

Unit 2 "I Put on Christ" Lesson 8
Signs of New Life

Objective: The children will be able to explain how we are born again in Baptism and name the white robe (baptismal gown) and candle as two signs of our baptism.

For the Catechist

By our baptism we have been made sharers in the victory of Christ over sin and death. Through Baptism into His death, we were buried with Him so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live a new life. "As to his death he died to sin, once for all; as to his life, he lives for God. Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as [being] dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:10-11). The Mystery of Baptism initiates us into the life of Christ. We are called to live our lives for God in union with Christ Jesus.

Water. Water is the element used in Baptism. In the history of mankind's salvation, it has numerous significances from the primeval waters at creation, the destructive waters of the Flood, the parting waters of the Red Sea, the flowing waters of the Jordan River, to the water which flowed from the side of Jesus. From science we know that all life comes from water. It is the most "motherly" of all elements. God has chosen this element to be the material sign of our spiritual rebirth. At the blessing of baptismal water, the priest prays:

"... Do You, O Lord and Master of all things, show this water to be the water of redemption, the water of rebirth, the gift of filial adoption, and the renewal of the spirit, so that all who are baptized with this water may strip off their old selves and put on the new; that they may be likened to Your death and become sharers in Your Resurrection; and be numbered among the firstborn who are inscribed in heaven..." (From the Blessing of the Baptismal Waters).

The Baptismal Hymn. After a person is baptized, the hymn, "All you who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, Alleluia!" is sung. It is from St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians (3:27). We

Lesson Plan Overview

Opening: "All You Who Have Been Baptized"

Introduction: How words and symbols change you **Need:** a necklace, cross, ring, or other article that you wear that is significant to you; an altar server sticharion if available and if you have altar servers in your class

Read Text Aloud: Have students read text aloud. Use the comments and questions on the following pages to help them understand the material.

Activity Tracks:

Choose a basic, group, or craft activity to reinforce the lesson (detailed on the pages that follow).

- *Basic:* Symbols of New Life
- *Group:* Mysteries of Baptism and Chrismation Mural (Part 1)
- *Craft:* White Garment Icon Scarf

Closing: "We Have Seen the True Light"

Come Bless the Lord Icon Packets:

Packet I: Theophany of Our Lord
Packet II:

Teaching Pic:

#S4 Immersion

also sing this hymn in place of "Holy God" on major feast days of the Church. We do this because in the early Church, candidates were baptized on these feasts. When the hymn was sung, it reminded the people present of their own baptism.

Baptismal Gown. After the baptism the newly baptized is given a baptismal robe as a sign of the newness of life that is received. The priest places the white garment upon the person baptized saying, "The servant of God, (Name), is clothed with the robe of justice, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The baptismal robe is an outward sign of the newness of life received in Baptism. White for the child indicates that something is new or clean. The white robe shows that through Baptism a new kind of life has been received or put on. This is the new life of Jesus Christ.

The Candle. A lighted candle is also given to the newly baptized. In the Slavic traditions, the priest says, "Take this lighted candle, and strive through your entire lifetime to shine brightly with the light of faith and of good deeds." Christian life is to be manifested in deeds. Like a light that is not hidden, a Christian's life must show forth the new life of Baptism. This light continues to shine brightly as the child does good deeds and grows in faith. His or her whole life should shine with the radiance of this baptismal candle. Both the candle and the robe have a brightness or a light which are outward signs of their inner illumination.

Background Reading

(Direct quotations from the sources noted.)

Baptism as Rebirth

"All sacramental mysteries consist of verbal and nonverbal imagery, of gestures and of prayer. In baptism the whole person—body, soul and spirit—is sanctified using physical matter which has been set aside as holy. And so, after the profession of faith, the water used in baptism is consecrated by solemn prayer. Water cleanses, refreshes, and is essential for life. As such it is a symbol of rebirth, of life. Water also carries an element of death, of destruction. Water, which parted for the Chosen People fleeing Egypt, drowned their masters. And so it also represents death: the burial and resurrection of Jesus. In the Paschal Canon we sing, 'Yesterday, I was buried with You, O Christ [referring to the baptisms on Holy Saturday], but today I rise, resurrected with You'" (LLII 74).

Baptismal Oil

"The water and the person to be baptized are then prepared by an anointing with olive oil. This oil used for the pre-baptismal anointing recalls the twig of the olive tree given to Noah 'as a sign of reconciliation and deliverance from the flood.' The dove with an olive branch was a sign to Noah in the ark of his reconciliation, the covenant of peace, between God and humanity. The baptismal 'oil of gladness' is a sign for us that our reconciliation in Christ is imminent. This oil is also considered 'an armor of righteousness,' recalling the struggle of repentance that comes with accepting the new life in Christ" (LLII 74-15).

Immersion

"In the Byzantine Churches baptism itself is conferred with the words, 'The servant of God (name) is baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.' The form of baptism (in Greek, *baptizo* or 'to submerge') is patterned on that of our Lord by the prophet John, thereafter called 'the Baptist.' Christ descended into the water as a sign of repentance, though He had no need of repentance, and was revealed to be the Son of God by the voice of the Father and the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove (*theophany*). Our Lord gave a new significance to John's baptism, 'I baptize you in water for the sake of reform, but the one who will follow me... will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire' (Mt 3: 11). Christian baptism not only cleanses us of our sins, but also gives life in the Spirit as a new creation" (*LLII 75*).

Baptismal Robe

"After baptism, a white robe—the garment of righteousness (cf. Is 61:10)—is put on to contrast with the nakedness before baptism. The baptismal garment, the 'robe of light,' indicates that we have been clothed in Christ (Gal 3:27), replacing the shame of Adam and Eve at their nakedness apart from God (Gen 3:27). Their attempts to cover themselves with leaves reflected their choice which made them dependent on the material side of creation with its slavery to passions and to death. The baptismal garments, already alluded to in Revelation 3:18 and 7:13,14, represent the return to Paradise and reveal man's true nature restored in God's image and likeness" (*LLII 75 and 77*).

We Put on Christ

"When we are baptized into Christ, we put on Christ. We are literally immersed in Christ, who also leads us to the Father and gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit. Only in Christ can we come to know the Father, for no one has ever seen the Father except the Son (Jn 1:18), and only He can lead us to the Father since only He truly knows the way (Jn 14:5). Only in Christ do we become children of the Father, adopted sons and daughters, heirs of the kingdom" (*LLII 77*).

The Lesson Plan

Opening

[Gather at icon corner.] *Today we'll continue to learn about our baptism. We'll sing the hymn for baptism, "All you who have been baptized."*

Introduction

[Adapt the following wording so that the students learn why an article you wear or own makes you think or act differently.] *I brought something to help me teach you. This is the Bible I received from my mother. It was very precious to her. I saw her reading the Bible many times. When I was 16, she gave it to me so that I would always be close to God through His Word.*

Your parents and godparents knew that their faith in Christ was a gift of great value, like my mother's gift of her Bible to me. It represented something I could not see—her own life united to God. She passed the Bible on to me. More importantly, she brought me to be baptized. She passed on the gift of faith to me. When I hold the Bible, I remember that I must live as God wants.

Do any of you have special things you wear that make you feel different? [Allow a few responses.] Are any of you in Scouts? Do you wear a uniform? When you wear your uniform, do you feel different? [If you have altar servers . . .] Do you altar servers feel different or act differently when you wear your sticharia?

You know we have been learning about Baptism. Through Baptism we are initiated or brought into our spiritual family. Baptism is one of the Mysteries through which we become part of God's people. Chrismation is the other. We'll learn about both.

When we were baptized, we were born again. Even though we may have looked the same physically on the outside, we were changed spiritually on the inside. Today we'll learn about some of the signs of the change in us. When we were baptized, we were given a white garment to wear, our baptismal garment. We say that we "put on Christ" from that day forward. We were changed. We were made Christians.

Let's talk about words. In ceremonies words can change us. If you are Scouts, you must know the Scout promise. When you say the Scout promise, you are more than just (Name) or (Name). You are a scout. The same thing happened when we were baptized.

Our priest, godparents and parents said the words of the baptismal ritual for us and the Nicene Creed which tells what we believe. Through words and signs we became a Christian. Let's learn more.

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Signs of New Life

As a Christian, you have two birthdays. One is the day of your physical birth. The other is the day of your baptism. On your physical birthday, you were born into life on this earth. On the day of your spiritual birth, you were born into life forever with God.

When you were baptized, it was a wonderful day. You were brought to the baptismal font. You went under the water three times.

When you went under water, you did not breathe. It was like dying for a moment. It was a symbol. A symbol tells us what is happening that we cannot see.

Through Baptism you died, as Jesus said, in order to be born again. It was a symbol of dying and being reborn. When you came out of the water, you were born again.

What happened next?

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Unit 1, Lesson 2

Reading of Text

As the children read aloud, help them interact with the text using the comments or questions below which are keyed to the text phrases (in bold type).

When you came out of the water, you were born again.

[Describe here how Baptism is done in your parish—by immersion or the pouring of water.] *Father said: This child is baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. When you went underwater, it represented your dying. Why? Because when you are underwater, you cannot breathe; and if you cannot breathe, you cannot live. You died to this world and were born into life everlasting, which means forever with God.*

Father prayed that you would stay clean and pure all your life.

What happened after we were placed in the water? (We were dressed in a white garment.) Why white? (White indicates cleanliness, goodness and purity.) We want to be good and pure all our lives so we may see God when we die.

How can we stay free of sin? [Allow responses.] All of us try to stay free of sin. We need to pray all the time. We need to make good decisions and act as Jesus taught.

The white robe was a symbol of putting on Christ.

Have you ever worn clothes that make you feel different? [Allow responses.] When we wear special clothes, we act differently. When we put on Christ, we act like Jesus Christ. We are good, kind and want to help others. We sing "All You" on special days like Pascha because long ago people were baptized on those days. When you hear that hymn think about your own baptism.



After you came out of the water, you were dressed in a white garment. The white garment said that you were a new, pure person. Father prayed that you would stay clean and pure all your life.

To put on Christ means to try to live exactly as He taught. The white robe was a symbol of putting on Christ.

Then Father gave your godparents a candle to hold and led you and your godparents in a procession. Everyone sang "All you, who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia."

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The signs are the water, white gown, and candle.

What are the signs of Baptism? The symbols of Baptism are water, the white baptismal robe, and the candle.

You are called a Christian because you are one with Christ through faith and Baptism.

Why are you called a Christian? (Because I am one with Christ through faith and Baptism.) Let's say that together. I am one with Christ through faith and Baptism.

Let's review: *We learned that Baptism is a symbol of being reborn. Why? What happens when we go under the water (We stop breathing or "die" for a moment.) What happens when we come out? (We are born again.) What are two signs of our new life or rebirth? (White gown and cross.)*

A wonderful thing happened when you were baptized. You were born again. What are the signs of the new life we receive through Baptism? The signs are the water, white robe, and candle.

Through Baptism, we became one of God's family. You became a follower of Jesus Christ. You are now a "Christian." You are called a Christian because you are one with Christ through faith and Baptism.

Next you received the gift of the Holy Spirit, just like the disciples long ago. Jesus told the disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit. One day, after Jesus had gone back to the Father in heaven, the Holy Spirit came.



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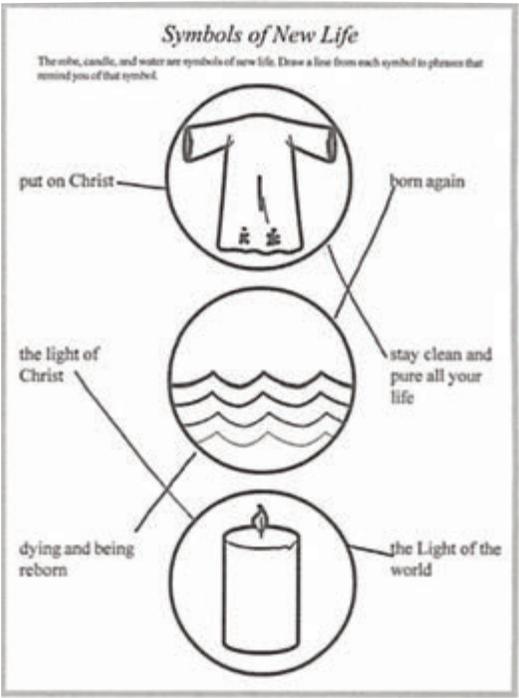
Activity Tracks

Basic: Symbols of New Life

The three symbols of Baptism are drawn on this page. Let's see if we can decide which phrases remind us of these symbols. [If students choose differently, ask why they made that choice. As symbols have different shades of meaning for each person, they may have a good reason for their choice.]

Symbols of New Life

The robe, candle, and water are symbols of new life. Draw a line from each symbol to phrases that remind you of that symbol.



put on Christ

born again

the light of Christ

stay clean and pure all your life

dying and being reborn

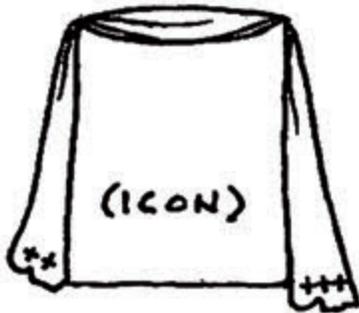
the Light of the world

Group: Mysteries of Baptism and Chrismation Mural
(Part1)



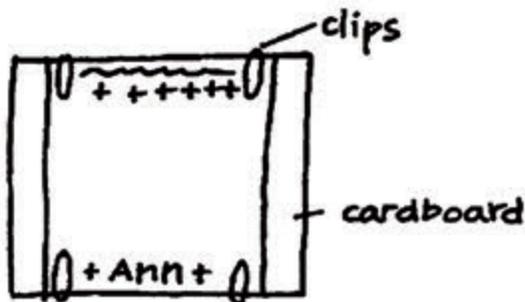
Materials: small poster boards (half-size) cut in half to approximately 8 1/2 x 11", markers, tape

Today we began our study of how we were brought into the life of the Church through Baptism. Many beautiful symbols and prayers make up the service. Today and for the next class, we will make a mural. It will be made of poster boards taped together that will stand like an accordion when we are done. On the poster boards we will draw a baby being initiated into the Church, and we'll draw the symbols of Baptism. We'll complete the project in a few weeks with another lesson. [Have the students work in small groups if you have a very large class—some may color, others can label, others can cut and paste.] Here are some ideas for today's work, 1) the title: Joining God's People, 2) Parents holding new baby, 3) Parents giving baby to godparents, 4) the baby arriving at church, 4) the priest meeting everyone in the back of the church, 5) the baptismal font, 6) the white robe 7) the baptismal candle. [Assign or let groups or children choose which idea they will depict, and then pass out materials.]



Craft: White Garment Icon Scarf

Materials: large white handkerchiefs, fabric markers or paint, pieces of cardboard 3" x length of handkerchief, white paper, straight pins or large paper clips, parents to help



[Ahead of time place white paper on cardboard and pin or clip handkerchief edge on top so it is taut. When other edge will be painted, change white paper so paint that has come through the cloth doesn't get onto new side.] *When we were baptized, we received a white garment. The white garment reminded us that our life was new and pure. The priest prayed that Jesus would save a beautiful white garment in heaven for us to wear when we come face to face with our Creator. To remind us of that white garment, we'll make a scarf to place on top of an icon in your icon corner. It will remind you to be pure and good. It will remind you of the white garment you will one day wear when you get to heaven. Today I have those pieces of cloth. I also have fabric markers. You can make designs*

on the edge of the fabric or write your name or use symbols of the Church and Baptism. Let's think of symbols you might use... [You may refer children to the last page of the lesson for ideas]

Closing: *Let's sing our hymn to Jesus, our True Light.*
[Sing or say "We Have Seen the True Light."]