

Baptism washes away original sin and fills the soul with sanctifying grace. Original sin does not mean that each person is personally guilty of Adam and Eve’s sin. Rather it means that humanity is born into a fallen condition, deprived of their original holiness, and lose communion with God for which we were created. **In Baptism, God restores what was lost.** Sanctifying grace is poured into the soul, and the person is made a new creation in Christ. Just as darkness disappears when light enters a room, so sin is driven out by the gift of God’s grace.

Some Christians believe Baptism should be delayed until a person is old enough to choose it for himself or herself. As the child matures, he or she must still personally embrace the faith. **Infant baptism, however, places the child within the grace and life of the Church from the start.** The Catholic Church baptizes infants because Baptism is a gift of grace and the doorway into the life of the Church. Since it is good to raise a child in a life of faith from the beginning, the Church does not withhold this gift. **The outward signs of Baptism are water, sacred chrism, the white garment, and the baptismal candle.** These signs express cleansing, consecration, new life, and enlightenment in Christ.

- Key Point: Baptism frees us from sin, gives us new life in Christ, and makes us members of the Church.

Confirmation

Confirmation perfects baptismal grace and strengthens the Christian for discipleship and mission. It is not primarily about a person confirming his or her own decision to be Catholic. Rather, it is about what God does in the person through the gift of the Holy Spirit. **In Confirmation, the baptized person is strengthened and sealed by the Holy Spirit** in order to live and witness to the faith more fully.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost shows the transforming power of this gift. At Pentecost the apostles, once fearful and hesitant, were filled with boldness and courage to proclaim the Gospel. **The Acts of the Apostles provides an important biblical foundation for Confirmation** which shows the close link between Baptism and the further strengthening of the Spirit through the laying on of hands:

- After hearing that the people of Samaria had accepted the word of God and had been baptized, Peter and John came to pray over them, laid hands upon them, and they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17, RSV-2CE).

In the early Church, Baptism and Confirmation were celebrated together. **Over time, especially in the Catholic Church, Confirmation gradually became distinct from Baptism.** One important reason for this was the growing practice of reserving Confirmation to the bishop. As Christianity spread over wider territories, it became difficult for the bishop to be present at every baptism, and so the completion of initiation through Confirmation often took place later.

The outward signs of Confirmation are the laying on of hands and the anointing with sacred chrism. These signs express the gift of the Holy Spirit, consecration, and spiritual strengthening.

Watch the following video which summarizes the Sacrament of Confirmation [Here](#)

- Key Point: Confirmation strengthens the baptized person with the Holy Spirit for Christian witness and mature discipleship.

The Eucharist

The Church teaches that Christ is truly present in the Eucharist — Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity — under the appearances of bread and wine. This is called transubstantiation. The outward appearances remain the same, but the underlying reality is changed. What still looks and tastes like bread and wine has, in substance, become the Body and Blood of Christ. This is what the Church means by the Real Presence. **The outward signs of Holy Communion are bread and wine.**

The institution of the Eucharist is recorded in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and its meaning is profoundly developed in John 6, the Bread of Life discourse. There Jesus declares:

- “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you” (John 6:53, RSV-2CE).

He goes on to teach that whoever eats his flesh and drinks his blood remains in him, and he in them. Holy Communion is therefore not merely symbolic remembrance. **It is true communion with the living Christ. Jesus gives himself to us so that we may abide in him and share in his divine life.**

There is also a meaningful contrast between the eating of the forbidden fruit and the eating of the Eucharist. Humanity’s communion with God was ruptured through disobedience, symbolized by eating what God had forbidden. In Christ, God restores that broken communion by giving us his own Body and Blood as heavenly food. **Since eating sustains physical life, it is fitting that sacramental eating would nourish spiritual life.** Through Holy Communion, we are brought into deeper union with Christ and restored in communion with God.

Watch the following video which summarizes the Sacrament of Holy Communion [Here](#)

- Key Point: In Holy Communion, Christ truly gives himself to us through His body, blood, soul, and divinity to draw us into deeper communion with him.

Sacramentals

Sacramentals are different from the actual Sacraments which were instituted by Christ. They are sacred signs that prepare us to receive grace and help us to cooperate with it. Sacramentals do not confer grace in the same way as Sacraments confer grace, but they signify spiritual effects

and help awaken faith and devotion. Holy water, the rosary, and votive candles are just some examples. **Sacramentals help Catholics live a sacramental life shaped by prayer and reverence.**

- Key Point: Sacramentals are sacred signs accepted by the Church that help prepare us to receive grace and grow more deeply in faith.

Conclusion

The Sacraments of Initiation bring us into the mystery of Christ and the life of the Church.

Through these sacraments, God draws us into communion with himself and forms us as members of his Church. Together they form a unified path into the fullness of Catholic life. **In Baptism**, we are reborn. **In Confirmation**, we are strengthened by the Holy Spirit. **In Holy Communion**, we are fed with the Body and Blood of Christ.

Worksheet 17 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