

Materials:

- Handouts - Preparing for Baptism - Week 1
 - Making Disciples - [J. Hill] Chapter 1
 - Model A Session 1 Notes (optional)
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Welcome and Introductions

Prayer

Community Building

- Invite people to answer from their places
 - What would you be doing now if you were not here?
 - What have you given up to be here?
 - What made you give it up and come? [what are your hopes for these sessions?]

Special Gifts [in pairs]

- Tell your partner about a gift you received that was special. It can be any kind of a gift from any period in your life:
 - What was the gift?
 - Who gave it to you?
 - What made it special?

Reflecting on what you heard about your partner's gift, or discovered about your own gift as you talked about it, what kinds of things make a gift special? [record]

Over the next sessions we are going to be talking about a special gift conveyed by Baptism. Baptism is not the gift. Baptism simply makes the gift available. We are going to ask ourselves these questions:

- What is the gift which Baptism makes available?
- Why might I want my child to have this gift?
- OK, it's available, now what?

Lifeline

Draw a line representing your child's (or the child you sponsor) lifeline, or your lifeline marking on the lifeline significant events. (Suggest a time span - maybe 20 or 30 years.)

What significant events are on the lifeline? What events would you like to be able to record there?

What are the hopes for your child (or the child you sponsor)? [record]

How do you expect these hopes to be realized?

Among these hopes for you or your child we have listed together, which of these can be listed as spiritual?

What specific things would you do to assist realization?

The Sacraments

Referring back to Baptism and the gift that it makes available introduce “Sacrament”

Baptism is a sacrament - an outward and visible sign which we can see and feel that tells us God has an inward and spiritual grace . Grace - the free gift of God, God’s favor, God’s special strength for the task, God’s help, God’s power to change us

Handshake - outward sign that we see and can feel that a person is inwardly friendly.

Kiss - Outward sign which we can see and feel that tells us the other person feels an inward affection

Sacraments - Holy Baptism - water, person made a member of Christ

Holy Eucharist - bread and wine, body and blood Christ’s life

Confirmation - laying on of hands, the strength of the Holy Spirit

Absolution - words of absolution or forgiveness, forgiveness of God

Ordination - laying on of hands, authority and strength to minister

Matrimony - act of commitment - rings, the strength to love

Unction (Anointing) - oil - healing power of Christ

Congregational Support

What do you make of the question put to the congregation regarding their responsibility in the Baptism of you or your child? [BAS, page 155]

What steps would you want a congregation to take to nurture and support you?

The Grace

PREPARATION FOR BAPTISM - Reason

WEEK 2

Materials:

Handouts: Preparing for Baptism 2
Book of Alternative Services
Thinking about Baptism
Bishop's Directive 2.1

Welcome back and new introductions

Prayer

Review - Questions

Why Infant Baptism? (if not discussed last week)

Monsters

Team member to share a personal story of some goblin in the past. eg. Scary night thing
Find a partner and share the story of some childhood monster, what was your reaction to it and what has become of it.

Large Group - What makes a monster monstrous?

The Renunciations

Invite the group to look at the Baptism Rite on page 151 in the BAS. We are particularly concerned with the questions that occur on page 154. The first 3 questions talk about some kinds of monsters.

What comes to mind when you hear or use the word Satan?

What do you think is meant by the word evil powers?

How do they corrupt and destroy?

What makes a desire sinful?

How does the world described in the first 3 questions on page 154 strike you?

How does what you hear about what this world is like speak to you about your hopes for your child or yourself?

What do you see your child or any person needing to cope with a world like this?

Where will he or she find that help?

Telling the story from Creation to the Fall

How do *you* explain the way the world is?

In Eden, Adam and Eve have a choice, when tempted their choice arises from a failure to trust God's love for them.

Taking a Stand

In these questions you are being asked to renounce.

What does it mean to renounce something?

Think of something you have renounced. What was that like to do?

What made it hard? What made it easy?

What is the point of renouncing something?

Rubrics in the BAS - pages 150 and 163

Bishop's Directive 2.1 on Baptismal Discipline

Responsibilities of the Parish - Thinking about baptism (John Hill)

Responsibilities of Sponsors - Thinking about baptism (John Hill)

Questions or Discussion

The Grace

PREPARATION FOR BAPTISM - Holy Scripture

WEEK 3

Materials: Book of Alternative Services
Order of Service with readings (if available)
Bibles

Welcome back – make new introductions – open with Prayer (collect for baptism Sunday?)

Purpose: 1) To reflect on the meaning of Baptism as put forth in Scripture, exploring the symbolism of the liturgical rite and the scriptural themes they represent.
2) To rehearse movements at the service of Baptism.

Revisit: Creation and the Fall (*Review the biblical story from the last session*)

Creation was good ... very good. The Fall represents what goes wrong with the good God has made - free will, bad choices, selfish will.

We can simply live within all that is evil in the world, join the parade OR make a conscious decision to live in opposition to evil, sin (separation from God) and walk to the beat of a different drummer (God).

Proclaiming the “Good News” (*What is the Good News and how do we proclaim it?*)

Question: In the Biblical account, What happens after the Fall? What does the Bible say?

God’s promise to bless a nation | the Exodus | the Judges | the Kings | the Prophets | the One, Emmanuel, Son of God, God’s message of love in a person

Help participants discuss the understanding of what Jesus has done. (Expressed in many ways.)

- Jesus is the new Adam [2 Es. 3:21; Romans 5:14; 1 Cor. 15: 22, 45].
- Jesus freely chooses to trust God’s love [i.e. do his will] and does not loose faith or follow his own path (one with the Father).
- Jesus’ steadfast trust (even to his human death) re-establishes the relationship between the Divine (God) and humanity [i.e. the hold of the monsters is broken].
- Jesus “shatters the chains of evil and death.” (BAS, 196 - Eucharistic Prayer 2). The Resurrection is a new start for humanity! It stands against (even reverses) the powers of evil.
- Jesus opens the way of another choice and the “way of salvation.”

Recall the conversation about a special gift and its meaning. [*This was on chart paper.*] The rescue of humanity is God’s special gift to all people.

God’s gift is offered in love: we are not forced to take it. As Adam and Eve had to “choose” whether to stay in the Garden of Eden, so we must “choose” to enter the Church and become part of that community living as part of the new humanity – God’s people.

What has Baptism got to do with all this? (*Connect the baptismal covenant to proclaiming*)

Question: From what you have heard since the first Session, what is your understanding of what you are doing in Baptism?

Help participants explore how Baptism connects us to Jesus and what he does for the world.

We affirm before God and the Community of Faith that we want to make this connection and live in “the Way.” We are marked with the sign of “the Cross” forever.

We are asked to take something on [BAS p. 154 and 158 (the Baptismal Covenant)]

What is your understanding of the first affirmation? Whole trust? Obey Jesus as your Lord? What about God the Trinity? The “continue,” “persevere,” “proclaim,” “seek,” and “strive” promises?

An Act of Faith (*Explore the mystery of faith*)

Introduce this section by pointing out that Baptism is an act of faith.

Think of a time when you had to undertake something blind. [*Team member to give an example.*]

What was that like to do?

What made it hard?

What was helpful?

Reflecting on what you have just heard and shared, how would you describe “an act of faith?”

Requesting Baptism is an act of faith.

Definition of “faith.”

- [-] “Faith is knowing something isn’t true, but believing in it anyway.” **NO**

- [+] “Faith is knowing something is true and believing in it even when the whole world acts like it isn’t.”

How is what you are asked in Baptism the same as / different from other acts of faith?

Scripture Study (*Connect the readings to the sacrament of Baptism*)

The readings at Festivals of Baptism all focus on different themes especially related to Baptism: Repentance, Resurrection, Holy Spirit, Communion of Saints

Using one of the readings appointed for the service (and the festival theme) at which the Baptism will take place, study what the Bible will say that day about Baptism.

Symbols of Baptism

Symbol - “... something that is in itself one thing but stands for something else.”

These are some of the symbols worth noting ...

- Water (refreshment, necessity of life, new birth from the womb)
- White Robe (Whitsunday, purity, change)
- Giving of the Light (Paschal Candle, the Light of Christ)
- Chrism/anointing (royal priesthood) and the sign of the Cross
- Font (location, fountain)

The Symbols might be explained as the candidates / sponsors / and parents are walked through the Service of Baptism as part of the “rehearsal” or in a round table discussion. In any case, the goal is that the symbols be connected to the service of Baptism.

Questions or Concerns

The Grace or the Lord’s Prayer

BAPTISMAL PREPARATION - Follow-up

WEEK 4

Materials: Bibles
Book of Alternative Services

Community Building

What has been the worst thing about getting to these sessions?
What has made it all worthwhile?

Reflection on the Mystery

What was the most significant thing for you about the Baptism?
What was the significance for you of the use of water?
What was the significance of the presence of all of us as you prepared?

What have I got myself into?

Review what the participants understand themselves to be doing in baptism.

Godparents and Parish Sponsors

Parents

Person Baptized

Explore the covenant [p.158-9]: *the meaning of the word* what God agrees to do, what we agree to do, how will we start.

What do these promises say to you about the relationship you have entered into with God?

Life with Jesus in it

Read the story of the Wedding Feast at Cana. (John 2)

What strikes you about the story?

What difference does Jesus make?

Who is changed? How?

If this is a story about what it is like to have Jesus in your life, what is it saying?

If it is a story about what you in your baptism undertake to be in the lives of others, what is it saying to you?

Where am I know?

Reflecting on all you have heard and shared in these preparation sessions, what would you like most to tell your child about Baptism? What would you tell someone else about your own Baptism?