



Discovery 6:

The Baptismal Covenant

Props suggested for this session: A bowl of water, a white tablecloth, a candle on a table as well as a candle for each person present, and a stone for each person present. Before proceeding, read the text highlighted in yellow, so you will know when to use the props.

Introduction

We are born into or adopted by our families. Baptism is our entrance into the Family of God. Through Baptism we make an investment in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Whether this happens as an infant, child or adult, we are given a new life in which we accept a loving relationship with God through Jesus Christ and turn away from sin and evil. It is our response to God's call to us to be his children.

The Baptismal Covenant begins with the Apostles' Creed, broken down into its three parts (The Trinity). In the early church, the person being baptized responded to each part of the Creed and was immersed in the water. Pouring water over the forehead has the same symbolic meaning.

Today in the Anglican Church these questions are asked of the whole congregation as well as the person(s) being baptized. We are reaffirming our own baptism and promise to support the newly baptized in their Christian life.

Following the Creed, five questions are asked of everyone in the congregation, not just the person being baptized or their sponsors. Again, we are reaffirming our own baptism at this point. These five questions reflect the teachings of Jesus and serve as an outline for our life and ministry.

In the Baptismal service, the persons being baptized, the families, priest and others gather around the font. At the point in which the water is poured, a prayer is said to bless the water – to claim a common thing (water) as set apart or holy. After the baptism, the priest makes the sign of the cross with holy oil on the forehead of the person who was baptized, saying, “_____ (Name), you are sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism and marked as Christ's own forever.” The water will dry up, the oil will go away, but there is a lasting sign on us – we have a new last name – “Christian.” We are children of God.

Service of Holy Baptism, pages 151-162 in the Book of Alternative Services (BAS).

Opening Prayer

All praise and thanks to you, most merciful Father, for adopting us as your own children, for incorporating us into your holy Church, and for making us worthy to share in the inheritance of the saints in light; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (BCP 311)

Remembering our Baptism

You may wish to set up the following items in preparation for this session on Baptism. On a table covered with a white cloth, place a bowl of water and place a stone in the bowl for each member of the family present. A candle is placed on the table as well. Have your family gather around the bowl, light the candle and then read the Prayer Over the Water from the Baptismal service.

We thank you, Almighty God, for the gift of water. Over it the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation. Through it you led the children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt into the land of promise. In it your Son Jesus received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah, the Christ, to lead us, through his death and resurrection, from the bondage of sin into everlasting life.

We thank you, Father, for the water of Baptism. In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection. Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, in joyful obedience to your Son, we bring into his fellowship those who come to him in faith, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (BAS p. 157-158)

Each person is invited to hold their hands, palms up, over the bowl. The parent or facilitator then scoops some of the water and one of the glass stones into their hands and says,

“_____ (Name) receive this symbol of your baptism.” Leave the stone in their palm.

Questions To Think About

What is baptism?

What is a covenant? What is a sacrament?



View the Video listening for these Key Points

Baptism

Baptismal Covenant

The Baptismal Covenant

As we live out the ministry of the baptized, we find direction through the five Baptismal Covenant promises. These promises are made at every baptism, and we ask God's help in keeping these promises. For this class all the promises are particularly relevant.

Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

Questions

1. Using a dictionary, look up the meaning of “[covenant](#).” (or click on the link). What kinds of covenants do we make in our daily lives?

2. The Prayer of Thanksgiving over the Water, on page 157 of *The Book of Alternative Services*, references several Bible stories. Look up one or more of the references listed below and identify what is the importance of water in each story?

Over it the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation. [Genesis 1:1-2](#)

Through it you led the children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt into the land of promise. [Exodus 14:21-22](#)

In it your Son Jesus received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit. [Matthew 3:13-17](#)

In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection. [Romans 6:3-4](#)

3. The Baptismal Covenant has five promises following the affirmation of faith in the Trinity (the Creed—BAS p. 158-159). Look at each promise below and answer the following two questions:

What are we being asked to do?

What insights does the video provide to help you in living out this promise?

1. *Will you continue in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?*
2. *Will you persevere in resisting evil, and whenever you fall into sin repent and return to the Lord?*
3. *Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?*
4. *Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?*
5. *Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?*

WRAP - UP

We affirm our relationship to “The Story” in the Creeds. We say that we believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus’ cross symbolizes for us the process by which we also grow, both individually and by giving ourselves to others. As we challenge and stretch ourselves in pursuit of goals, we grow.

The crucifixion of Jesus did not end his interaction with us. The resurrected Christ lives among us.

The parent or facilitator gathers your family in a circle. Lower the lights in the room if possible. From the candle you lit at the beginning of this session, light a candle for each person present, after saying the following:

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” ([John 8:12](#)).

Then the facilitator says, “*We receive our own light at our baptism.*”

Light a small candle for each person from the large one and hand out, saying,

“_____ (Name) receive the Light of Christ.”

After everyone has received a candle, continue by saying,

“At first there was one light and now there are many. We were one light and now we are a room filled with light. We are called to take that light out together. We end our services in the Anglican Church with the words of Dismissal to go in peace to love and serve the Lord, in other words, to be a light to the world.”

Continue with following prayer:

Heavenly Father, we thank you that by water and the Holy Spirit you have bestowed upon us your servants the forgiveness of sin and have raised us to the new life of grace. Sustain us, O Lord, in your Holy Spirit. Give us an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works. Amen. (BAS p. 160)

Quietly enjoy the light for a minute and then extinguish the candles.

Closing Prayer / Hymn

The following hymn can help us reflect on our session today. You may either read and pray or sing and pray the hymn.

Common Praise #39: You Are God's Work of Art

Refrain: You are God's work of art, created in Jesus the Christ.

1. You have been enlightened by the Lord. Walk as children of the light.
2. Keep the flame of faith in your heart, and may you meet Him when He comes.
3. Blessed be our God, who chose you in the light of Christ.

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Pray the Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

If you have any questions, please contact Rev. Shirley at 328-9913 or email stlukes@nb.aibn.com

This program "Discovery" was prepared by the Episcopal Diocese of Texas and adapted for use by the Anglican Parish of Woodstock 2021. Please note that any reference to Episcopal Church (USA) is the same as the Anglican Church (Canada).