

Shell

Memory Verse: “In the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...” 1 Corinthians 12:13a

Study Plan: To earn the Shell badge, you will learn about baptism. In our baptism, our sins are forgiven and we become part of God’s family forever.



Step 1: Baptism is a Sacrament

Leader’s Initials _____

A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. That means we do something we can see and feel, and while we are doing that, God is entering our lives in a special way, touching and changing us.

People who are baptized become members of Christ’s family. When we are baptized, God forgives our sins and brings us into a close, special, loving relationship with God. In our baptism, we are called to serve as the hands and feet of Christ and we are called to bring peace.

Since baptism is becoming part of the family of God, it is normally celebrated when the family of God is gathered for worship; there are four days when it is particularly appropriate. Look on page 312 of the Book of Common Prayer. There are special instructions as to when baptisms are to be celebrated.



- Where is the baptismal font in your church?
- How old does a person have to be in order to be baptized?
- Who performs the baptism?
- Have you attended a baptism? When? Tell your group about it.



Share the story of your baptism at your next meeting. If you have pictures of your baptism, bring them to share.

- Who are your godparents?
- Where were you baptized?
- How old were you?
- What was special about that day?
- Do you have a way of celebrating that day, like a birthday?
- If you were baptized in the same church you are now attending, ask your priest if you can see the record of your baptism.





Step 2: How much water do you need? Leader's Initials _____



In the Episcopal Church, we normally baptize by sprinkling water on the person's head. Other ways of baptizing involve more water: a person may be held under the water in a lake, river, or ocean, or a pool-like structure made for baptism, or the candidate may stand in a bowl or pan and water is poured over them. We use water to show that our sins are washed away, and that we are made clean by God; how much water is used is not important. Baptism never needs to be repeated; God never abandons us.



- Why do we use water at baptism?
- Does it matter how much water is used?
- If you were to convert to another denomination of the Christian church, would you need to be baptized again?



Find pictures of different kinds of baptism and discuss these with your group.



Step 3: The outward symbols and traditions of baptism

Leader's Initials _____

At the baptism, we see symbols that carry special meanings.

- Water-water is used to show that our sins are forgiven and that we are washed clean
- Shell-sometimes a shell is used to pour the water on the head
- Chrism-this is a sweet smelling oil which has been blessed by the bishop. Chrism is used to mark a cross on the person's forehead when they are "sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked as Christ's own forever." This tradition dates to when kings and prophets were anointed using oil in the Old Testament.
- Godparent-this person promises to help a baby grow up as a friend of Jesus. An adult candidate for baptism has sponsors, people who will support the candidate by their prayers and example in their Christian life.
- Candle – sometimes a newly baptized person is given a candle, lit from the Paschal candle, to show that now the light of Christ is in them.





- Which of these special symbols and traditions have you seen?
- Ask your priest or altar guild director to show you the chrism and some of the other special things your parish has for baptisms.



Do one of the following activities:

1. Plan a party to celebrate your baptism and incorporate some of the special symbols into your plans.
2. Make a frame using shells to hold a picture of your baptism. You might want to make these frames to be used by your parish as a gift to the newly baptized. You could use pasta shells, or find small shells at a craft store.



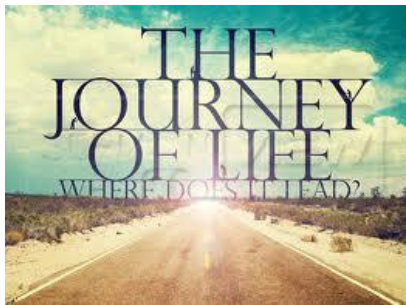
Step 4 Packing for a journey

Leader's initials _____

Being baptized is like beginning a journey. First you have to agree to go on the journey. Then, you have to plan what to take and what to leave behind. Finally, you meet all the other people who are taking the journey with you.

Are you ready to go?

The baptism service begins with presenting the candidates. This is when we introduce the candidates and say that they are special. The candidate must say that they want to be baptized. If the candidate is too young, then their godparent speaks for them. This happens on page 301 of the Book of Common Prayer. Look it up!



What will you leave behind?

The person being baptized (or the godparents) promises to renounce, or leave behind certain things; which are found on page 302 of the Book of Common Prayer.

They are asked:

- Do you renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God?
- Do you renounce the evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God?
- Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw you from the love of God?

What will you take with you?

The person being baptized is asked 3 more questions about their plans, found on pages 302-303 of the BCP.

- Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Savior?
- Do you put your whole trust in his grace and love?
- Do you promise to follow and obey him as your Lord?

- What do you have to leave behind to go on the journey that begins with baptism?
- Are these things that keep you from God?
- How do we decide which roads to take and what to take with us?

You are not alone. Look who else is traveling with you!

After the priest asks the candidate the first six questions, he/she turns to the congregation and asks for their support. On page 303 the priest asks:

- Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support these persons in their life in Christ?



- Why do you think the congregation becomes involved in the baptismal service?
- Is Christianity something you do all by yourself?

Do It!

Draw a sketch of a baptism. Include all of the participants – the priest, the godparents, the candidate and the congregation

Step 5: Cov-e-what?

Leader's initials _____

Discern

A covenant is a promise between two people or groups; both parties to the covenant agree that they will do certain things. The first part of the baptismal covenant asks about our belief or trust in God. We respond with the words of the Apostles' Creed. Read this covenant on page 304 of the Book of Common Prayer.

In the second part of the covenant, we promise to do certain things for God. Read these promises on page 304 and 305.

In simpler words:

- ✓ We promise to keep learning about Jesus, go to Eucharist, and to pray.
- ✓ We promise to come back and ask God's forgiveness when we do things we aren't supposed to do.
- ✓ We promise to tell others about Jesus, even with our deeds and actions.
- ✓ We promise to see others as God's children and help them.
- ✓ We promise to make the world a peaceful and safe place and to respect all people.



Discuss how you can live out one of these promises. Try it for the next week. Share your experience with your group.

Do one or more of the following activities:



1. Use special paint pens (found at the craft store) to decorate a tile or plaque with words or designs that remind you of the covenant
2. Make a collage of pictures of the people of God
3. Make a cross-stitch or embroidery project of a shell



**Step 6: Prayers, Thanksgivings, Consecration and finally:
THE BAPTISM MOMENT!** Leader's Initials _____

Look over the words on page 305-307 in the BCP. There are special prayers for the person who is about to be baptized. The blessing of the water recalls significant Biblical events involving water. Can you find these prayers in the prayer book?

Now the moment you have been waiting for!!!

The priest pours water on the candidate while these words are said:

(Name), I baptize you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The priest makes a sign of the cross on the forehead of the candidate, using the chrism and saying, (Name), you are sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism and marked as Christ's own forever. Amen.

Enter the congregation.....Everyone says the words of welcome to the newly baptized. Find these words on page 308.



We began our study by learning the definition of a sacrament.

- What are the outward signs of baptism?
- What has happened on the inside?
- Will God ever leave us?
- Does a person ever have to be baptized again?

Step 7: Emergency...911....Emergency Leader's Initials _____



Did you know that there is an emergency form of baptism that any baptized person can administer? Just in case you need to know, this is how it is done.

Using the given name of the one to be baptized (if known), pour water on him or her saying,

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

Follow this with the Lord's Prayer.

Important!!! Inform the priest of the appropriate parish so that the baptism can be recorded.

