

Pages 19-29 focus on the Church's sacraments.

Background

The Church's sacraments are actions and signs. In each sacrament Christ acts to draw us into the life-giving, saving mystery of his death and resurrection. Each sacrament deepens communion with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Every sacramental celebration 'is woven from signs and symbols'. (CCC, 1145) The Catechism recognises our need to express and perceive spiritual realities through physical signs and symbols; and to communicate through language, gestures and actions. (CCC 1146) For these reasons in *Church's Story* the focus is on the language, gestures and actions of the sacramental celebrations.

Pages 19-20

I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The sacrament of Baptism is the basis of all Christian life. The Catechism describes it as 'the gateway to life in the Spirit' and 'the door' to the other sacraments. 'Baptism' comes from a Greek word meaning to 'plunge into' or 'immerse' in water. In Baptism the pouring of water is a symbolic action. It signifies the immersion of the person into Christ's death and resurrection and through him to new life.

Look

Encourage children to name the people, actions and place. (baby, mum and dad, priest, friends, other children)

Help the children to identify the sacramental actions and symbols.

New words to introduce: font, baptism, pouring water, cross, Easter candle, godparents, white garment, Christian family, the Church.

(Everyone is gathered round the font. The priest is pouring water on the baby's head. He says, "I baptise you (baby's name) in the name of the Father and of the Son and of



the Holy Spirit." The cross in the window and the tall Easter candle remind us of Jesus. Jesus died on the cross but the candle is a sign of his new life. The godmother is holding a white shawl. The priest will put this round the baby as a sign that he/she is a new Christian and is beginning life in the Christian family, the Church.)

Make connections

Look at photos of family baptisms. Talk about choosing names, about the children's godparents, about who was there at their baptisms.

Find the font in church and look at the holy water.

Something to do

Learn to make the sign of the cross. Find the holy water stoup on the way into church; making the sign of the cross with holy water when entering the church is a reminder of baptism and a sign of belonging.

Page 20-21

God bless us today! Thank you God for...

Baptism is the beginning of the Christian life. The Catechism says: "For all the baptised, children or adults, faith must grow after Baptism." The family is referred to as 'the Domestic Church' and the Church honours and respects parents as their children's 'first teachers'. Teaching children the place of prayer in the Christian life is important. This page recognises the challenges and the opportunities. (CCC 1213-1214)

Look

Talk about the two pictures separately.

What are the children doing? What time of the day is it?

Encourage children to think about how the people are feeling? (What is mum saying? What are the children saying?) What might the little girl have to say thank you for?

Make connections

Does the same thing happen in your family?

Why is night time a good time to say thank you to God?

What else might you want to say about the day? (sorry for things that did not go right)