

Unit 1 "A People of God: The Church" Lesson 4
Our Church Follows Jesus

Objective: The students will be able to state that 1) our Church follows Jesus and 2) we became members of the Church through Baptism and Chrismation. One way we stay united to Jesus is by receiving Holy Communion.

For the Catechist

Mysteries of Baptism and Chrismation each year of their religious instruction. That means the information about these Mysteries will be a review. This year the aim is to help them realize that through these Mysteries they become members of the Church. The concept of the Church being the Body of Christ is difficult, but the concept of belonging to a group is familiar to them. They will come to realize that through Baptism and Chrismation they belong to the group of followers that form the Church.

Baptism and Chrismation establish our membership in the Church. That means that we followers are now able to receive the Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Christ. The Eucharist is a very important way for us to join with all the baptized people of the Church. Together we are united to God.

In this lesson the children will read that through Baptism we "put on Christ" and become members of the Church; through Chrismation, we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit to help us live out our new life with Christ; and through the Eucharist, we join with all the other members of the Body of Christ, the Church, to receive Jesus.

Lesson Plan Overview

Opening: "O Only-begotten Son"

Introduction: Discussion of belonging to a group.

Read Text Aloud: Have students volunteer to read the text. Use questions in the teacher manual to discuss the lesson with the students.

Activity Tracks:

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

- *Basic:* I Am A Member of Our Church
- *Group:* "Come and Join Us" Song
- *Craft:* "O Only-begotten Son" Prayer Page

Closing: "O Only-begotten Son"

Icon Packets:

Packet II: Communion of the Apostles

Teaching Pics:

Holy Baptism (S3, S4, S5)
Holy Communion (S11)

Background Reading

(Direct quotations from the sources noted)

The Church

"This fellowship with the Holy Trinity comes to us in the Church, the assembly of those whom God has called to be His people. While the Holy Spirit is the continuation of Christ's divine presence among us, the Church is His Body, the extension of His physical presence in the world. The Church is thus the Temple of God in which the Spirit dwells, as the human body is the dwelling place of the human spirit. The Fathers called **the Church the communion in the Holy Spirit**, the fellowship He builds which joins us to God in a divine community. Our mission as Church, our purpose for being, is *'to proclaim the wonderful acts of God'* (1 Pt 2:9): to be a witness of God's revealing love to all mankind. As members of the Church, we are part of Christ's Body, inseparably joined in Him to the Trinity, the living stones which make up God's temple. In this is our life" (*DC 10*).

Baptism

"Baptism admits the Christian into the life of the Trinity. It also makes a person a member of the Church. These two passages—the first from the limitations of our natural life into the divine life, and the second from selfish individuality into the Body of Christ, which is the Church (Col 1:18)—are inseparable. Authentic Christian faith and participation in the divine life presume membership in the Church and participation in a believing community. Life in the Trinity is real. We have truly become children of the Father; Christ is our brother; the Spirit fills our lives. This makes a real difference in how we live and act and in how we relate to others" (*LLI 73*).

Chrismation

"The apostolic tradition affirms that each believer is called to be a temple of the Spirit. This is why the newly baptized receive the gift of the Spirit in the mystery of chrismation. In this sacrament the believer is anointed with myron (olive oil mixed with many fragrances) on several parts of the body. The multitude of fragrances symbolizes the variety of gifts of the Spirit, and the different anointings symbolize that the faithful Christian receives the Spirit for all the needs of life. St. Simeon of Thessalonica remarked that in this mystery the baptized and chrismated person received all the divine gifts, except holy priesthood (*On the Holy Mysteries 66, PG 155, 229*). Thus the whole Church is built up by this diversity of gifts which are received by the new member of the Body of Christ. Through these gifts of the Holy Spirit, the individual person is joined uniquely to the Body as an integral part to assist in its growth and perfection" (*LLI 74-75*).

Holy Eucharist

"The Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ, the gift from the heart of His passion and resurrection. Both as elements and as action the Eucharist is Christ, who died and rose for our salvation. The Eucharist is a truly 'Divine' Liturgy, because it is a mighty work of God undertaken for our sanctification. When we partake of it, we are made one in Christ and united with God: Father, Son, and Spirit. It is called a mystery since the way in which it happens is beyond our comprehension. Nevertheless, by participating in it with faith we can grow continually in our understanding of God's great love for us" (*LLII 57*).

The Lesson Plan

Opening

[After the traditional greeting and the sign of the cross:] *Let's pray, "O Only-begotten Son*
[Modify text according to your jurisdiction.]

Introduction

Let's go back to our seats in a different way this morning. First, everyone who is wearing something green this morning gets to sit down. Now the rest of us can sit down. Let's try this again. [You may add the following: Anyone who is wearing something white gets to stand up. Okay, let's all stand up. Now anyone who is wearing glasses gets to sit down. Okay, let's all sit down.] Very good. Okay, please be seated. Did you like being the one who was chosen to sit or stand? Did you like having other people join you? Being a member of a group can be fun. Do any of you belong to the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, or a sports team? When you join that group, do you ever have to do something special? What do you have to do? (Wear uniforms, learn the rules, practice, do projects)

Today we are going to learn about a very special group of which you are a member. You are a member of the Church. You became a member when you were baptized. As members of the Church we belong to the group of people who follow Jesus. Who remembers the name for the followers of Jesus? (Disciples) Does anyone remember what Jesus told the disciples to do? (Make disciples of all nations.) Jesus wanted all people to be united to God. Through our baptism, we are united to God.

Let's turn to our lesson.

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Our Church Follows Jesus



The disciples traveled to other places to tell the Good News of Jesus. The disciples told the people about the resurrection of Jesus. The disciples said that Jesus' death and resurrection united us to God and gave us eternal life. Many people listened to the disciples talk about Jesus. Jesus gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to the disciples. The Holy Spirit helped Jesus' followers come together as one to form the Church.

Many other people wanted to join the Church. Before they could join, they had to be baptized. The disciples baptized many followers of Jesus.

The Church grew as people learned about Jesus and His resurrection. The Holy Spirit helped people hear Jesus calling them to follow Him. We answered Jesus' call when we were baptized. We became members of the Church.

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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).

What is happening in the picture on this page? Do any of you remember being baptized? Do you have pictures of your baptism?

... to form the Church.

What did the disciples tell the people about Jesus? (The resurrection of Jesus) Who helped the disciples come together as one? (The Holy Spirit)

We became members of the Church.

When did we become members? (When we were baptized)

"All you who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, Alleluia."

Does anyone remember singing this song?

We sing this as part of the Divine Liturgy during special seasons. Why do we put on white clothes and hold a white candle when we are baptized? (To show we have been filled with light.)

We receive this gift because we have become members of the Church.

What parts of the body are sealed with holy oil? (Head, chest, back, hands, and feet) Let's point to those parts as we say them. What is the name of the oil used? (Chrism) Is the word chrism in the word chrismation?

Many of us said "Yes" to Jesus even before we could talk. We were baptized when we were babies. Our parents wanted us to be united to Jesus. They wanted us to become members of the Church.

Our godparents were with us at our baptism. They answered "Yes" for us if we were too small to talk. If you were a baby when you were baptized, your godparents said "Yes" for you.

In Baptism the priest uses blessed water and olive oil to bring us new life. We are covered with a white robe as a sign of our new life. We receive a white candle to show that we are filled with light. We truly believe the words of the Bible:



For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ... for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:27-28).

These words are familiar. At special times of the year we sing them during the Divine Liturgy:

"All you, who have been baptized into Christ,
have put on Christ. Alleluia."

After we are baptized, we receive the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit in the Mystery of Chrismation. The priest uses a special oil, chrism, that has been blessed by the Bishop or Patriarch. The word chrism is in the name Chrismation.

The priest anoints our head, chest, back, hands, and feet. He seals in the gift of the Holy Spirit. We receive this gift because we have become members of our Church.

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We continue to say "Yes" to Jesus each time we receive Communion.

Who are we united to each time we receive Holy Communion? (Jesus) Also we are united to everyone else who receives Holy Communion. What two mysteries did we receive before we received Communion? (Baptism and Chrismation) What did we join when we received those mysteries? (The Church) Every time we receive Communion we join together with all the other people who were baptized. All of us members of the Church become one. As one we form the Body of Christ.

Let's review: *As members of the Church, whom do we follow? (Jesus) Name the two Mysteries through which we became members of the Church. (Baptism and Chrismation) To whom are we united when we receive Holy Communion? (To Jesus and everyone else who says "Yes" to Jesus) Why do we follow Jesus? (To unite ourselves to God and to gain eternal life) What does eternal mean? (Forever) We will be with God forever.*

As members of the Church, we are able to receive the Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Jesus. We are united to Jesus every time we receive His Body and Blood. We continue to say "Yes" to Jesus each time we receive Communion.



Our Church follows Jesus.
We became members of our Church through Baptism and Chrismation.

Words to Remember:
Baptism: This Mystery joins us to Christ and makes us members of the Church. We are baptized into Jesus Christ. The signs of this Mystery are water, olive oil, a white robe, and a lighted candle.
Chrismation: We receive this Mystery together with Baptism. This Mystery seals the gift of the Holy Spirit through the placing of chrism, a special oil, on our head, chest, back, hands, and feet.
Eucharist: The Mystery of the Body and Blood of Jesus. When we receive the Eucharist during the Divine Liturgy, we become one with God and with each other.

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Activity Tracks

Basic: I Am a Member of Our Church
[This worksheet is in the student text.]

Today we learned we are members of a special group of followers. We are members of the Church. When did we become members? (When we were baptized) Please use your nicest printing or writing to complete this page. Use the information your parents sent in last week. [If you asked the parents to send in pictures, let the children share their pictures after they complete their writing.]

I Am a Member of Our Church

(Use the information you brought to class last week to complete the sentences on this page.)

I was born on _____

in the town of _____

I received my Baptism, Chrismation and Eucharist in _____ Church

on _____

My father's name is _____

My mother's name is _____

My godfather's name is _____

My godmother's name is _____

The name of my church is _____

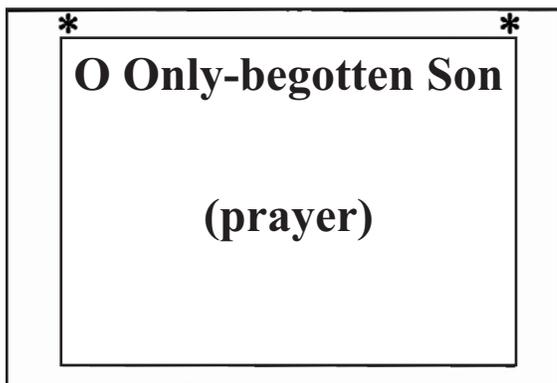
I have _____ brothers and sisters. Their names are _____

Group: "Come and Join Us" Song

Materials: "Come and Join Us" Song worksheet

Today we are going to sing a song. The tune is like the one for "Are You Sleeping?" Does anyone know that song? Let's sing this song together. [Give out copies of the worksheet at the end of this lesson.]

*Come and join us; come and join us.
We are one; we are one.
We all have been baptized; we all have been
baptized.
We are one; we are one.
[Continue singing all the stanzas.]*



Craft: "O Only-begotten Son" Prayer Page

Materials: Prayer pages from Lesson 2 (pages 89-91) in this Teacher Manual), heavier white paper or construction paper (1/2 sheet per student), hole punch, markers, stickers or stars, scissors, and glue

[Have sample ready to show children.] We have been saying a special prayer at the beginning and end of our classes. What are the first few words? (O only begotten Son) Where do we hear this prayer? (During the Divine Liturgy) Today we are going to make a prayer page. Throughout this year we are going to make prayer pages for each new prayer. We will put this page inside the cover we made during the first class. At the end of the year, you will have your own little prayer book.

Paste the prayer on a half sheet of construction paper or the heavier white paper. You can draw pictures around the prayer, or you can add the stars or stickers I have here. Punch two holes to match the ones on the prayer cover. Untie the yarn on our prayer book cover and add this new page. Now pull the yarn through the holes and tie.

Closing

Let's use our new prayer page to say our closing prayer, "O Only-begotten Son. ..."

Come and Join Us

Come and join us; come and join us.
We are one; we are one.
We all have been baptized; we all have been baptized.
We are one; we are one.

Come and join us; come and join us.
We are one; we are one.
We all have been chrismated; we all have been chrismated.
We are one; we are one.

Come and join us; come and join us.
We are one; we are one.
We receive the Eucharist; we receive the Eucharist.
We are one; we are one.

Come and Join Us

Come and join us; come and join us.
We are one; we are one.
We all have been baptized; we all have been baptized.
We are one; we are one.

Come and join us; come and join us.
We are one; we are one.
We all have been chrismated; we all have been chrismated.
We are one; we are one.

Come and join us; come and join us.
We are one; we are one.
We receive the Eucharist; we receive the Eucharist.
We are one; we are one.