

We Are Born Again



Background Focus

When parents choose to have a child baptized, they answer this question: “What do you ask of God’s Church for [Name of child]?” The answer is “Baptism” (*Rite of Baptism for Children*, 37). The parents ask that their child be set upon the road to full initiation into the Catholic Church. The choice to accept Jesus Christ as Savior, to be born again, is made by the parents at that moment. The Sacrament of Confirmation continues the process of rebirth begun at Baptism, and this is symbolized by the Renewal of Baptismal Promises included in the *Order of Confirmation*. This renewal, also made by the entire Church at Easter, is a direct link between the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.

The Sacrament of Confirmation strengthens the presence of the Holy Spirit, first received at Baptism, through the laying on of hands and the anointing with Sacred Chrism. Through these actions and prayers, the candidate is *sealed* with the Gift of the Holy Spirit. A seal is a symbol of authenticity. It is a verification that something (like a letter or a signature) is true and valid. Through Confirmation, the Holy Spirit seals us and verifies us as members of the Church and witnesses to Christ.

GO (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite your child to turn to page 1 of the chapter 3 activity booklet and locate the prayer on the page.
- Begin prayer by making the Sign of the Cross, then say, “Let us remember we are in the holy presence of God.” Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read the prayer in the activity booklet. Invite your child to say “Amen,” and then close with another Sign of the Cross. Have your child put away the activity booklet for now.

Chapter 3




Featured Story

We Are Born Again through Baptism (John 3:4–6)

Lesson Goals

- to recall that we first received the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Baptism
- to recognize that in Confirmation we renew our baptismal promises to follow Christ and to renounce sin
- to summarize that in Confirmation we are sealed with the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands and the anointing with Sacred Chrism

Lesson at a Glance

- Go** (10 minutes)
 -  Opening Prayer
 - Engage Activity
- Seek** (30 minutes)
 -  Featured Story
 - Core Learning Activity
- Find** (20 minutes)
 -  God’s Treasure of Confirmation
 - Lesson Wrap-Up
 - Closing Prayer

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and chapter 3 activity booklet
- pitcher of water, clear glass bowl, small plastic doll, white towel
- drawing paper, crayons
- clear glass bottle of olive oil, small glass dish

Music Suggestions

- “Come, Holy Spirit,” by David Haas (GIA Publications, Inc.)
- “One in the Spirit,” by Ronnie Caldwell (Ronnie Caldwell)

Engage Activity

- Have ready a pitcher of water (preferably clear glass or plastic so the water can be seen) and a clear glass or plastic bowl. Also have available a small plastic baby doll, dressed in a diaper, and a white towel.
- Explain to your child that you will be having a “pretend” Baptism right now. Remind your child that you brought them to church to be baptized and to become a child of God. Explain that this is when we received the Holy Spirit for the first time.
- Tell your child that they will be the parent. If there is another family member available, have them be the godparent. Explain that godparents are people who promise to help the parents raise the child as a Christian.
- Ask your child what name they would like to give this baby. Explain that part of the name must be a name of a saint.
- With your child holding the doll, pour water over the doll’s head three times (or immerse the doll three times), saying, “_____, I baptize you in the name of the Father (*pour water or immerse*), and of the Son (*pour water or immerse*), and of the Holy Spirit (*pour water or immerse*)” (*Rite of Baptism for Children, 60*).
- Give the towel to your child and have them wrap the doll in it.
- Explain that the day of Baptism was a wonderful day for your family and for your Church family.

Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite your child to find John 3:1–21 in *The Catholic Children’s Bible* (pages 1651 and 1656).
- Direct them to turn to page 1658 and place an “I found it!” sticker next to the Featured Story.
- Tell them that the words between the leaves on page 1658 are a shortened version of the Scripture story on pages 1651 and 1656.

- Ask your child to look at the artwork on the pages. Ask:
 - What time of day does this event take place? (*at night*)
 - How can you tell? (*The sky is very dark blue. There are many stars. Jesus and the man are talking by the light of a candle.*)
- Have your child read the title of the story. Ask them to listen carefully for the question that the man, Nicodemus, asks.
- Read the Bible story. Then ask a few questions to check for comprehension, such as:
 - What was the man’s name who came to see Jesus at night? (*Nicodemus*)
 - What question did he have? (*“How can a grown man be born again?”*)
 - What did Jesus say about being born again? (*We must be “born of water and the Spirit.”*)
 - What are the two ways we are born? (*We are born physically and we are born spiritually of the Spirit.*)
- Explain that being born “of water and the Spirit” means being baptized and confirmed. In Baptism and in Confirmation, we receive the Holy Spirit, which helps us to grow and to be strong in following Jesus.
- Have your child turn to page 2 of the activity booklet and complete the activity with their Bible open. *Answers: 1. parents, 2. Spirit, 3. physically, 4. womb, 5. spiritually*

Understand It!

- Read Understand It! on page 1659.
- Invite your child to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review some of the key points with them:
 - What puzzled Nicodemus? (*Jesus said that we must be born again. Nicodemus did not understand what Jesus meant.*)
 - How are you born again? (*You are born again in Baptism. In Baptism, you receive spiritual life.*)

- What is spiritual life? (*Spiritual life is life with God. You cannot see it, but it is real.*)
- What does Baptism do for you? (*It makes you a child of God and a member of his family, the Church. It makes you a Christian who will one day live with God forever in heaven.*)
- Expand Understand It! to link the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation by adding:
 - At Baptism, parents and godparents make **baptismal promises** for us—promises that we would follow Jesus by living a Christian way of life.
 - At the time of Confirmation, we renew our baptismal promises. Now we can say them for ourselves! We promise to follow Jesus and to stay away from sin. In Confirmation, the Holy Spirit comes to us to help us to grow and to be stronger followers of Jesus.
 - We renew these baptismal promises, with the entire Church, every year at Easter.

Live It!

- Read Live It! together.
- Give your child a sheet of drawing paper and crayons. Explain that instead of drawing on two sides of the paper, they are going to think of and share out loud different ways water helps us physically. Then have them write the word *Baptism* at the top of one side of the paper and draw a picture of a baby being baptized on that side of the paper.

Tell It!

- Ask your child to look at the images in Tell It!
- Remind your child that the third frame shows the Sacrament of Baptism in a lake or river. Explain that most people are baptized in a church.
- Have your child use some of the smaller stickers to mark parts of the Featured Story pages that capture their interest. Remind them to save enough stickers to use on the last remaining chapter.

Core Learning Activity

Asking God's Blessing with Oil

- Remind your child of the practice of dipping our hand in holy water and blessing ourselves. Explain to them that we do this as a reminder of our Baptism. Remind them that we bless ourselves in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
- Tell your child that sometimes, in families, parents bless children before they go to bed or before they leave the house in the morning. Explain that we are all God's children, and we can ask God's blessing on one another.
- Explain that in Confirmation we are blessed with holy oil as a sign of the Holy Spirit. Explain that today you will bless your child using olive oil. Explain that this oil is not "holy oil," as it has not been blessed by the bishop, but that you will use it in a blessing to help them prepare for Confirmation.
- Have a clear glass bowl of olive oil prepared on a desk or other prominent place. Put a stack of napkins or paper towels near the bowl for wiping hands after the blessing.
- Have your child stand as you call their name. Ask your child to extend their right hand, palm up, to you.
- Stand next to the bowl, dip your thumb into the oil, and then trace the Sign of the Cross in the palm of your child's hand as you say, "_____, I bless you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."
- Conclude with this prayer: "Holy Spirit, in Confirmation you will come to us under the sign of holy oil. Help us to prepare for your coming to us in the Sacrament of Confirmation. Amen."
- Invite your child to touch the place where their hand was marked by the Sign of the Cross in oil. Ask them to remember what this felt like. Have them describe the feeling: Was it smooth? soft? soothing?

- Ask your child to think about the oil that might have been used when they had a cut or that was rubbed on their chest when they had a bad cold. Explain that oil helps us to heal from illness. Ask:
 - Can you think of other good things that oil does? (*Oil helps mechanical things like locks work better and go together more easily; motor oil helps cars run smoothly; oil keeps metal from rusting; sunscreen is an oil that protects us from too much sun.*)
- Tell your child that oil is a gift from God, just as water is a gift from God, and that both oil and water are signs of the Holy Spirit. Explain that in Confirmation the bishop will **anoint** them with holy oil as a sign that the Holy Spirit is with them.

✕ Find (20 minutes)

God's Treasure of Confirmation

- Remind your child that they will renew their baptismal promises in the Sacrament of Confirmation. (*You may want to have your child practice the renewal of baptismal promises. A copy of these can be found on pages 2–3 in the last activity booklet.*) Explain that after the renewal of baptismal promises, the bishop will raise his hands over all those to be confirmed and will pray a prayer that asks the Holy Spirit to come and give his seven gifts to each one of those to be confirmed. This action is called the **laying on of hands**.
- Explain that the bishop will then go to each person and make the Sign of the Cross with holy oil on each person's forehead; that is, he will anoint each person with the holy oil, called **Sacred Chrism**.
 - Oil is a sign of the Holy Spirit. Just like oil can help us feel better when we are sick, the Holy Spirit can comfort us when we are sad; the Holy Spirit can heal us in body and in spirit.
 - Just as oil helps mechanical moving parts work together, the Holy Spirit helps us work together with others to bring the Good News of Jesus to the world.
- Just as oil helps keep tools from getting rusty, the Holy Spirit protects us and helps us always. The Holy Spirit keeps us active in loving others, so we don't just sit around and get rusty!
- Explain that when the bishop anoints each person, he will say the individual's name followed by, "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit," and the person anointed will then say, "Amen" (*Order of Confirmation, 27*). Tell your child that when they are sealed with the Holy Spirit, they receive an invisible and permanent spiritual mark on their soul that means the Holy Spirit will be with them forever to guide and strengthen them.
- Tell your child that the bishop will then give the newly confirmed person the sign of peace, saying "Peace be with you," and the newly confirmed person will then say, "And with your spirit" (*Order of Confirmation, 27*). Remind your child that the sign of peace is a sign that we are all united in God's family, the Church.
- Ask your child, if time permits, to get out their drawings of Baptism. Have them turn the paper over and write "Confirmation" on the top of the page. Then have them draw a simple cross. Around the cross, ask them to draw the outline of a large circle or "drop of oil" to symbolize the anointing with oil in the Sign of the Cross that the bishop will mark on their forehead in Confirmation. Ask them to color the drop of oil with their yellow or gold crayon or marker.
- Write the following words on a piece of paper that the bishop says during the anointing: "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit" (*Order of Confirmation, 27*). Invite your child to turn to page 3 of the activity booklet and complete the activity.

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite your child to think back over all the different things they did in this chapter, and have them share some of the key things they learned.
- Ensure that the following points are made:
 - We first received the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Baptism.
 - In Confirmation, we renew our baptismal promises to follow Christ and to stay away from sin.
 - In Confirmation, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands and the anointing with Sacred Chrism.
- Ask your child to place the chapter 3 sticker in the correct circle on the Confirmation treasure map. Then have them place the water, laying on of hands, and anointing stickers in the correct circles.



Closing Prayer

- Begin the prayer by making the Sign of the Cross and saying, "Let us remember we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Play a piece of music, if you have time, that speaks about the Holy Spirit.
- Pray this prayer aloud: "Holy Spirit, come to us. We look forward to receiving the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands and the anointing with holy oil in the Sacrament of Confirmation. May we carry the goodness of Jesus Christ with us always." Encourage your child to respond, "Amen."
- Close with a final Sign of the Cross.

Additional Family Suggestions

For additional ideas, activities, and prayers that can be used by your family for this chapter, please refer to the Family Page on page 4 of this chapter's activity booklet.