



## FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME



### UNIT 4

# Celebrating the Sacraments

#### AIMS

1. To understand that as Christians we celebrate in many different ways.
2. To introduce the celebration of the Mass as our main celebration and give a brief look at the Liturgical Year.
3. To identify and understand the meaning and importance of the seven sacraments and the signs and symbols related to them.

#### KEY WORDS

- SACRAMENTS,
- CELEBRATIONS
- Name for each of the sacraments: BAPTISM, etc.
- SIGNS, SYMBOLS

#### INTRODUCTION

Ask children to give examples of what they do when they are happy. They usually want to share their happiness with others and celebrate. Invite the children to give examples of special occasions when they had celebrations, parties, etc in their families. Explain that in the Church we do the same - we often gather to celebrate. Today we briefly look at our main celebrations.

#### RESOURCES

- Images/Posters for each of the 7 sacraments.
- Various items (or images of) used in the celebration of sacraments and other special days: ex. Water; rings etc.

#### MAIN

- Explain that the most important celebration is our Sunday gathering for the **Mass**: the celebration of the **Eucharist**. Briefly invite the children to provide examples how we celebrate at Mass: we sing, we pray, we share peace, we receive the body of Christ (for those who have already made their First Holy Communion). Say that we will be learning about the Mass later on in other units.
- Also explain that there are so many other celebrations during the year. Invite children to mention any special dates or feast days of saints or of Our Lady that they know of. Using a poster showing the Liturgical Year briefly talk about the special seasons of Advent, Christmas Time, Ordinary time, Lent, Easter time etc. Show how during the year there are so many special days we celebrate e.g. Christmas, Epiphany, Ash Wednesday etc. up to Christ the King which is the end of the Church's year.
- Introduce the idea of the **Sacraments**: special **celebrations** that we have in our Catholic faith. When we receive any of these sacraments we move closer to Jesus. We show we want to be and remain his friends. Show images/posters showing the seven sacraments (see resources section). Go through each of the seven sacraments. Briefly talk about each of them to explain what happens in each of these 7 celebrations. Use captions showing key words, images or signs and symbols to match with the poster of each of the sacraments. Ensure children understand the purpose of each Sacrament and who is it intend for. Also explain that some are only celebrated once in our life (e.g. Baptism and Confirmation) while others we can receive regularly (e.g. Reconciliation and Holy Communion).
  1. BAPTISM: We become God's Children. We are now part of God's family: Christians. Symbols/signs used: Water, Easter Candle; White Garment etc (more in Unit 5)
  2. EUCHARIST: We receive the Body of Christ. Symbols/signs used: Bread and wine.
  3. CONFIRMATION: We receive the Holy Spirit. We become adult Christians. Symbols/signs used: Laying of Hands, Flame (Holy Spirit), oil of chris.
  4. RECONCILIATION: God forgives us. Symbols/signs used: absolution (more in Unit 12)
  5. ANOINTING OF THE SICK: Jesus helps people who are ill. The priest prays for them and anoints them. Symbols/signs used: Oil of anointing.
  6. HOLY ORDERS: A man is Ordained to Serve in the Church. Symbols/signs used: Laying of Hands and anointing with oil.
  7. MARRIAGE or MATRIMONY: Man and woman become One to form a family. They are united in Love for each other and for children they may have. Symbols/signs used: rings.
- Also explain that the sacraments can be grouped in three categories, namely Sacraments of **Initiation** (1, 2 and 3), **Healing** (4 and 5) and **Service** (6 and 7) (see Worksheet 4).

#### CONCLUDING PRAYER

Invite children to look at the images and captions used in this session about CELEBRATIONS. Ask them to bring to mind real people involved in any of these sacraments and pray for them. Ex. someone soon to be baptised or getting married etc.

Remind that this year they will be celebrating two of the sacraments for the first time. Lead a group prayer asking God to help everyone in the group in this time of preparation.

#### NOTES

There is a PowerPoint presentation that follows this session. You may find it helpful to use as you go through the main steps of this session. Link in SDC Website, Resources section ([www.sdc.me.uk/resources](http://www.sdc.me.uk/resources))

#### ACTIVITY

Scramble the posters, captions, artefacts/objects showing signs and symbols and place them on the floor where children can access them. Invite children to take turns to pick a caption or object and match it to the corresponding sacrament to show their understanding. Hand out Worksheet 4 and explain the task of unscrambling words to reveal the name of each of the 7 sacraments, and filling in the missing letter in the captions etc.