



Introducing the Sacraments: Baptism (KS2) – teachers’ notes

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SLIDE 3: Learning Objectives

Today we will be able to:

- Understand why Christians choose to baptise babies.
- Understand why some Christians choose Believer’s Baptism
- Explain what happens in an infant and believers baptism ceremony
- Identify key symbols used in a baptism service and explain their meaning for Christians using appropriate language

SLIDE 4: A New Beginning

When a new baby is born to Christian parents, there is a special ceremony which welcomes them and marks the start of their life as a Christian. This is called Baptism or Christening.

Christians believe that even babies are important to God. In fact, Jesus is said to have encouraged children to come to him (Matthew 19:14).

Most religions have a special way of marking the birth of a new baby. It is usually a joyful occasion and shared with the extended family.

Encourage the class to share their experiences of welcoming a new baby. What do you do in your family? Have any of you been to one of these ceremonies? What happened? How did people feel? Did you go to a place of worship? Did you have any special food or sing special songs?

SLIDE 5: Jesus’ Baptism

The Christian holy book, the Bible, tells the story of Jesus’ baptism.

Jesus’ cousin John was sent by God to tell people that they should say sorry for their sins (wrong- doing) and turn away from wrong-doing to live a good life. This is called Confessing and Repenting. As a sign of



this, John baptised them in the River Jordan. He took them into the river and gently pushed them under the water for a few seconds, before pulling them up. John said that after him, God would send someone much greater. When John saw Jesus coming to be baptised he recognised that this was the person he said would come after him. He agreed to baptise Jesus, although he did not feel worthy. As he did so, the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove and flew down to Jesus. And a voice from Heaven was heard saying, "This is my Son, with whom I am well pleased".

You could also read Matthew Chapter 3.

Christians believe that baptism is an important ceremony, called a sacrament, because Jesus was baptised. This ceremony brings them closer to God.

Activity: Act out this story in groups. Parts would include: John the Baptist; Jesus; people coming to be baptised; The Holy Spirit; and God.

SLIDE 6: Part of the family

Christian parents often choose to have their child baptised as a baby. This is usually called Infant Baptism.

Baptism usually takes place as part of a Sunday service, although that doesn't have to be the case. For Christians who go to church every Sunday, it is a really important time for the whole community to welcome the child.

Near the beginning of the Christian baptism service, the priest asks all the people in the church if they will help the child to grow up and live as a Christian. It is important that the child is part, not only of their immediate family, but also of the whole church throughout the world. By being baptised they are joining a wider family of Christians from all over the world.

SLIDE 7: Godparents

The font is a large stone basin, filled with water. It is usually found inside but near the entrance to a church. Why do you think it is near the entrance? Because baptism is a ceremony which marks the entrance to the Christian faith.

In pairs, write a job description for a godparent. What sort of person do you think would make a good choice? What do you think the job should entail? You might include: Ensuring the child goes to church on Sundays, teaching the child to pray etc. What qualities do you think they should have? E.g. trustworthy, loyal, honest etc.



SLIDE 8: One of the most important parts of the baptism service is the promises that the parents and godparents make.

The priest asks the parents and godparents to questions about their faith and commitment. They are expected to answer for themselves and for the child to show that they are committed to bringing up the child as a Christian.

Christians believe in one God, but that God is known and worshipped as Trinity. The Father, who made the world and keeps it going; the Son, Jesus, who came into the world to save it from sin; and the Holy Spirit, the power of God who lives with believers and helps them live a good life. This is quite a complicated belief but the symbol of the trefoil, the three-leaved shape helps to illustrate it. Other ways to explain it include H₂O: Ice, Water and Steam. They are all the same element but have different properties. Or a person: They can be parent, child, teacher – one person but three roles in life.

SLIDE 9: Significance of Baptism - Membership

Have you ever worn a badge to show that you are member of something? e.g. School badge, scouts/guides

Design a badge which could be used as a symbol for your class. You could include your year group, the name of your class or your teacher's initials. What colours would you use?

Water is a very important part of baptism. Water is put into the font before the service starts and during the service, prayers are said over it, asking God to bless it.

The priest dips their hand in the water and draws the sign of the cross, the symbol of Christianity, on the baby's forehead. This is like marking the baby with a badge to show that they belong to Jesus and are members of the worldwide church community.

SLIDE 10: Significance of Baptism – Naming ceremony

The priest holds the baby and asks the parents what the baby is to be called. Then saying the baby's name, they scoop water out three times, saying "I baptise you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen"

This shows that part of the significance of baptism is that it is a naming ceremony at the start of a baby's life. It is an opportunity to thank God for the baby and to start them on their earthly life.

Note again, that pouring the water three times symbolises the Christian teaching that God is One, revealed as the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit,



SLIDE 11: Significance of Baptism - Shine as a Light

At the end of the service the parents are given a candle and the congregation say these words.

In pairs, discuss: What do you think it means to 'Shine as a light in the world?'

Draw the discussion together to bring out ideas such as light as a symbol of good, the opposite of darkness, bringing hope in troubled places and times etc. A life lived for others and for God.

SLIDE 12: Recap

Ask pupils to look at this picture of a baptism. What can you see? Can you remember the significance of the things in the picture?

Font – baby is baptised using the blessed water in the font

Priest – wearing special robes

Baby – wearing a white dress, symbolic of purity. Some Christian families pass on Christening robes for many generations. The one this baby is wearing is about 100 years old and has been worn by many babies

Parents and Godparent – who have made promises on behalf of the baby

Candle – symbol of Jesus, the Light of the world, and how the child is to live their life as a light in the world

Activity: Create an invitation to an Infant Baptism. Think about symbols you could use to decorate the invitation.

SLIDE 13: Believer's Baptism

Some Christians choose not to baptise babies, but prefer to wait until the child is old enough to really understand the commitment and significance of the promises they are making. Someone who has not been brought up as a Christian may become a believer when they are older and many chose to be baptised by full-immersion. This means that they will be put right under the water and pulled up again.

This is usually called Believers' Baptism.

Discuss the similarities and differences between the two pictures.

The most obvious difference apart from the age of the person being baptised, is that there is a pool rather than a font. This sort of pool is called a Baptistry.



SLIDE 14: A Believer's Baptism usually involves being completely put under the water. This is called a full-immersion baptism.

This symbolises dying and rising to new life. Christians believe that Jesus died and was placed in the tomb. Three days later he was rose again to new life. By going under the water and coming back up again, Christians feel that they have symbolically joined with Jesus dying and rising a new life of faith.

The water can also symbolise washing away of sins. When someone becomes a Christian, they believe that all their sins are forgiven by God and they can start a new life, afresh. Just as water washes away dirt, so baptism washes away sin.

For this reason, many chose to wear white clothes when they are baptised.

Discuss: Why might some Christians who were baptised as babies choose to have a Believer's Baptism when they are adults?

SLIDE 15: What have we learnt?

Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist

Baptism is a ceremony where Christians welcome a new baby into the church family

Parents, Godparents and the whole church community promise to bring the baby up as a Christian

The baby has water poured over their head in the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Some Christians wait until a child is grown up and can chose to be baptised for themselves. This is called Believer's Baptism and can often involve full-immersion in water