

Stations for Sacraments

The following is a set of seven self-guided stations for youth to explore the two great sacraments and five sacramental rites. You will need to gather the youth before they begin (we did so around the Baptismal font) to provide an introduction to the sacraments--what they are and what is the Church's definition of sacrament. Have enough copies of each of the pages at each table (one for each youth). Part of our confirmation program included writing in journals, so the youth wrote the answers to the reflection questions in their journals. Ask each youth to begin with Baptism but then wander to any station, being sure to complete them all.

The self-guided portion of this activity lasts about 45 minutes. Consider having music playing quietly in the background on a CD player. Note that because the activities are meant to engage the heart, they do not provide definitions or formal explanations for each sacrament. When the youth have finished their exploration, we gathered to talk about their experiences. We wove teaching about the sacraments (providing formal definitions) into the conversation.

Set up one table for each sacrament, laying a nice cloth on the table to begin (white for Baptism and Holy Eucharist, purple for reconciliation of a penitent and other colors, perhaps green, for the remaining.) Set each table with the following items:

Baptism:

Pitcher of water and a glass for each participant
Candles (one for each participant) and matchbox
Cross

Holy Eucharist:

Red grapes and pita bread
Candles (one for each participant) and matchbox
White tablecloth

Confirmation:

Oil in a shell
Candles (one for each participant) and matchbox

Holy Matrimony:

Two rings
Candles (one for each participant) and matchbox

Reconciliation of a penitent:

Candles (one for each participant) and matchbox
Six photographs illustrating healing touches
Purple tablecloth

Unction:

Oil in a shell
Candles (one for each participant) and matchbox

Ordination:

Stole
Statue of a the good shepherd
Photograph of cattle yoked together
Candles (one for each participant) and matchbox

Baptism

Read:

(John 5: 5-15) So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink'. (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink", you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.'

Reflect:

Recall a time when you drank a glass of water when you were really thirsty. How did drinking the water make you feel? Have you ever felt spiritually thirsty? What did you do to quench that thirst?

Respond:

Light a candle: The light of Christ's love shines within you. As a member of the church, let that light shine wherever you go.

Pour a glass of water to drink: Water sustains life. We grow in a sea of water in our mother's wombs and born into the Church family, given new life in Christ, with water.

Hold the cross: Remember: At baptism you became a member of the Church and were marked as Christ's own forever. That mark cannot be taken away. Through the Paschal mystery we are buried with Christ by Baptism into his death, and raised with him to new life.

Holy Eucharist

Read:

(Luke 24: 28-35) As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Reflect:

Just like the disciples gathered in Emmaus, Jesus is revealed to us in the breaking of the bread. We celebrate the Eucharist to give thanks to God for the gift of new life in Jesus. How has Jesus been revealed to you in Eucharist?

After being fed at the Table we go out into the world to serve Christ with gladness and singleness of heart. How have you served Christ this week?

Respond:

Eat a few grapes: Grapes are one of the common fruit grown in Israel. Ever since ancient times they were picked, crushed and fermented into a drink for celebration. Eat a few grapes and remember celebrations you have enjoyed. Thank God for those times of celebration.

Take a bite of bread: Bread is a staple of our meals. By choosing common food as a way of remembering Him and celebrating his resurrection, Jesus invites us to know that He is with each and every day.

Light a candle: The light of Christ's love shines within you. After being fed at the Table we go out into the world to serve Christ with gladness and singleness of heart.

Confirmation

Read:

(John 14:23) Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him.

Reflect:

Jesus longs to be with so deeply he offers to dwell with us, to make us his home. What does home provide for you? What does it mean to be at home with Christ? How do you make a home for Christ in your life?

At confirmation, God renews the covenant God made with us at our baptism and we are sent in the power of the Spirit to perform the service God has given us. In the covenant and through the baptismal promises, we promise to keep Jesus' word. What are the ways in which you keep Jesus' word?

Respond:

Light a candle: The light of Christ has made a home within you. Give thanks to God for the light that shines your way and for the strength to share that light with others.

Holy Matrimony

Read:

(Matthew 5:13-16) You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

‘You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Reflect:

Jesus is the light of the world. The love between two people joined in Holy Matrimony begins with the love of Christ for the Church. How do married couples shine the light of Christ on the world?

Couples often exchange rings as symbols of their vows. Rings are in the shape of a circle. What might its shape symbolize for the union of two people?

What distinguishes a civil marriage from a marriage in the church is that in a church the priest pronounces God's blessing on the couple. At what other times do we receive blessings? What does a blessing mean to you?

Respond:

Light a candle: The light of Christ's love shines within you. Give thanks to God for the opportunity shine that light in the world by the friendships and commitments we make to others.

Reconciliation of a penitent

Read:

(2 Corinthians 5:18-21) All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Reflect:

The word reconcile comes from the Latin word "to make whole again." Sinning breaks relationship; reconciling restores it. Remember a time when you were in need of forgiveness or were yourself forgiven. What stood between you and the other person? What did you, or others, do to make the relationship right again?

Reconciliation of a penitent is a sacramental rite that is available to all people, but not required of anyone. It is a time of intentionally confessing how we have missed the mark to God in the presence of a priest and receiving absolution by a priest.

Respond:

Choose a photograph: When a priest pronounces absolution he or she lays hands on the penitent. In Matthew, a woman who had been bleeding touched Jesus' cloak and was healed. Jesus touched the blind man's eyes and the man was healed. We yearn for healing and caring touches. Choose a photograph and consider how touch gives life in the moment captured by the camera.

Light a candle: The light of Christ's love shines within you. When we turn away from that light, our pathway becomes dim and our journey becomes difficult to navigate. Thank God for forgiving us even before we have turned away from God's light.

Unction of the Sick

Read:

(Psalm 91:9-16)

Because you have made the Lord your refuge,
the Most High your dwelling-place,
no evil shall befall you,
no scourge come near your tent.

For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways.
On their hands they will bear you up,
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.
You will tread on the lion and the adder,
the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot.

Those who love me, I will deliver;
I will protect those who know my name.
When they call to me, I will answer them;
I will be with them in trouble,
I will rescue them and honour them.
With long life I will satisfy them,
and show them my salvation.

Reflect:

What does it mean to make God your refuge?

How might your day be different if you knew in your heart that God has sent angels to watch over you all that you do? Might you choose to act differently? If so, how?

Respond:

Dip your finger in oil: Rub the oil into your hand and remember a time when you or someone you know has needed healing.

Light a candle: The light of Christ's love shines within you. Give thanks to God for being a refuge.

Ordination

Read:

(John 10: 11-18) 'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.'

(Matthew 11: 28-30) Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

Reflect:

The ministry of the baptized is to represent Christ in the world. There are three orders of ministry with particular ministry to the church. The particular ministry of a bishop is as apostle, chief priest, and pastor of a diocese, a priest is as pastor to the people, and a deacon is as a servant to those in need. How do you represent Christ in the world?

A "stole" is the long strip of fabric a priest wears over both shoulders and a deacon wears over the left shoulder and crossed to the right side. It represents the yoke of Christ. What comes to mind when you think of the word "yoke"? How is it different or the same from the yoke described in Matthew 11: 28-30?

Respond:

Hold the statue of the Good Shepherd: What does the image of the Good Shepherd suggest about the ministry of a priest?

Light a candle: The light of Christ's love shines within you. Give thanks to God for the light that ordained ministers provide to the Church.