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## Unit 1

# Baptism and Eucharist

## Community

What a feeling it is to be welcomed! To find a place where we belong is an important part of life. How do you feel when everybody knows your name and is happy to have you around?

**Draw it:**

- Draw a shape or a picture that shows what it feels like to be welcomed.

**Act it out:**

- Create a 30-second movement that shows how you feel about a time when you introduced yourself to a group or were introduced to a group.

What a feeling to be all alone! What does it feel like to be sent to your room? to eat lunch alone at school? to not be invited to a party? Do one or all of the following activities.

**Write about it:**

- Write as many words as you can that describe how you feel when you are all alone.

### Act it out:

- Put your body in motion to make a picture of how you feel.

Feelings are sometimes clues to what is important in life.

### Talk about it:

- Share what you feel when you are alone.
- Who is one of your favorite people?
- Why is that person so special?
- How do you feel about yourself when you are with that person?

## Communities in Trouble

You can be on top of the world when you make a friend. Lose a friend and you can go down in the dumps. Why do things sometimes go wrong between people?

When I was turning five I had a birthday. I invited some friends over. We had cake and ice cream. After that we opened presents. Then we went and played in my room. While we were playing something strange happened. All the kids started to play with my dollhouse. They wouldn't even let me play with my own toy.

It was so crowded that I couldn't even see my doll house. At the end when they all left I couldn't find my doll house baby. You should have seen the mess. We cleaned the mess up and I never invited that many people over again.

—Mary Catherine Hawes (age 7-1/2)



Selfishness, anger and resentment damage and sometimes destroy friendships. Sometimes quarrels go beyond personal fights. Some quarrels grow into national quarrels. Zlata Filipovic describes the situation in Dubrovnik in her October 23, 1991, diary entry:

There's a real war going on in Dubrovnik. It's being badly shelled. People are in shelters, they have no water, no electricity, the phones aren't working. We see horrible pictures on TV. Mommy and Daddy are worried... We're worried about Srdjan (my parents' best friend who lives and works in Dubrovnik, but his family is still in Sarajevo) and his parents. How are they coping with everything that's happening over there? Are they alive? We're trying to talk to him with the help of a ham radio, but it's not working. Bokica (Srdjan's wife) is miserable. Every attempt to get some news ends in failure. Dubrovnik is cut off from the rest of the world.

God did not create us to be cut off from each other. God created the world for people to be friends forever. But, when we choose our own way of doing things instead of the way God intends us to do things, relationships, friendships and peace suffer.

## Communities Redeemed

God sent his Son Jesus to live on earth so that people would not remain cut off from God or from each other. It all begins with the friendship we have with God. If we get that on-track, it is possible to be friends with one another. Friends make community because friends know how to love each other. 'To be of-one-heart' is to love another person for who that person is, not to use

a person to get what we want. True friends create true communities.

What groups do you belong to? Are these groups real communities? How do you know?

**Write about it:**

- List some groups that know you by name and welcome you. Describe them.

**Talk about it:**

- Describe groups you belong to that accept people as they are.
- Do you belong to a group that does not accept people? Why are some people left out?

- Are you a member of a special community? What makes that community special to you?

There are many different kinds of communities. People who are baptized belong to a special community. The Church is a special community.



## Baptism

Sometimes babies are baptized in the church community. Perhaps you were baptized as an infant. Have you seen the baptism of a baby? What do you remember about the baptism? What do you remember about your baptism?

When a baby is baptized at a Sunday mass, the priest, in the name of the community, welcomes the child. The parents tell everyone in the assembly the child's name. The community welcomes the entire family. Together they listen to the word of God in the scriptures.

With the help of your parents, find out when the next baptism will take place at a Sunday liturgy in your parish. Make plans to attend mass when a baby will be baptized. Sit where you can see. Listen for the priest to welcome the family. Listen closely to hear the baby's name. Pay careful attention to the scripture read-

ings. Watch closely when the baby is baptized with water "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Draw it:**

- On the next page, draw something of the baptism you saw at a Sunday liturgy.



## My Drawing of a Baptism

### Write about it:

- Write about a baptism as if you are writing an article for your local newspaper. Write about what was done, who did it and why you think it is important.

## Water

Without water, nothing lives. With too much water, nothing lives. Some Bible stories tell of waters that destroy. Do you remember the story of Noah and the ark? To get the complete story, ask your parents to read Genesis chapters 6-10 aloud to you, or you can read it to them. In the story of the great flood, water destroys life. God was not pleased with the evil that was on the earth in Noah's time. So, God sent the flood waters to destroy the wickedness.

Water is powerful. A storm surge, the wall of water that hits land during a hurricane, can completely wipe out a city along the

coast. When the heavy snows of winter melt in the spring, rivers swell. The waters overflow the river banks. These flooding waters claim acres and acres of land. People sometimes lose their homes and their farms. The hidden currents in the ocean create undertows and rip tides. A swimmer can drown in this “river” in the ocean.

**Draw it:**

- Draw a picture of the most powerful water you have seen.

### My Drawing of Powerful Water



### Talk about it:

- Share a personal story about the destructive power of water. It can be something you have experienced, or it can be a story that you read or heard.
- Describe a powerful water scene you have seen in a movie.
- Check out a video about water and watch it with your confirmation group or your parents. Pay attention to the scenes that show water in all its power.

Water has another side. It is not always destructive. It cleans, refreshes, comforts and nourishes. Water is necessary for all life. Plants, animals and people cannot live without water. The simplest science experiment shows that a plant dies without water.

People need water for spiritual life as well. The story of Jesus' baptism in the river Jordan shows us why water is necessary for Christian baptism.

## Baptism of Jesus

John the Baptizer was the cousin of Jesus. He preached that people should be sorry for going against God's laws. When people turned away from sin, he baptized them. He prepared people for the time when Jesus would come by saying:

One mightier than I is coming after me (Mark 1:7b).

Jesus never sinned. He always did the will of his Father. He did not need the baptism of John. But he went to John to show that he loved God and the law God gave.

Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. Immediately on coming up out of the water he saw the sky open and the Spirit descend on him like a dove. Then a voice came from the heavens: "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11b).

God showed that Jesus was his son. He showed that his Spirit was upon Jesus. John encouraged people to follow Jesus. Jesus taught people in a new way. The Spirit was always with Jesus. The Spirit stayed with Jesus when he taught, when he healed the sick. Jesus himself forgave people's sins.

**Act it out:**

- Act out what kind of change happens in baptism. Use the following examples as a guide. Try this exercise one at a time and talk about what you see. Or, everyone can do this exercise all together if the room is big enough. Do it with or without music. Do it with or without your eyes closed.
- Pretend you are asleep. Wake up in the water of baptism.
- Pretend you are a withered plant. Come to life in the water of baptism.
- Pretend you are in a dark cave. The bright light outside the cave is like the water of baptism. Walk into that light and let your body show how the light changes you.
- Pretend you are a tightly wound metal spring. Baptism sets you free. Show what that freedom looks like with your body.
- Pretend you are at the bottom of a deep pool of baptismal water. Show what happens to your body as you reach the surface and the life-giving air.
- Create your own physical expression of baptism. How does your body show that you are a child of God in baptism?

- Let your body express the movement of the Holy Spirit in the water of baptism.

### **Take a trip:**

- Take a trip to your church building. You can go with your confirmation group, with your confirmation sponsor or with your parent(s). Write your answers to these questions in this book. If you need help, ask an older person or your parent to help.
  - Where is the baptismal water held?
  
  - Does it always stay in the same place?
  
  - Is it in a large pool?
  
  - Is it in a font?
  
  - Is it at the front of the church?
  
  - Have you ever paid attention to the place where the baptismal water is held?

**Talk about it:**

- Tell the group, your sponsor or your parent(s) what you saw on your church visit.

## Grace

Grace and balance go together. A dancer is graceful. He or she practices daily. The muscles need training. The hands, head and feet need to learn attitude. One day the body will be poetry in motion. But until that day, the body works hard. The body needs skill. The body needs strength. After years of hard work, the dancer will no longer think about leaping, jumping, turning, arching. The dancer will let the muscle memory do the dancing. The dancer will just leap, jump, turn, arch. And the dancer will be grace in motion.

**Talk about it, draw it or mime it:**

- Describe a dancer you like to watch.

Sometimes we find graceful movement at a circus. Have you ever seen acrobats, trapeze artists or jugglers? How do they do what they do? They are strong. They practice every day. They try to break the last record in time, in speed, in height.

**Think about it or talk about it:**

- What circus acts have you seen? Which did you like best?
- How many hours a day do you imagine circus performers practice?
- How do you think circus performers get their courage?

Animals show graceful movements too. Running or walking, they seem to glide in space. Photographers for wild animal programs on television show us the most wonderful scenes. Animals at play, animals stalking a prey, animals running for life are totally focused on what they are doing. There is beauty and grace in their dedication. Dogs, cats, ducks, birds are never more beautiful than when they are just being dogs, cats, ducks and birds.

**Think about it:**

- How do animals move?
- How is the way a dog moves different from, say, a cat? a bird? a cow? a moose? a snake? a fish?
- Which animals move most gracefully?

**Look for it:**

- Go to the zoo or animal park in your area.
- Watch your pets at home.
- Take notice of animals in your neighborhood.
- Find an example of a graceful animal.



**Write about it or draw it:**

- What do you see as you watch animals move?

## My Animal Drawing

Grace shows itself in our lives in natural ways through dancers, athletes and animals. When we are free to be who we are, we show gracefulness. God wants us to be free to be who we truly are: God's children.

Grace shows itself in our lives when we live as Jesus taught us to live. Every expression of grace shows the grace that lies within us. This grace may be hidden. It cannot always be easily seen. Grace shows itself in action, in what we call right-living. When we make right choices, then we know that the hidden work of grace is active in our lives.

## Source of Grace

God gives us the Holy Spirit in the waters of baptism. That is God's gift to us so we can live as we should. Grace is a gift. No one earns grace. No one is good enough for grace. No one can do something so terrible that they can never again have grace. Grace is from God. God gives grace freely. To receive it, all people need to do is love God and do what God says.

At baptism you were given the grace of God. The Holy Spirit came to you as a special gift. Confirmation will strengthen you so that you can more fully cooperate with God's gift to you.

### Think about it:

The Holy Spirit is always ready to help you. All you have to do is ask.

### Pray about it:

- Remember the prayer to the Holy Spirit that you rewrote on page 7? Say your prayer to the Holy Spirit now.
- How would you like the Holy Spirit to help you right now?

## Learning to Recognize the Spirit

In the scriptures, sometimes the Holy Spirit is described as the wind. At other times the Holy Spirit comes as a dove. Most of the time the presence of the Spirit is known by the good actions of

people who believe in and follow Jesus. Some people say they can feel the presence of the Holy Spirit in prayer.

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would be with us always. You can trust Jesus to keep his promise. Do you recognize the work of the Holy Spirit?

**Talk about it:**

- Name all the ways you see the grace of God and the works of the Holy Spirit in the lives of these people:
  - your parent(s)
  - your sister or brother
  - your teacher
  - your best friend
  - your pastor

When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan by John, his identity was made known. The first thing Jesus did was go to the desert to pray. To recognize the Holy Spirit, a person needs to pray often and well. Practice praying to the Holy Spirit. Practice looking for how the Holy Spirit shows up in everyday life.

**Act it out:**

- Act out how a person is changed with grace and the Holy Spirit in their lives. Use the following examples as a guide for your body interpretation. Watch each other do this exercise one at a time and talk about what you see.
- Pretend you are asleep. Look up and see the heavens open up!
- What would the Holy Spirit like to say to you? Let your body movement show the message.

- Pretend you are floating in space. Every action must be done in slow motion. You are enjoying being free in the wind that is the Holy Spirit.
- Pretend that you are strong and courageous. Create a scene where you need to show your strength and courage that comes from the Holy Spirit. Ask the Holy Spirit to help your imagination on this one!

## Eucharist

### Sharing a Meal

Isn't it a wonderful experience to be invited to eat with someone? A best friend invites you over for dinner! The new boy at school invites you to his birthday party! Parties mean friends, and special foods (like cake and ice cream).

#### **Talk about it:**

- What was the best party you ever attended?
- What made it special?

To eat with a group of people you want to be with and who want to be with you is a sign that you are among friends. You can relax and be yourself. You know you belong when you are invited to 'break bread' or share food with another person.

#### **Think about it or talk about it:**

- When you think about eating with friends, what—other than the food—makes it fun?
- When have you noticed someone at school lunch period eating all alone?
- When have you been that someone?



**Draw it:**

- How do you feel when you eat all alone?

**Draw it:**

- Draw a picture of someone eating lunch all alone at school.

## Eucharist: A Meal of Thanks and Remembrance



Jesus shared meals with all kinds of people: rich and poor; famous (people who are well known for good actions) and infamous (people who are well known for doing bad things), women and men, young and old.

One meal that Jesus shared with his friends is the most special and well known. He 'broke bread' with his disciples at the Passover meal the night before he died on the cross. When Jesus did this, he gave us an understanding of eucharist.

### Think about it:

- If you've celebrated your first eucharist, when was it? Who was there?
- If you have not celebrated your first eucharist, watch your friends or adults when they go to receive eucharist.

### Write about it:

- Remember what it was like the first time you received eucharist.
- Find out if your family has photographs of your first eucharist or the first eucharist of a member of your family. Look at the photographs carefully. What do you see?
- If you have not celebrated your first eucharist, imagine what it might be like.

**Draw it:**

- Draw a picture of a first eucharist. You can draw a picture of yours or someone else's.

**My Drawing of a First Eucharist**



At eucharist it's nice to close my eyes and pray. Jesus does not always want to stay in the tabernacle. He wants to come in my heart and stay. My faith is like a seed that Jesus comes to help grow. Holy eucharist strengthens my roots so I can grow like a tree. With Jesus, I am growing in faith and love.

—Nicole Gomez (Age 9)

### **Talk about it:**

- How has the eucharist helped you or someone you know grow stronger?
- How has the eucharist helped you or a friend make better choices?

Robin Liu celebrated baptism, confirmation and eucharist when she was nine years old. Two years after celebrating all three sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil, she sees how all of these sacraments have helped her change:

Since I was baptized and welcomed into the church community, I have felt like another person.... The teachers at Sunday School have taught and encouraged me to act like Christ. For example, when my friend Sara asked for a drink, I gave her my juice box because I remembered "To give drink to the thirsty." She needed it more than I did.

—Robin Liu (Age 11, reflecting on her baptism, confirmation



