

SUIT UP

The Rite of Baptism

GOAL

The goal of this session is to illustrate the symbols of Baptism and renew in the youth the call to forgive others as God has forgiven us.

Scripture

Genesis 6-9, Exodus 13:21-22, Exodus 30:22-31, Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 6:12-13, John 3:1-8, Acts 2:1-10, Acts 2:38-39; 1 Peter 3:20-21

Catechism

CCC 1213-1274, 1533, 2838-2845

Resources

Article

Shelby Mayer, “The Ultimate Guide to Catholic Baptism” (media.ascensionpress.com)

Handout

“Suit Up” Parent Letter

Media

“Baptized” by Zach Williams

Joey Feith, “Giants, Elves, & Wizards - Physical Education Game (Chasing & Fleeing)” (youtube.com)

The Bible Project, “We Studied Anointing in the Bible (Here’s What We Found)” (youtube.com)

GATHER

Youth compete in a large group competition drawing from the symbols in Baptism: water, oil, and fire.

PROCLAIM

The following are the main teaching points of the Proclaim:

- The symbols of Baptism are water, oil, and fire, symbols God used throughout the Bible to deliver, anoint, and guide his people.
- Baptism unites us to God as our Father permanently by a mark on our soul that can never be removed.
- As God's children and representatives of him, we must treat all people as God has treated us – with acceptance, love, and forgiveness.

BREAK

In small groups, youth draw a simple mark on their hand as an identifying symbol for their small group, reminiscent of the indelible mark received in Baptism. They also participate in a small group discussion on Baptism.

SEND

Youth are blessed with a Signing of the Senses by their parent, guardian, or core member as a sign and reminder of their Baptism.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

This week, talk to your parents about your Baptism and what they remember about it.

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PREP

Parents and guardians of youth are invited to be present for the Send to participate in a Signing of the Senses prayer activity. Communicate to them well in advance, inviting them to come in for the final 20 minutes of this session and pray with their child. Reassure parents and guardians who are unable to attend that their child's core member will stand in and that their child will not be excluded. Appoint a core member to greet parents as they arrive.

Compile a slideshow of six to eight popular brand logos that do not display the brand name. Use restaurants or food brands, technology companies, or social media logos that the youth would recognize, such as Apple, McDonald's, X, Instagram, Taco Bell, Gucci, Coca-Cola, Pepsi, or Stanley. If your parish or youth ministry program uses a particular logo, consider including it.

Cut half-inch slips of paper to use as wristbands in the Break.

SETUP

Follow the environment suggestions for the series.

Tape a dividing line halfway through the main meeting space with masking tape. Tape another line parallel to it about five feet away from the center on both halves. Approximately 40-50 feet from the center in both directions, tape another line on the floor, marking the safe zones.

Place stacks of chairs in a corner of the room for parents to use during the Send.

Test all audio-visual elements of the Edge Night.

Project the environment image and play the "ES - Below the Surface" Spotify playlist as the youth enter.

SUPPLIES

Prepare the following supplies:

Gather

- ☐ Masking tape

Proclaim

- ❑ Slideshow of six to eight brand logos

Break

- ☐ Pens or permanent markers, three per small group
- ☐ Paper cut into strips, one per person
- ☐ Scotch tape, one per small group, to fasten the wristbands

NOTES

CORE ASSIGNMENTS AND NOTES

This youth minister worksheet provides writing space to detail core member assignments and notes specific to running this Edge Night. Write the names of core members assigned to the roles listed.

Highlights:

- Parents and guardians will be coming in to participate in the Send of this session. Introduce yourself to your small group's parent or guardian if you have not met them.
- Be prepared to participate in the Send for those youth whose parent or guardian is absent.

Setup: _____

Opening Prayer: _____

Gather – Symbol vs. Symbol

- Leader: _____
- Team Leads (2): _____

Proclaim – Suit Up: _____

Break – Indelible Identified, Small Group Discussion

- Parent Greeters: _____
- Chair Setup (3): _____

Send – Signing of the Senses

- Leader: _____

Weekly Challenge: _____

Parking Lot: _____

NOTES

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GATHER

Introduction (5 min)

Welcome the youth and introduce those who are there for the first time. Invite the preselected core member to begin in prayer. Give a brief overview of the Edge Night topic, using the following as an example:

One piece of essential gear for divers is their wetsuit. Not only does it protect the diver, but it also provides buoyancy, which helps them float, and insulates them from the freezing water. The wetsuit is the diver's baselayer, and they stack all their remaining gear over top of it. In a similar way, the Sacrament of Baptism is our baselayer, laying the foundation for the rest of our life of faith. Through Baptism, we become identified as part of God's family, receive his forgiveness, and have the power to forgive others.

Symbol vs. Symbol (15 min)

Divide the group into two equal teams with one core member assigned as the team lead. Explain that this game is similar to Rock, Paper, Scissors, but instead of the familiar signs, this game uses signs of sacraments represented in full-body actions.

Water is represented by making a horizontal wave motion with both arms. Fire is represented by making a finger-flicking motion with both hands. Oil is represented by wrapping their arms around their torso.

Invite the youth to practice each sign as you call them out. Begin slowly and call the signs faster and faster until they have practiced them five or six times.

Teams gather in their safe zone and quickly choose which symbol to show during the faceoff. Both teams line up and face each other on the lines near the center. On the countdown from the game leader, the teams display their symbol.

Water quenches Fire. Oil covers Water. Fire consumes Oil. The entire team must show the same symbol. If a teammate dissents, the team automatically loses the round.

The winning team chases the losing team, attempting to tag opposing players and win them for their team. Once players reach their safe zone, they cannot be tagged and claimed by the other team. Players tagged in the playing field join the other team.

Play through a few practice rounds before officially starting the game. The team with the most players at the end of time wins!

PROCLAIM

“Suit Up” Teaching (10 min)

Brand Loyalty

- Popular apparel, food, or service brands use signature symbols and phrases to make them easily recognizable. A brand strives to become so well known that its symbols or phrases can easily identify them and even stand alone from the brand name.

Show the slideshow of brand logos. Ask the youth to guess each company and reveal the correct answers.

- We use the symbols and signs around us to know what and who is represented. For example, you may know who is home by which shoes lay near the front door. Or you may know there's a substitute teacher before you see them due to different handwriting on the classroom's whiteboard.
- God, too, has signature signs and symbols that reveal his presence to us, and we have been learning about these through this series on the sacraments.
- We will start with the most obvious: Water. Water is an essential element of Baptism – so much so that Baptism cannot take place without water! The water represents a cleansing of our sins and symbolizes new birth and the covenant God made with his people.
- In the Old Testament, God brought his people out of slavery in Egypt through the Red Sea. By passing through the waters, they were released from bondage. **(Exodus 14)**
- Also, the story of Noah's ark and the great flood brought about a new beginning of life on earth. **(Genesis 7-9, 1 Peter 3:20-21)**
- Water is a “signature” of God's that means deliverance and salvation.
- Another symbol used in Baptism is oil. In the Rite of Baptism, a person's head is blessed with oil, which is called an anointing.
- Anointing is a sign of being set apart as chosen by God, like how the kings of Israel in the Bible were anointed with oil. Through Baptism, we are anointed as members of Christ's Body, the Church. **(1 Samuel 16:13 CCC 1241)**
- Finally, we also see the symbol of fire in Baptism. Fire represents the guiding presence of God. Shortly after leading his people through the Red Sea, God guides them into the desert with a pillar of fire to light their way. **(Exodus 13:21-22)**
- The Gospels call Jesus a light shining in the darkness who dwelt with humanity to bring us the light. **(John 1:1-5, John 1:14)**
- In Baptism, our parents and godparents receive a candle lit with the fire from the Easter candle. They are entrusted with keeping the flame alive in us as we grow up.
- These meaningful symbols recall how God delivered, anointed, and guided his people in the past. Their use in Baptism represents the spiritual reality that the baptized receive the same providence and care as children of God.

Going Deeper

Another symbol in Baptism is the white garment. This symbol is related to becoming an identifiably new creation in Christ. In the book of Revelation, a great crowd in heaven was clothed in white robes and stood worshiping God. **(CCC 1227, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Revelation 7:9-17)**

Invisible, Indelible, Incomparable

- The physical elements of Baptism are symbols that point to invisible spiritual realities. One of the spiritual realities of Baptism is that it makes a mark on our souls.
- The mark, or character, identifies us as belonging to Christ, similar to a badge or stamp.
- Belonging to Christ is not a possessive ownership but more like an adoption record, as we belong to a family. It is called an indelible mark, which means that it cannot be removed.

Going Deeper

The Catholic Church acknowledges the validity of most Christian baptisms, provided that the correct words and intention are used – “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” – and that water is either poured over the person or they are fully immersed. If the proper formula was used when someone was first baptized in another Christian faith, then there is no need to be re-baptized when they become Catholic.

- After Baptism, we are permanently part of God’s family no matter where we go or what we do.
- Even when we sin, God never “disowns” or removes us from the family. We see this illustrated by the father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Jesus told this parable along with others that poetically reveal how God rejoices when those who turn away from him return.
- In this story, a man has two sons. The younger son asks his father for his share of his inheritance and leaves. While away, the younger son squanders all of his wealth and is left broke and hungry, even desiring to eat the slop he fed to pigs. In his extreme poverty, he remembered his father’s goodness, so he returned, willing and expecting to become one of his servants rather than being treated as a son. **(Luke 15:11-16)**

Project and read **Luke 15:18-24**.

- When the son left, he completely rejected a relationship with his father. Despite his son’s rejection, when the father saw his son coming home, he rejoiced greatly and accepted him back as a son. This is how God feels about us!

- Through Baptism, we become his children, and he will always joyfully welcome us home, even after we reject him by choosing sin.
- This is an incredible gift that we receive in Baptism – to not only be forgiven once but have the opportunity to be forgiven over and over again. Not only that, but the grace of the sacrament enables us to resist temptation and detest sin. One of our responsibilities after Baptism is to offer this same gift to others.

We Forgive as God Forgives

- In the Our Father, we ask God to “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us,” and through Baptism, we become a member of the Body of Christ and an example of God’s love in the world.
- We need to extend forgiveness in the same way God has for us – completely and totally.
- In this petition, Jesus hinges our forgiveness on our capacity to forgive others: “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive...”
- The call to forgive others extends to all people. Everyone, even those who have not been baptized, is created in God’s image and likeness and deserves the dignity and respect associated with that identity.

Going Deeper

While Baptism is necessary for salvation, people can reject God through sin and not be saved, even after Baptism. We can pray for those who have turned away from God so that they can repent and trust that God welcomes back all his lost children who return to him. **(1 Corinthians 6:9-10)**

- This is a hard teaching, especially because we are imperfect! It is impossible for us to love and forgive perfectly in the way that God does, apart from God’s help. **(Romans 3:23)**
- When others sin against us through things like bullying, telling lies about us, or hurting us physically, they take something from us and owe us a debt. True forgiveness is releasing the other person from having to pay back the debt. This can happen with or without the person asking for our forgiveness. It means not holding a grudge.
- While we cannot shut off our feelings or completely forget when others hurt us by words or actions, we can allow the grace of the Holy Spirit to help us and lead us to compassion for those who hurt us. **(CCC 2843)**
- This does not mean we continually tolerate bad behavior, but it means that we are free to forgive those who hurt us. By forgiving others, we extend God’s love to them and hopefully lead them to an encounter with him.
- Our Baptism is a great gift by which we receive God’s forgiveness and become his children. By our witness of forgiveness, we can lead others to experience God’s great mercy and become his children and our brothers and sisters.

BREAK

Indelible Identified (10 min)

Explain the activity using the following as an example:

Sports teams have different jerseys, trendy influencers wear the same designer, and name-brand clothes and shoes are status symbols that show others that you are “in.” The indelible mark of a baptized person is only visible through our actions. It is better and longer-lasting than matching uniforms. It connects all Christians and identifies us as members of Christ’s Body.

To make a more visible reminder of the indelible mark on our souls, we are going to make a small mark on our hands or wrists to remind us we belong to God. You will choose a small symbol for your small group that will identify you together.

Dismiss the small groups to their meeting space. Discuss and decide on a small symbol to identify your small group e.g., a star, a circle, a cross). Take turns with the pens or permanent markers to draw it on your hand or wrist. If a youth is uncomfortable with drawing on themselves, give them a slip of paper to draw the symbol on and tape it to their wrist.

Small Group Discussion (15 min)

Dismiss the preselected core members to set up chairs in the main meeting space quietly. When setting up, arrange the chairs in an auditorium style.

Use the following questions to foster a discussion within the small group:

- Whip Around: When heading out for a pool or beach day, what is part of your “essential gear”?
- What are the symbols of Baptism? What did you learn about them?
- What are other common symbols in our faith? What do they represent?

Sample Responses: bread and wine, lamb, cross, fish

- What stands out to you from the story of the prodigal son?
- When is it difficult to forgive someone?
- How can we show others that we belong to God through our words and actions?

Eighth-Grade Adaptation

Use the following questions for a more challenging discussion for eighth-grade youth:

- How does your Baptism and membership in the Church influence how you act?

Read the full parable of the prodigal son, **Luke 15:11-32**.

- Which character do you most relate to – the younger son, the older son, or the father? Why?
- What can we do to forgive others who do not ask for forgiveness? Why is it important to do so?

SEND

Signing of the Senses (15 min)

Gather youth and their parents and guardians into the main meeting space in chairs, with each small group with their parents sitting near each other. Welcome the parents and guardians and thank them for being present for this special prayer for their children. Invite the parents to take a few minutes and introduce themselves to their child's small group and core members. Provide a short recap of this series so far, using the following as an example:

Our current series is titled "Below the Surface." In the sacraments, we see one reality on the surface, but when we dive deeper into their symbolism and significance, we see a whole new world of God's grace present. We have learned about the sacraments of the Catholic Church, how they give us grace, and how that grace makes us holier and more virtuous people. In this session, we focused on Baptism and the symbols of water, fire, and oil as signatures of God's care.

To close in prayer, we invite you, as the parents, guardians, and first teachers of the faith for your children, to give your child a special blessing.

Ask the youth to stand facing their parent or guardian. Core members pair up with youth whose parent or guardian is not present. Ask one parent-child pair to stand at the front as an example for others to follow. Open the time of prayer with the Sign of the Cross, then continue:

As I read each petition, your parent, guardian, or core member will mark you with the sign of Christ's Cross as a reminder of the mark you received the day you were baptized.

Read each petition slowly, pausing between each.

Receive the Sign of the Cross on your forehead. It is Christ who strengthens you with this sign of his love. Seek to know him more deeply and follow him.

Receive the Sign of the Cross on your ears, that you may hear the voice of the Lord.

Receive the Sign of the Cross on your eyes, that you may see the glory of God.

Receive the Sign of the Cross on your shoulders, that you may bear the gentle yoke of Christ.

Receive the Sign of the Cross on your hands, that Christ may be known in the work you do.

Receive the Sign of the Cross on your feet, that you may walk in the way of Christ.

God, we thank you for the gift of our Baptism. We ask that you continue to pour your Spirit on us as we seek you and work according to your will. Amen.

Weekly Challenge (5 min)

Invite the preselected core members to present the Weekly Challenge.

This week, talk to your parents about your Baptism and what they remember about it.

Dismiss the core members preassigned to parking lot safety.

Make announcements related to your program.

Dismiss the youth.