

Celebrating Baptism

Episode 3: Celebration

Rejoice and celebrate with the Gregory family as their daughter's baptism gives them a glimpse of the whole history of God's presence.

Opening Meditation

After you have welcomed the class, begin by reviewing this portion of the Catechism from pages 854-855 of the Book of Common Prayer. Ask for volunteers to read the questions, and invite the whole group to give the answers in unison.

The Church

Q. What is the Church?

A. The Church is the community of the New Covenant.

Q. How is the Church described in the Bible?

A. The Church is described as the Body of which Jesus Christ is the Head and of which all baptized persons are members. It is called the People of God, the New Israel, a holy nation, a royal priesthood, and the pillar and ground of truth.

Q. How is the Church described in the creeds?

A. The Church is described as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

Q. Why is the Church described as one?

A. The Church is one, because it is one Body, under one Head, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. Why is the Church described as holy?

A. The Church is holy, because the Holy Spirit dwells in it, consecrates its members, and guides them to do God's work.

Q. Why is the Church described as catholic?

A. The Church is catholic, because it proclaims the whole Faith to all people, to the end of time.

Q. Why is the Church described as apostolic?

A. The Church is apostolic, because it continues in the teaching and fellowship of the apostles and is sent to carry out Christ's mission to all people.

Q. What is the mission of the Church?

A. The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.

Q. How does the Church pursue its mission?

A. The Church pursues its mission as it prays and worships, proclaims the Gospel, and promotes justice, peace, and love.

Q. Through whom does the Church carry out its mission?

A. The church carries out its mission through the ministry of all its members.

Reflection

This is only a portion of the Catechism, the outline of our faith found in the Book of Common Prayer. This portion addresses what it means to be the Church, which is an important thing to consider as a baptized or soon-to-be baptized person.

Take a few moments to discuss what stood out about this section. Possible prompts: Is there something in this section that is new or particularly relevant to you right now? How does the last answer, "The church carries out its mission through the ministry of all its members," encourage or challenge you?

Homework Review

If your time together allows, ask volunteers to share their baptism stories. Ask for reactions to the assignment:

What about the exercise did you enjoy?

What surprised you?

Video

Watch *Celebrating Baptism, Episode 3: Celebration*.

Preface the video by asking participants to consider how their baptism links them to the larger story of God.

Discussion Questions

Discuss the following questions as a group.

1. One observation made in the video is that baptism is a sacrament and ritual that reminds us of how we are connected to a story: the story of how God has always been seeking, finding, and welcoming humanity in love. How have you felt sought-out, found, and welcomed by God or through the Church in your life?
2. The baptismal service, with all its "bells and whistles," is deep and beautiful. What part of the service do you find particularly meaningful? Why? Feel free to look through the service as found in the Book of Common Prayer, pages 299-311.
3. Who are your faith guides? Whose life as a baptized Christian inspires and informs your life?

Final Questions and Discussion

This is the end of this three-part series.

If you have time, consider inviting additional questions or discussion around the group's understanding of baptism.

Closing Prayer

A Prayer for the Mission of the Church:

Everliving God, whose will it is that all should come to you through your Son Jesus Christ: Inspire our witness to him, that all may know the power of his forgiveness and the hope of his resurrection; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*