The Sacraments Leader Leaflet

This course is recommended for Grades 5-6.

INTRODUCTION

This course is designed to give fifth and sixth grade learners an overview of our Lutheran church's two sacraments. It has four sessions. The first two focus on Holy Baptism, the last two on Holy Communion.

The goals of this course are reflected in the "Learning Focus" sentences at the beginning of each session. Keep the focus statement in mind as you are teaching each session. The stories, Bible study, Small Catechism selections, and session activities are designed to help you fully explore and develop that one focus with your learners.

Your Learners

Fifth and sixth graders are beginning to think abstractly. However, concepts such as repentance and forgiveness still may be understood best when concrete examples are used and real-life situations are described.

This course is designed to encourage your learners to visualize and practice community. Give the learners a variety of opportunities to work cooperatively and see themselves as part of the larger family of faith.

The Learning Setting

Your class environment is very important in creating a positive, fun, and inviting atmosphere for learning. Arrive early for each session to make sure the area is ready. Decorate the walls and bulletin boards. Build a warm and friendly place.

The ideal class area has tables and chairs for group seat activities but also provides flexibility for partners and small groups to move into areas for study and activity. An informal seating area is helpful. Use carpet squares or a small rug. Be creative in using the space you have. Make arrangements to move to large areas occasionally for games or noisy activities.

Getting Ready

Prepare each session carefully. Read the materials completely and select the response activities that will fit in your time and space. Read through the session in the learner resource. Not all of the learner resource pages and all of the activities need to be done during class time. And you may want to consider working through this course in more than four sessions. Make the course fit the needs of your learners, your congregation, and yourself.

Before you teach each session, pray, "Lord, give me the wisdom to share from my heart the faith you have given to me. Amen."

SESSION 1

CALLED INTO GOD'S FAMILY

LEARNING FOCUS

Holy Baptism brings us new life in a new family—the family of God.
BACKGROUND

As Jesus prepared to return to his Father in heaven, he directed his followers to go make disciples and baptize. Jesus himself had been baptized by John the Baptist, reminding us that while he did not need forgiveness, he willingly put himself in our place to fulfill all that God required.

Baptism may be a sensitive issue depending on the background of your learners. Be aware of those learners who may not yet be baptized and assure them of God's love and care for them also. Encourage them to talk to their families about becoming a part of God's family through baptism. Share this information with your pastor as well.

Chances are good that your learners will be from many kinds of families. Find ways to assure each one that a family is not defined by numbers or specific arrangements of people. Family has more to do with common bonds, goals, experiences, and love. This is especially true in the family of God where we celebrate our diversity and the uniqueness of each believer!

HEART OF THE LEARNING

These activities form the heart of the session and will take about 45 minutes to complete.

Preparation: Gather a learner resource (LR) for each student, Bibles, chart paper, pencils, and markers.

- Ask volunteers to read aloud “In Every Nation” on page 5 (LR), and then have pairs work to solve the code message—the words of Jesus from Matthew 28:19.
- Ask pairs to respond to “Think about It” on page 5 (LR).
- Point out the quotation from Luther's Small Catechism on page 6 (LR). Take a minute to refresh the learners' memories about Luther and his work, especially his work on the Small Catechism. Read the portion of Luther's Catechism. Ask, “What are the two elements of Baptism?” (Water and God's Word.)
- Ask volunteers to read aloud “Disciples Everywhere!” and “Baptized as Disciples” on page 6 (LR). Talk about how people live as Jesus’ disciples.
- Ask the learners to discover the benefits we receive from baptism by reading the catechism quote on page 7 (LR). (Forgiveness of sins, redeems from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation.)
- Create a litany reflecting the joy of belonging to God's family as special and unique children of God. Write each learner's name on a slip of paper. Place in a basket and draw names. Ask each learner to say a one-sentence prayer thanking God for the person whose name they've drawn. Respond to each sentence prayer by saying together, "Lord, we thank you for bringing us into your family."

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Choose from these activities to complete your session as time allows.

A Symbol

Ask learners to complete the symbol puzzle on page 7 (LR). As a group, discuss the “Think about It” question. (The shell reminds us of water; some churches use a shell to dip baptismal water; the three drops are the water used; the three drops represent the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.)

If All the Body Were a Foot . . .

Preparation: Read the directions to this game carefully. Plan for space in your class area or make arrangements to use another room area in your facility.
• Explain briefly that Paul used the illustration of a body to describe the family of God; refer to 1 Corinthians 12 if you need background material. As members of God’s family, we each have special contributions to make. Paul noted that if the whole body were a foot, it couldn’t work.
• Divide the learners into pairs. Be ready to step in yourself if you have an odd number of learners. Have pairs join both hands. Explain that they will need to complete a task without letting go of their partners’ hands or using their hands in any way. Also, they may not speak to each other.
• Assign each group a series of tasks to complete, such as: 1) Open a door; 2) Enter the room; 3) Find a box; 4) Open the box; 5) Remove the object from the box. Be creative and adapt your tasks to your particular room situation.
• Be sensitive to the individual needs in your class. If you have learners with limited physical abilities, use a series of tasks that is realistic for them.
• When all have finished, invite comments on how this exercise illustrates the need for many types of talents in a community.

Friends and Family Wall

Preparation: Cover a table with newspaper for protection. Gather aluminum pie pans, tempera paints, water, stirring sticks, a plastic dishpan, and paper toweling. Have a large sheet of chart paper ready to use.

• Mix several colors of tempera paint in the pie plates.
• Put the pie plates at one end of the table and the sheet of chart paper at the other.
• Have students place one hand carefully in the paint with fingers slightly apart. Press handprints along the edges of the paper, creating a border.
• Rinse hands in dishpan of water. Dry with paper toweling.
• Allow the chart to dry, and then use markers to sign names by the handprints.
• Place the chart in a community area of your church. Attach several pens with string and push pins. Invite the members of your family of faith to sign their names to your “Friends and Family” wall.

SESSION 2

LIVING WATERS

LEARNING FOCUS

The waters of Holy Baptism give each of us a new life with God.

BACKGROUND

The imagery of water is important to understanding the significance of Holy Baptism in the lives of Jesus’ disciples. Not only does God invite us into the family of God as children, God also promises to enrich and nourish our lives, just as water provides growth for all living things. Baptism offers hope as our old sinful desires and deeds are drowned through our sorrow and repentance and a new person arises who lives as one of God’s chosen.

This session helps learners explore and discover the importance of this living water to their everyday lives as they daily repent of their failures and wrongdoings and rely on the Holy Spirit to give them new opportunities to live as Jesus’ disciples.

Your fifth and sixth graders understand sin and its consequences. They may also sense that harsh judgment follows failure and wrongdoing. Encourage them to see that the joy of forgiveness is the promise of the Holy Spirit, who empowers them to make changes—to seek forgiveness, receive absolution, and rejoice in a fresh start!

HEART OF THE LEARNING

These activities form the heart of the session and will take about 45 minutes to complete.

Preparation: Gather a learner resource (LR) for each student, a bowl of water, a towel, Bibles, pencils, and markers.

• As learners arrive, invite pairs to look at page 8 (LR) and number the uses of water they find there.
• Sit in a circle and pass around the bowl of water followed by the towel. Ask each learner to dip a hand in the water and name one use for water. After they have finished, read the Bible verses on page 8 (LR) aloud to the learners.
• Ask for volunteers to read aloud “What’s Special about Water?” on page 9 (LR) including the Small
Catechism quote printed there. Ask, “What makes the water special?” (*The Word of God with the water.*)

- Say, “Water has often been used by God to help people.” Turn to page 10 (LR). Divide the learners into small groups of three. Choose one of the following reading strategies: 1) Have each small group read all the Bible texts and match them with the proper illustration. Then have each group select one text and share the story with a skit, role play, or oral group reading; 2) Assign each group one Bible text, and have them read the story and plan how to share with a skit, role play, or oral group reading. Complete the matching activity as groups present their stories.

- Ask volunteers to read aloud “A New Start” on page 11 (LR). Emphasize the grace of God, who never tires of forgiving us and giving us a chance to start over.

- Read aloud “The Old and New Me!” and the words from the Catechism on page 12 (LR). Ask pairs to think about how they might complete this statement: “Baptism is like a __________.” Briefly discuss their responses.

- Read aloud “Remembering Your Baptism” on pages 12 and 13 (LR). Talk about the sign of the cross as a reminder of baptism. Ask, “Has anyone seen people use this sign in church? When?” Invite the learners to practice making this sign.

- Ask learners to read silently “The Morning Blessing” on page 12 (LR) and respond to “Think about It” on page 13 (LR). Invite volunteers to share their answers.

- Pass the bowl of water again. Ask learners to dip a finger in the water and make a small cross on their foreheads as a reminder of their baptisms. Join in the Lord’s Prayer.

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Choose from these activities to complete your session as time allows.

Living Water Mural

**Preparation:** Have available a large piece of paper (a section from a roll of paper tablecloth is ideal). Provide markers or colored chalk.

- Tape or tack the paper to a wall or room divider.
- Divide the paper into seven sections using a light pencil mark; mark out space for the mural title.
- Divide your learners into small groups. If your class is small, reduce the number of stories to illustrate. Assign the water stories from page 10 (LR) and a scene of a baptism in your church to the small groups.

- Encourage the groups to work cooperatively in planning and illustrating their assigned story. Each group member should actively participate in the mural.

Baptism Banner

**Preparation:** You will need glue, scissors, 9” x 12” felt pieces, and felt scraps. Purchase a piece of muslin; the size will be determined by the number of learners. Each learner will design a 9” x 12” felt piece that will be arranged on the muslin backing to give a quilt look to the banner. Some plain felt pieces may be needed to create a pleasing effect. Allow space for words too. For a low-cost version of this banner, use construction paper instead of felt and a large piece of colored wrapping paper for the background.

- Ask learners to design a banner to remember their baptisms; refer to page 13 (LR) as a work sheet.
- Provide the 9” x 12” felt background and felt scraps to create the banner they designed on page 13 (LR). You may also add trimmings like glitter, beads, or braid.
- Arrange the finished banners on top of the muslin backing to create a pleasing look to the banner. Use plain pieces in between the others if needed. Pin in place with safety pins.

- Complete the banner at home, or ask a church member to complete it for you. Sew the small banners in place on all four sides as you would in quilting. Batting may be used if you wish. Fold over a heading and sew. Push a piece of doweling through the hem, and attach gold cord as a hanger. Purchased fringe may be sewn to the bottom of the banner.
- As a class, present the banner to your church.
Water Words

Preparation: You will need drawing paper and markers.

• Invite the learners to use a variety of ways to write or print the words water gives life randomly on the paper. Decorate and embellish the words creatively. Add drawings of ways we use water and how God uses water to refresh, renew, and give life to all of nature.

SESSION 3

A SPECIAL MEAL

LEARNING FOCUS

Holy Communion was given to us by Jesus as a tangible promise of his presence and a reminder of our rescue from sin.

BACKGROUND

The setting for Jesus’ institution of the Lord’s Supper is significant. The Passover meal was a very important reminder to the people of Israel of their rescue from slavery in Egypt. All the food eaten during the meal, and the words spoken, were reminders of specific events as God led them out of slavery under Moses’ leadership.

Jesus used this Passover celebration to announce a new meal—a meal of bread and wine, which, with the words spoken by Jesus, would remind those who ate and drank of their rescue from sin through the suffering and death of Jesus himself. Even more, Jesus promises to be present in the bread and wine, his body and blood given for our sake.

Your fifth and sixth graders are becoming aware of other faiths and cultures. As you study the Passover in this session, help them understand and appreciate Jewish culture and religious traditions and how these were an important part of Jesus’ life.

HEART OF THE LEARNING

These activities form the heart of the session and will take about 45 minutes to complete.

Preparation: Gather a learner resource (LR) for each student, Bibles, chart paper, pencils, and markers. Cut slips of paper in three or four different colors, enough for one slip per person. Place in a basket.

• Ask each learner to draw a slip of paper and join others with the same color to make a group.

• Assign each group a holiday or special event, such as Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter, a wedding, or a birthday party, to act out as a silent charade. Each group member should participate in the action.

• Allow several minutes for the groups to prepare their charade. Take turns presenting and other groups guessing what event they are acting out.

• Ask volunteers to read aloud the story “Something New” on page 14 (LR). Invite learners to tell about some of their favorite meals.

• Ask for three or four volunteers to role-play a family at mealtime. (Possible things to include: Pray, catch up on news, plan family activities, listen to stories, make announcements, discuss family problem and issues.) Afterward, discuss what happens when a family gathers at mealtime. Discuss if the same things might have happened when Jesus and his disciples sat down for a meal together.

• Read aloud “What Meal?” on page 15 (LR) and discuss how Jesus instituted the Sacrament of Holy Communion at his celebration of Passover. Divide the students into partners and have them complete the crossword puzzle on page 16 (LR). Share answers when finished. (Answers: Across—2. BREAD; 5. DOORPOSTS; 8. PASSOVER; 9. LAMB; 11. EGYPT; 12. MOSES. Down—1. PASSOVER; 2. BODY; 3. FORGIVENESS; 4. DISCIPLES; 6. DRINK; 7. EAT; 9. BLOOD.)


• Ask students to find the Small Catechism section on page 17 (LR) and read it silently and then fill in the word puzzle (Answer: Jesus’ body and blood, given with bread and wine, for us to eat and drink.) Discuss “Think about It” as a class, pointing out the meanings of the different names for Holy Communion at the top of page 17 (LR).

• Read together the Small Catechism section on page 18 (LR). Ask, “What are the benefits we receive?” (Forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.)

• Close with prayer, asking God to fill you with love as you remember God’s great love for everyone.
RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

Choose from these activities to complete your session as time allows.

Communion and the Congregation

Preparation: Ask a member of the altar guild to join your class in the sacristy to show the serving items and linens your church uses for Holy Communion.

- Gather in the sacristy or other area of your church where Holy Communion preparations are made. Have the altar guild member explain how the serving items and linens are used and what they are called. Look for Christian symbols on these items.

Stained-glass Butterfly

Preparation: Have available old newspapers, 9" x 12" drawing paper, pencils, crayons, permanent black markers, cotton balls, thread, and vegetable oil.

- Tell the students that a butterfly is often used as a symbol of the new life we have in Jesus.
- Cover the table with several layers of newspaper.
- Ask the learners to draw a butterfly on the drawing paper with a pencil. Provide a pattern or two if you wish. Trace over the pencil lines with the permanent black marker. The best stained-glass effect is achieved by outlining a number of different sections inside each wing area.

- Have the learners color each section with crayons, pressing down hard as they color and filling in all the spaces.
- Spread a small amount of vegetable oil evenly on the butterfly with a cotton ball. Let dry.

- Cut out the butterfly and attach a thread hanger. Hang in a window to let the light shine through.

SESSION 4

CELEBRATION!

LEARNING FOCUS

The gifts of forgiveness of sins and new life in Christ Jesus bring joy to our everyday lives.

BACKGROUND

The words of promise shared by Jesus are cause for joy and celebration. While it may seem strange to celebrate Jesus' suffering and death, we do so because not only is Jesus our risen Lord, but he has promised that we, too, will live eternally with him.

The session begins with a closer look at how the Lord's Supper offers us forgiveness through the body and blood of Jesus, given with the bread and wine we eat and drink. The bread and wine given with God's Word have the power to declare to us forgiveness and the promise of life and salvation. This is indeed a time for celebration!

Fifth and sixth graders are very interested in fairness and justice. There may be some learners who do not feel they could possibly deserve the kind of love that Jesus revealed for them by his suffering and death. Find opportunities to stress that this new life and forgiveness is a gift. No one can earn such a valuable gift. We receive it humbly as a gift of grace from God.

HEART OF THE LEARNING

These activities form the heart of the session and will take about 45 minutes to complete.

Preparation: Place small treats (one for each learner) in one box. Gift wrap the box. Have available Bibles, pencils, markers, and a learner resource (LR) for each student.

- Show the class your gift. Say, "Can you imagine being offered a gift and not even reaching out to take it? Have you ever received a birthday gift and left it on a shelf unopened?"
- Offer the gift to a learner to open. Say, “God offers us many gifts. We do not have to earn them. We just need to receive them and share them!” Enjoy the treats as you discuss times you have been surprised by a gift.

- Ask volunteers to read aloud “A Hug Tells It All” on page 19 (LR). Discuss responses to “Think about It” together, being sure to offer your own response as well.

- Ask, “How did Mr. Chang convince Luisa he had forgiven her?” (He hugged her.) Comment on how we sometimes need to see and touch and feel expressions of love and forgiveness from others.

- Ask volunteers to read aloud “Words of Promise” on page 20 (LR). Ask, “How is the eating and drinking in the Lord’s Supper different from eating and drinking in the cafeteria at school?” (Jesus’ words bring special gifts.) Read together the words from the Small Catechism on page 20 (LR), and let the learners complete the activity independently. (Answers: Baptism uses water. Holy Communion uses bread and wine.)

- Ask, “How do Jesus’ words have such power?” Assign each of the stories on page 21 (LR) to a pair of students. Allow a few minutes for learners to discuss possible endings to their stories; then have pairs act out that ending for the class. Note that if these words caused action, how much more God’s words can do!

- Read together “You Are Welcome” on page 22 (LR).

- Ask, “How do we prepare for the Lord’s Supper?” and ask learners to read the Small Catechism section on page 22 (LR) to find and underline the answer. Solve the puzzle to discover the word BELIEVE.

- Ask partners to read aloud Psalm 138 and list three words of praise found there. Create a class list from these, taking out duplicates.

- Read aloud “Come to the Celebration” on page 23 (LR), and share how meals are often times of celebration. Point out the words of praise and thanksgiving used during the Holy Communion liturgy.

- To discuss “Think about It” on page 23 (LR), designate one side of your class area as “almost no one” and the other as “nearly everyone.” Have learners stand in the area that shows their response. Be sensitive to those children who may not attend worship with their families and,

therefore, may not have been part of a Holy Communion service. Be prepared to tell about what age people in your church begin to receive the sacrament and about how children and families are prepared for the time of first communion.

- Celebrate by reading Psalm 138, dividing the learners into two groups and alternating verses.

**RESPONSE ACTIVITIES**

Choose from these activities to complete your session as time allows.

**Holy Communion and the Congregation**

**Preparation:** Make plans to attend a worship service of Holy Communion and sit together as a class. Ask several adults in your congregation to meet with pairs of learners after worship for a short interview.

- Before you worship together, read “Celebrating with the Family of God” on page 24 (LR) and provide pencils so that learners can jot down notes to answer the questions there.

- After worship, have pairs of students interview the adults you have asked using the questionnaire.

- Enjoy a light lunch together as a class to discuss the information the learners collected.

**Luminaries**

**Preparation:** Remove the labels from soup cans, one per learner. Fill the cans with water and freeze. Store in freezer until activity time. Gather newspapers, drawing paper, a pail, masking tape, and nails of various sizes. Have a hammer and votive candle for each learner.

- Say, “Candles are a common symbol in churches, telling of the light of God’s love and the light of our new life in Christ. Jesus calls us to be like candles, showing God’s light to others.”

- Ask the students to sketch a simple Christian symbol (cross, rainbow, heart, dove) on a piece of paper the same size as the soup cans.

- Cover the work area with several layers of newspaper. Place the pail nearby for ice disposal.

- Lay the can on its side on the newspaper. Wrap the symbol drawing around the can and tape in place.
- Pound nails into the can along the outline of the symbol. The nails need to be pounded only until they penetrate the metal; then they can be removed and used for the next mark. Demonstrate how various sized nails can be used to create different sizes of holes.

[Image of a Luminary]

- Work rapidly as the ice keeps the can from being crushed and will be melting as you work. Dump ice in the pails when finished.
- Give each learner a votive candle to place inside. Light them for a closing worship if that is permitted; then send them home.

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The Sacraments
Exploring Luther's Small Catechism
Leader Leaflet

This Leader Leaflet has a corresponding Learner Resource.

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