

THE SACRAMENTS

Objective

The children become acquainted with the sacraments.

Contents

- The concept “sacrament”.
- The three sacraments of the New Apostolic Church:
 - Holy Baptism (John 3:5; Matthew 28:19–20; Acts 8:36, 38).
 - Holy Sealing (John 3:5; Acts 8:14–17; 19:1–6).
 - Holy Communion (Luke 22:19–20; John 6:53–57; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 10:16–17, 21; 11:23–28).



Introductory Remarks¹

1 The Concept “Sacrament”

The word sacrament is not a biblical word. It developed, starting in the middle of the 2nd century. At first it meant “oath of service, loyalty or allegiance”. In Christian Latin the word was the accepted rendering of the Greek *mysterion*, which means mystery. Originally this referred to the godly mysteries of Jesus Christ’s birth, death and resurrection. According to our understanding, sacraments symbolize the New Covenant. They are holy acts through which the immortal soul is dedicated and assigned to God. The soul thus partakes of Jesus Christ’s life.

2 The Administering and Inner Effect of the Sacraments

It is necessary to distinguish between the act of administering the sacraments (i.e., visible), and their inner effect (i.e., invisible).

The sacraments are means of grace for the individual, and the ascertainable sign of sanctifying grace. They are by no means to be interpreted symbolically, but bring about what they denote.

3 The Introduction of the Sacraments and their Essential Features

Jesus Christ introduced the sacraments. They are dispensed through prayer and the word spoken with power and authority, using water, bread and wine. The Holy Ghost is transmitted directly through prayer and the laying on of hands of a living Apostle.

4 The Importance of the Sacraments to the Believer

The sacraments establish a close fellowship with the triune God. They are the means to man’s perfection and spiritual healing. The Holy Baptism and the Holy Sealing effect the emergence of the new creature in Christ, the Holy Communion produces spiritual growth and the strengthening of the immortal soul.

According to Christ’s teachings, the Holy Baptism, Holy Sealing and Holy Communion are necessary in order to have eternal fellowship with God. These three sacraments are therefore dispensed in the New Apostolic Church:

¹ For more information, please refer to lessons 21–24.

■ **Holy Baptism** (John 3:5; Matthew 28:19–20; Acts 8:36, 38),

■ **Holy Sealing** (John 3:5; Acts 8:14–17 and 19:1–6), and

■ **Holy Communion** (Luke 22:19–20; John 6:53–57; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 10:16–17, 21 and 11:23–28).

The biblical reference to the three that bear record, and who are one, can be found in 1 John 5:7:

“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”

5 Holy Baptism

Through the Holy Baptism with water, God makes a covenant with man. Thereby the original sin (i.e., inherited sin) is washed away.

As an example for all mankind, Jesus had himself baptized by John the Baptist in the river Jordan to “fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:13–15).

According to Jesus’ commission to the Apostles, all peoples are to be baptized (Matthew 28:19–20; Mark 16:15–16).

The prerequisites for each individual are his faith and repentance.

Until the day of confirmation, the parents, or the legal guardian, on behalf of the children, assume the responsibilities arising from the baptismal vow and promise to preserve the child’s soul for the Lord, to the best of their abilities. The same applies to the promise at the time of Holy Sealing.

6 Holy Sealing

Holy Sealing is the dispensation of the Holy Ghost by Apostles (Ephesians 1:13–14 and 4:30). Through it, the baptized person attains the childhood in God.

Jesus Christ also received the Holy Ghost following his baptism (John 1:33).

According to God’s will, receiving the Holy Ghost brings about a complete renewal of man who, through sin, had become enslaved by death (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17; James 1:18).

As in the first church, the dispensation of the Holy Ghost is carried out through prayer and the laying on of hands of a living Apostle (cf. Acts 8:14–17 and 19:1–6).

7 Holy Communion

Holy Communion is the sacrament established by Jesus himself in remembrance of his suffering and death, the sacrifice brought by him (Matthew 26:26–28; Luke 22:19–20). Partaking of it worthily gives us the assurance of remaining in Christ.

Holy Communion provides the soul with spiritual powers, which assist in overcoming everything which could be of hindrance to the soul's eternal salvation (cf. Revelation 12:11). Holy Communion is preceded by the absolution, which brings about the forgiveness of sins (cf. also Lesson 17 "Jesus Celebrates Holy Communion").

Lesson Plan

Lead-In

Workbook, Theme Picture

The children look at the theme picture, which depicts the dispensation of the sacraments.

Implementation

Discussion

Let the children tell what they know about the sacraments and their dispensation.

Teacher's Presentation

Explain to the children that the word "sacrament" is derived from Latin, meaning "oath of service, loyalty or allegiance". We understand sacraments to be holy acts, through which souls are dedicated and assigned to God. These acts symbolize the New Covenant. The dispensation of the sacraments is a visible act and has inner effects. The sacraments establish a bond of union with God, and contribute to the perfection and worthiness of the soul.

Workbook, Exercise 1

The children complete the exercise, and read the text aloud.

Discussion

Substantiate why these sacraments are dispensed in the New Apostolic Church.

Bible

A child reads

1 John 5:8:

“And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.”

Here the spirit represents Holy Sealing, water represents Holy Baptism, and blood represents Holy Communion.

Some explanation is provided for the individual sacraments.

Holy Baptism

Teacher’s Presentation

Emphasize that not only infants are baptized—which the children will be most familiar with—but also adults (e.g., in missionary areas).

Holy Baptism is part of the rebirth, and is necessary in order to enter God’s kingdom (cf. John 3:5).

To baptize means to dip into water. Baptism can be carried out through besprinkling, dousing or complete immersion. In our church, children and adults are baptized as follows:

- Water is consecrated.
- The minister performing the baptism moistens one finger with the consecrated water, and makes the sign of the cross three times on the forehead of the person being baptized.
- At the same time, the words “I baptize you in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost” are spoken.

Through the baptism, God makes a covenant with man. The one being baptized vows to live his life in accordance with God’s will. When children are baptized, the parents assume this obligation. Through the act of baptism the original sin (i.e., inherited sin), handed down since the time of the first human beings, is washed away.

Question Prompt

Who is eligible for Holy Baptism?

Discussion

- Anyone who is prepared for it.
- All people, regardless of ethnic origin, status or age (Matthew 28:19).
- Not only adults, but children also (Mark 10:14).

Teacher's Presentation**Holy Sealing**

As a rule, Holy Baptism is carried out first, and only thereafter the Holy Sealing follows (i.e., the dispensation of the Holy Ghost).

Whoever wants to be sealed, should believe, have been instructed and have decided on this step of his own free will. In the case of children, this decision is taken by the parents.

Question Prompt

How is the Holy Ghost dispensed?

Discussion

Through prayer and laying on of hands of a living Apostle (cf. Acts 8:15, 17).

Ask the children whether they recall witnessing a sealing. Discuss it with them.

Children are also able to receive the Holy Ghost through prayer and laying on of hands of a living Apostle. In this case, the parents vow to raise their child in the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles

Workbook, Exercise 2

The children do the exercise and compare answers.

Discussion

Explain once again that the Holy Ghost is received at Holy Sealing. It is the basis for the complete renewal of the inner man, and makes us children of God and heirs of his glory.

Holy Sealing is also called

- the baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire (Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5).
- the holy anointing (2 Corinthians 1:21–22).

Holy Communion**Workbook, Exercise 3**

The children complete the exercise.

Discussion

Afterwards, discuss the contents of the balloons with them. Supplement as follows:

- Holy Communion is not only in commemoration of Christ's suffering and death. It is also a celebration of joy, thanks and praise. As Jesus once took bread and wine, and gave thanks, so the congregation comes before God to praise and thank him for his Son's merit: the sacrifice brought by the Lord.

- The Holy Communion preserves the soul for eternal life and provides it the surety of remaining in a long-term relationship with the redeemer, Jesus Christ.

Question Prompt	Which is the most important sacrament?
Discussion	Discuss with the children that all three sacraments are equally important. According to statements from the Holy Bible, acceptance of the sacraments is an essential prerequisite for entering the kingdom of heaven (John 3:5 and 6:53-54; the "last day" = Christ's return).
Conclusion	
Workbook, Exercise 4	The children complete the exercise.
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