

GRADE 9

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

BOOK 3: THE SACRAMENTS



Grade 9 Religious Education

BOOK 3

THE SACRAMENTS

This book is the third of a series of four books which make up the Religious Education Programme for Grade 9.

Nihil Obstat: Fr. Anthony Arthur MSC, S.T.L., M.A.

Imprimatur: Rev. Bishop Gerard J. Deschamps SMM, L.E.D., M.A.(LIT.), L.C.L.

Prepared by: * Commission for Christian Education in Secondary Schools
Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

Writing and Layout: Sr. Elizabeth Taylor OLSH

Acknowledgements: Word Publishing for Photos - Pages 6, 8, 11, 18, 35, 36, 37, 40, 41.

Published by: Commission for Christian Education
Goroka, P.O. Box 127, Papua New Guinea

1999

Printed by: Wirui Press, Wewak, PNG.

*This publication was made possible through generous donations from JUNGSCHEAR - Austria, MISSIO - Germany and Austria, Archdiocese of Munich, Germany, SVD - Holland; and many private benefactors.

Our special thanks go to those who have given advice and support during the course of the production. God's blessing be with them all.

Sr. Ehrentrude Pretzl, SSpS, Coordinator.

CONTENTS

TOPIC 1	ABOUT THE SACRAMENTS
TOPIC 2	BAPTISM
TOPIC 3	CONFIRMATION
TOPIC 4	EUCCHARIST
TOPIC 5	RECONCILIATION
TOPIC 6	THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK
TOPIC 7	THE SACRAMENT OF ORDERS
TOPIC 8	THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

Prayer before Class

O Holy Spirit of light and truth,
help me now as I begin this class
to understand what I am taught
to remember what I learn,
and to work hard to learn well.
Amen.

Prayer after Class

We thank you O God
for all that we have learnt.
Reward our teachers and bless our
companions in class.
Protect us and help us to be happy
and kind, now and throughout our
lives. Amen.

To the student:

Your exercise book is a companion to this book. By writing down your thoughts, sharing them with your teacher and with others, you will learn far more about yourself and God's action in your life, than by using this book by itself.

There are many questions that come to our mind when we think about the Sacraments. May you discover more and more, the love of Father, Son and Spirit, their dwelling place within you, and their plan for your life and for the world, as you learn about these special times when God comes to us.

Topic One

About the Sacraments

This book is about the sacraments of Jesus. Jesus came to redeem us and to teach us about God, his Father. A sacrament is a special time when God meets us and gives himself to us. We use signs to reveal how God has truly touched us and come to us. Not all Churches give the name 'sacrament' to these precious times we meet Jesus, but all Churches do recognize and celebrate them - e.g., when a person is baptized, when they make a commitment, when they are married.

We have special times in our lives as human beings, so also as Christians, our lives have special times.

Probably a cactus does not remember its birthday or have a party every now and then. But human beings do! We celebrate when people are married, when a child is born, when we are selected for high school or win a prize for something.

Write down an event in your life that was really special to you.

Share with the person next to you, the way in which your family celebrated this event.

What special event has your family or school celebrated recently?

Draw and illustrate a poster showing some of the special times that human beings celebrate.

Put the poster on your classroom wall.

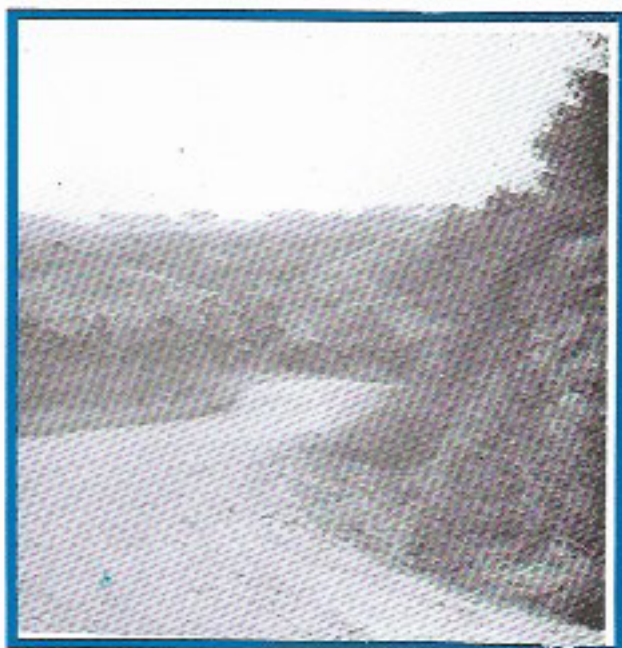
Sometimes we celebrate just because it is weekend, and time to rest from our everyday work.

God understands and loves these special times that we celebrate. To show us that our human life is good, and also to save us from the power of the evil one, God became a

human being, just like us. He was born in poverty and was honoured first by shepherds (Lk 2:8-18).

He grew up like we do; in age, in wisdom, in grace (Lk 2:52). He was like us in everything but sin (Heb 4:15).

When Jesus began his mission, he did it in the midst of ordinary life. Jesus walked dusty roads like we do.



He enjoyed meals with his friends as we do. He spent a lot of time in the open air, praying in the hills, visiting the seashore, going to the marketplace.

Because of the Incarnation, (God becoming human), everything connected to what is good in human life is sacred, it has meaning and importance. This means that the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the games we play, the happy times we share, the work we do, the sleep we need, are all important to God, who became one of us.

Most importantly however, God comes to us in a special way in the very deep events of our lives.

*He comes to us at birth and at death.
He is there to strengthen us as we grow.
He feeds us at the table of the Eucharist.
He stands ready to forgive us when we are
sinful and full of guilt.
He comforts and helps us when we are sick.
He sustains us in our vocations as married
people or ministers to his people.*



All the sacraments that the Church celebrates can be traced back to Jesus. When we look at his life, we see he was present to people when special help, grace, and friendship with God were needed. Jesus came to people, showing God's love and concern for them, when they were sick, when they needed healing and forgiveness, when they were just beginning married life.

God is still present to people today.

God comes to us in many ways, but the seven sacraments named by the Church are very special times when God reaches into and touches our lives.

The sacraments help us to remember what Jesus has done for us. But more than this, they continue and celebrate Jesus' glorious deeds today.

Jesus still continues to heal people.

Jesus still continues to forgive people.

Jesus still continues to feed people.

Somewhere in the world now, a priest is saying to someone 'Go in peace, your sins are forgiven'.

Somewhere the Mass is being offered, and Jesus is feeding people with his own body and blood.

Somewhere there is a wedding, and Jesus is joining in the joy and celebrations as he did at the wedding feast of Cana, and offering the couple the new wine of his Spirit to help them on their journey.

Somewhere, Jesus is saying 'This day you will be with me in Paradise', as someone is dying.

Somewhere he is calling someone to follow him, and somewhere he is consecrating such a person for a life of service to his people.

Jesus *promised* that he would be with us; and the sacraments are guaranteed moments of encountering Jesus.

How can I best get myself ready to meet Jesus in one of the sacraments?

- ♦ I can faithfully believe in Jesus' ongoing work.
- ♦ I can prepare for his coming, by thinking ahead and praying for the grace God wants to give me.
- ♦ I can truly trust that God's grace will flood my soul in the meeting between Jesus and myself in the sacrament.

If you believe and desire and trust, then you will certainly grow in friendship with Jesus and your relationship with the Father will also deepen.

The Sacraments as signs or symbols

The sacraments all use everyday things we can experience through our senses, as signs speaking to us of God truly coming to us. Things like bread, wine, water, light, oil. Our people are very used to symbols. Some kunai grass tied on a stick near my aibika says 'Don't steal this aibika or else!' Or maybe a drawing of a hand is used to say, 'This is mine, don't touch it'.



Not only in PNG but all over the world, people use symbols. When a soldier wears a uniform, he is not just putting on clothes to cover his body from the heat or the cold. The soldier is using the clothes to say 'I am somebody in this community. You know my job'. The uniform tells us about his work and his importance.

Story 1.

Once a little girl went to bed as usual. Her parents were in another room. Then there came a fierce thunderstorm. The lightning lit up the whole sky and the thunder cracked. The noise got louder and louder. The little girl was very frightened. She cried out 'Mummy, Mummy, come quickly, I'm scared.' Her mother called back 'Don't worry, Asella. God loves you. God is watching over you.' The child replied, 'Yes, I know that Mummy. I know God loves me, but just now I need someone with skin on.'

A girl wearing high heels and a smart suit might be saying

'I'm enough, I'm not just a bush meri!'

It is part of being human to use signs or symbols to express things. Even a child does this.

If a child wants a PK from the store and the mother doesn't want to buy it; what happens?

Words or signs?

The more important something is to us, the more we want to use a sign to show our feelings. If we are very, very angry with someone, we might cut their clothes. If our friend said that he or she was really angry with us but then did nothing at all, we would not believe they were truly angry. But if we went to our dorm and found our jeans cut in half, and mashed pawpaw in our suitcase, then we would truly get the message.

Psychologists tell us that body language (actions of our body) is really the primary human language. Body language 'speaks' far better than words.

How do students 'say' that they are not very interested in a class? By ordinary language or by body language?

Imagine you have just won a very exciting volleyball grand final. 'Do you politely say 'well done' to each other and then sit down? If you are the losers, do you say 'bad luck' and then begin talking about how to do your maths homework?

What usually happens?

Act out the winners and the losers.

'Body language' is better than words.

In the same way, the body language and the symbols used in the sacraments help us to touch, to see, and to understand God's loving presence.

Summary: Read Story 1.

Each sacrament puts 'skin' on the reality of God's love for us. The sacraments do this by using ordinary everyday things we know or use in our lives.



Read Story 2 below.

What is the story trying to say?

Think of a time when God came to you through an ordinary event in your life.

Write the story of this time in your book.

Story 2

On a small island there lived a man who had great faith in God. Sometimes his place experienced cyclones and floods. One time the cyclone season was very serious. His home was threatened by the rising waters of the nearby river. His neighbours all prepared to leave and they came to help him collect his belongings together.

But the man refused to leave, confident that God would protect both him and his home.

The neighbours begged him to go with them but he still refused. Meantime the water kept rising. His neighbours left. The water crept up and up, till it reached his platform.

A rescue boat came by and offered to take him to safety, but he said that he trusted in God to save him.

Then the water rose higher and it began to carry his furniture out of the house. The boat came back, but still the man refused to leave.

The water rose higher and the man had to climb on his roof. One whole day passed. The boat came back a third time but again the man refused to leave.

Finally, a helicopter came. The man also refused the helicopter. Minutes later there was a big rush of water and the man was swept from his house and drowned.

When he met God he was really really angry.

'Why didn't you protect me?' he yelled.

'I trusted in you and you let me down!'

God spoke gently to him.

'Cool down my friend. I did my best to save you. I sent your **neighbours** to take you and your things to safety.

Then I sent a rescue boat and I made it go back **three times**. I even sent a **helicopter**.

But you wanted an extraordinary sign of my love when the way I choose to work is to use ordinary people and ordinary things.

Because the sacraments use ordinary things, we must be careful not to be too casual about them and lose the reverence we ought to have.

The two stories tell us two

very important things

about the sacraments.

1. It is not enough for God to speak to us in words only.

We need signs and actions.

2. God comes to us in ordinary human events.



Topic Two

The Sacrament of Baptism

Do you know?

The Sacraments are often grouped together as follows:

Sacraments of Initiation:

Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist

Sacraments of Healing:

Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick

Sacraments of Commitment and Service

Marriage, Holy Orders.

So the first sacrament we are going to study, Baptism, is a sacrament of Initiation.

What does the word initiation mean? What does it remind you of?

Some of the most familiar words in all of the New Testament are those Jesus said before he ascended into heaven

"Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And know I am with you always, to the end of the world."

(Mt 28:18-20).

Baptism is one thing that all Christian Churches have in common.

This is because these words of Jesus are very clear. They are his instructions to his disciples about how to carry on his work on earth. Baptism, along with Confirmation and the Eucharist initiate a person into the Church and make it possible for the person to share the life and mission of the Church.

We know that after traditional initiation, a young person has new rights and duties in the community. If you have never had a traditional initiation, then you might find it

helpful to think of your Gr. 10 Graduation, or the getting of your driver's licence as a kind of initiation. There is a period of preparation for both of these events. Both give us new rights and duties. In the same way, Baptism grants the new Christian the rights and the responsibilities of a member of Christ's body.

Symbols of Baptism.

To help us to appreciate the rich meaning of the sacrament of Baptism, many symbols are used in the baptism ceremony.

How many symbols can you name in the picture below?



Imagine how it would be if the priest just said to someone 'I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' and made no action at all to them, no water, no sign of the cross, no shaking hands, no smile or greeting, no oil or candle or white cloth, just only words and nothing else. We would find it hard to even believe that the person was truly baptized, that something real had happened to them.

Fortunately, Baptism is not like that. Many beautiful symbols are used.

The most important and beautiful symbol used is water.

What have you used water for today?

What is the name for water in your own language?

Think about the last few days. In how many ways have you used water? List them down.

In a second column next to your list, try to write down how this way of using water in your everyday life, is an image of what Baptism does for us.

Ways in which I have used water lately	How this use of water can be a picture of baptism
I washed myself	Baptism washes my soul from sin.
I watered plants	
I drank water	
.....	

As well as making plants grow, quenching our thirst, and all the other beautiful things about water, water can also be scary.

Water can drown us.

The terrible tidal wave disaster in Aitape in 1998, is a reminder to us that water is also an image of death.

In baptism this image is used to mean death to an old life of sin. St. Paul says it often: e.g. 'when you were buried with him in Baptism' Col 2:12.

We sometimes forget that our baptism is a real 'burial' to living in a selfish way. It is dying because it is much easier to be bad than to be good. If you are feeling like giving up then read St. Paul who encourages us over and over to keep running the race to the finish.

Before we were born, we were surrounded by water in our mother's womb. When the water broke, then we began to be born.

We changed our way of living from how it was inside the womb, to life outside. When we pass through the waters of Baptism, then we too are born into a new life, into another way of living, just like the baby comes from the darkness inside its mother's womb to the light outside.

White Clothes

White clothes are often used to remind us of how we live now in the light. Remember Jesus' clothes shone as white as snow during his transfiguration. The white clothes also symbolize that we have been washed clean, as well as truly being like Jesus transfigured on the mountain.

Candle:

This is another symbol used in Baptism. At Easter, when we renew our baptismal promises, we often hold lighted candles. The most outstanding characteristic of a candle is that it gives light. Jesus used the image of light a lot in his teaching. He said

'I am the light of the world; anyone who follows me will not be walking in the dark, he will have the light of life' (Jn 8:12).

Those who do not recognize Jesus, prefer the darkness of sin to the light of Christ.

When the newly baptized Christian is given a lighted candle the following prayer is said.

Receive the light of Christ.

Walk always as a child of the light.

Keep the flame of faith alive in your heart.

When the Lord comes, may you go out to meet him with all the saints in the heavenly kingdom.

Oil

Oil is another symbol of baptism. The holy oil used in baptism is an important symbol with a deep meaning.

Today oil is a symbol for wealth. The very rich countries have a lot of oil. Some of our provinces produce oil for use here in our country as well as for export.

Oil is used in many cosmetics and medicines. It is used as a fuel, it is used for machinery as well as being an ingredient in the production of plastics, paints, fertilizers and many other goods. It is used in cooking and in soap. We use oil for our hair and for dancing. Oil is very important in our everyday life.



In Bible times too, oil was very important. Olive oil was mixed with a sweet smelling substance called balsam. It was used to anoint.

For example, oil that had been perfumed with balsam was used to anoint the heads of guests at dinner parties to show respect and honour.

You might remember from Luke's gospel, how one Pharisee, whose name was Simon, failed to extend this kindness to Jesus.

But a woman who was a sinner came in from the street to do so. (Lk 7:36-50).

Dead bodies were also rubbed with oil as a preparation for burial. This was the task the women went to perform on Jesus' body on Easter Sunday morning (Lk 16:1).

The Jewish people also used to consecrate their altars and priests with a holy oil to symbolize God's continuous presence. We still do this today.

The most important use for oil in religious ceremonies in biblical times was for the anointing of kings. In Israel the anointing of the king, who was considered God's servant or son, took on a special meaning. After a time came the belief that a special 'anointed one' of God would come to free the people and be their redeemer. The word for 'anointed one' is 'Christ' in Greek.

Christians get their name because they are 'anointed' followers of the 'Anointed One', Jesus Christ.

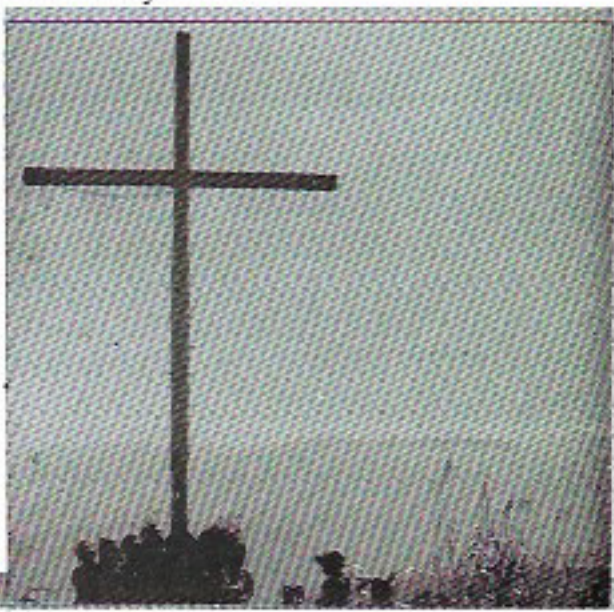
Baptism is sometimes called 'Christening' to remind the person that they are called to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

Adult Baptism

In the early Church, it was common for people to become Christians when they were adults. A person who wanted baptism did so because they were attracted to the Christian community. The period of preparation was called the *catechumentate* and usually lasted three years.

During this time, the catechumen learned about the Christian faith and lived a life of prayer, fasting and conversion.

The commitment to becoming a Christian was very serious because many times in the first centuries Christians were a hunted group. Many were subject to persecution and even martyrdom.



In the early Church, the baptism of a group of catechumens took place on Holy Saturday night after a 40 day extra period of prayer and formal instruction. During this time the candidate would learn the Creed and the Our Father. From writings we still have from the 2nd century this was the pattern followed:

- The candidate prayed and fasted on Holy Saturday as preparation
- the Church community also prayed and fasted with the candidate to show that baptism was not an individual thing but a community celebration
- the person was questioned by the bishop to see if they were ready for baptism
- the person promised to give up Satan and his evil ways
- the Bishop 'signed' the person with oil. Then the candidate entered the water to symbolize their dying and rising with Jesus.
- the person was asked three Trinitarian questions: Do you believe in the Father, Do you believe in the Son? Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?
- After the person came from the water, they were anointed with oil of chrism and then everyone prayed that the new Christian would be filled with the Spirit (This part of the ceremony is now called Confirmation)
- The candidate was given a new white garment as a sign of new life in Christ. They were also given a lighted candle.
- The new Christian was introduced into the community, the sign of peace was given and the Eucharist was celebrated. At the eucharistic celebration, the newly baptized person would receive his or her first Holy Communion.

From these writings we can see that our custom of baptizing has remained similar for 2000 years.

The early form of baptism included all the symbols we use today, oil, candle, white cloth, water, the Creed.

Infant Baptism.

Although it was adults who were the first baptized, very soon children were baptized too. We know that some of the early martyrs of the Church were very young, and the Acts of the Apostles talks about whole households being baptized. These 'households' surely included children.

Some people think that only adults should be baptized. They say that Christianity is an adult religion, and it takes adult faith and commitment.

Others think that children should be baptized as well.

What do you think?

Copy the table below into your books. Fill in the spaces with some points supporting each of the two sides.

Also try to think of some points against.

Have a class debate on this topic.

Points in favour of Adult Only Baptism	Points in favour of Infant Baptism
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
Conclusion

Some last points:

The tradition of the Church has been that children are baptized as well as adults. Many people think that we need the grace the sacrament of Baptism gives to help us on our journey through life to the Father.

Infant baptism is also a reminder that God's love does not depend on us, our maturity, our ability to think or to choose.

God's love extends to us simply because we are his children. In fact the smaller we are, the greater is God's concern for us.

Jesus also said 'let the little children come to me and do not stop them'.

Of course the final decision about whether to accept and live the responsibilities of our baptism rests with the grown child.

He or she can never be forced to accept God's gift of love and friendship. The child can only be shown by a loving family, that God's love is so important to the parents, that they wish to share it with their child from the very beginning.



Activities:

1. List at least five things your parents value. (Find out by asking them what they value as well as by your own observations). Are any of these related to the Good News of Jesus? Tick the ones your parents value that you think are related to Jesus.

2. Are you glad your parents baptized you as a child? Why? or Why not?

3. If you were the priest of a parish, and some parents came to you wanting their child to be baptized, but you knew that the parents did not participate in the life of the Church, would you baptize the child?

Note: The Church names the parents the first and most important teachers of the faith.

4. Copy the list below putting them in order of how important you think they are for the spiritual environment of a child as he or she is growing up.

Parents go to Mass on Sundays, and sometimes on weekdays.

Parents say they will send the child to a Catholic school.

Parents support the Church financially.

Parents attend some classes on the meaning of Baptism.

Parents participate in parish activities, apart from attendance at Mass.

Parents marriage is happy.

Parents pray in the home.

What else do you think is important?

Living our Baptism.

Most of us were baptized as infants. In a way, the decision was made for us by our parents and godparents. They wished us to be members of God's family from the very beginning of our life.

This does not mean we have no choice in the matter however. Baptism is something we live every day. Every time we struggle to resist the temptations of sin, we are saying yes to Jesus and to our Baptism.

Every time we go out of our way to help our parents, friends, teachers, even strangers, we live our Baptism.

When we pray and make sacrifices for others, we live our Baptism.

When we worship God in community, we are truly making our Baptism our own.

We know it is a struggle at times, but the joy and help we receive from Jesus make it worthwhile.

In fact as we come to reflect about what life with Jesus means, most of us would not want to live in any other way.

REVISION

The symbols of baptism speak to us of the following realities:

1. Water points to our new life in Christ, our death to sin, and our purification as we join the Christian community, the body of Christ.
2. The fire of the candle and our white clothes remind us to let the light of Christ shine in our lives.
3. The holy oil, called chrism, reminds us that we have taken the name Christian and are followers of Jesus.

In regard to the argument about adult or infant baptism, even though many of us were baptized as children, we live and make our own our Baptism, when we follow the Spirit of Jesus in our lives and listen to his voice encouraging us to be forgiving, to be generous and to be respectful of all other people.



Test Yourself

After rating yourself on the following items, share your responses with a classmate.

Explain to your friend why you put yourself on that place on the rating line. The key is at the top of the next column.

Key:

A mark at the far right means a strong **Yes**

A mark at the far left means a strong **No**

A mark in the middle means **Undecided**

Copy the scales below into your book with their sentences. Then mark the scale.

- A. I believe in the Good News of Jesus

- B. I am willing to suffer for my faith

- C. I am willing to tell others about my faith

- D. I am willing to die to sin

- E. I am willing to be a follower of Jesus

Now look at your results and reflect on them. Write a paragraph to say whether you think you have accepted the faith that was spoken for you as a child, or whether it is still only the faith of those who spoke for you. (If you have marks in the middle than you have not yet decided on living your Baptism).

My Baptism was...

date.....

Topic Three

The Sacrament of Confirmation

The second sacrament of initiation is called Confirmation, which means 'making strong'. In Confirmation we are strengthened for the mission given us in Baptism.

The letter to the Hebrews says

Let us go forward then, to mature teaching, and leave behind us the first lessons of the Christian message. We should not lay again the foundation of turning away from useless works and believing in God, of the teaching about baptisms and the laying on of hands; of the resurrection of the dead and the eternal judgment. Let us go forward! (Heb 6:1-3)

This quote from Hebrews lists the first parts of Christian instruction.

(Name these six first lessons).

The part of this letter we are interested in, is the laying-on of hands.

The 'laying on of hands' is considered by the Church as the true part of the sacrament of Confirmation.

Confirmation has been called the sacrament of maturity. But this does not mean physical or psychological maturity.

Confirmation is a call to live in response to God's love.

Confirmation is about becoming mature spiritually.

Check your spiritual maturity IQ by copying and filling in the chart in the next column.

Give yourself 10 points for each tick in the first column, 5 points ones in the second column, 2 points for ones in the last column. Then add up your score.

	I do, most of the time	I do but only sometimes	I only do this rarely
Pray often			
Witness to my faith			
Show concern for the poor			
Try to learn about my religion			
Ask for God's forgiveness			
Admit when I am wrong			
Actively join in the Liturgy			

Results:

60 - 70	High IQ
50 - 59	Medium IQ
Less than 50	Low spiritual maturity.

Write down one way in which you can improve your spiritual maturity:

.....

.....

.....

The Sacrament of Confirmation gives us the power

- to witness to Jesus
- to continue his work

Example:

A retired old man spent part of each day reading the Gospel to outpatients in the waiting room of the clinic near his house.

Everyone got to know the old man, the nurses, the patients and the doctor too. One day the old man had trouble reading. So he went for a checkup. The doctor discovered that the old man was going blind, and there was nothing he could do for him. Sadly he told him.

The next day the old man did not show up at the hospital clinic. Nor did he come the day after that. The doctor was worried. He found out the old man had gone to a quiet place in the bush. So the doctor went to see him. The old man only laughed when he heard that the doctor was worried about him.

He said:

Ever since the day you told me I was going blind, I've been reading and memorizing the most important parts of the Gospel. I've memorized Jesus' birth, his important miracles and parables, his death and resurrection. I've been reading them over and over and saying them aloud to make sure I have them right.

Soon I'll be back at the clinic again, telling the outpatients about Jesus.

*Wait for the gift I told you about,
the gift my Father promised...*

In a few days

you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit

When the Holy Spirit comes upon you

you will be filled with power

and you will be witnesses for me

to the ends of the earth.' (Acts 1:4-5,8)

The memory of the Spirit coming must also have been a great consolation to them.

On the day of the Jewish feast of Pentecost, the Apostles with Mary the Mother of Jesus and some disciples, were gathered in prayer in a house in Jerusalem

Suddenly there was a noise from the sky which sounded like a strong wind blowing and it filled the whole house.

They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other languages as the Spirit enabled them to speak (Acts 2:1-4).

The Apostles were faithful to the gift they received and in turn passed it on to others:

The apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had received the word of God, so they sent Peter and John to them.

When they arrived,

they prayed for these believers that they might receive the Holy Spirit ... then Peter and John placed their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:14-15,17).

These three references from Scripture, show us that Jesus first of all promised us the Holy Spirit as a gift of his Father, that the Holy Spirit actually came, and that the Apostles passed on this gift of the Spirit to others.

Background to Confirmation.

The reference to Jesus promising the Holy Spirit, must have been a favourite one for his apostles:

Confirmation is the sacrament by which we receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit that the disciples received at Pentecost.

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Our God is a gift-giver. Perhaps that is why we, who are made in God's image, also love to give gifts.

Have you ever given something to your mother on mother's day?

Have you ever given a gift to one of your friends or small ones?

How do you feel when you give a gift?



God our Father has given us all the gifts of creation. *What has Jesus given us?*

The Holy Spirit too, gives special gifts. Perhaps you know the following hymn:

*Come Holy Ghost, creator come,
From thy bright heavenly throne,
Come take possession of our souls
And make them all thine own.*

*Thou who art sevenfold in thy grace
Finger of God's right hand,
His promise teaching little ones
To speak and understand.*

The first line of the second verse tells us about the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. The prophet Isaiah has told us the names of these gifts. You can find them in Isaiah, Ch. 11.

Understanding. Through this gift, the Holy Spirit shows us what God wants and teaches us to see things from God's point of view.

Counsel: Counsel means advice / guidance. Through this gift, the Holy Spirit helps us to decide what to do for the good of our souls.

Knowledge: A person does not have to be clever or well educated to have a deep knowledge of spiritual things. Through the gift of Knowledge, we are able to know about God and the mysteries of Heaven.

Fortitude: Another name for fortitude is courage. Some people have the courage to walk about at night, or to do dangerous things. The Holy Spirit's gift of Fortitude is not like that. The Spirit's gift gives us a share in the strength of God, so that we can overcome evil and temptation and persevere in doing good. St. Paul said "I can do all things in Him who strengthens me". We can see the Holy Spirit's gift of fortitude in the martyrs, in those persecuted for their faith, in the lives of people around us who go on being faithful and serving God, even though it is hard.

Piety: Through this gift, the Holy Spirit helps us in all our relationships. It helps us to know God as our Father, and to act towards him as his children. It also helps us in our relationships with Mary and the saints and with other people, our family, school, parish, village and so on. We know from experience that it is very difficult to stay at peace with everyone. The great gift of Piety helps us with our relationships, and especially helps us to show reverence for God.

Fear of the Lord: This gift makes us ready to give up everything and to put up with anything, in order to stay close to God our Father. This gift is not about fear of punishment or any of those kind of fears. The gift of Fear unites us with God. The only thing it makes us afraid of, is losing God. The gift of Fear makes us sing with the psalmist:

*God, you are my God,
And I am seeking you.
Your love is better than life itself,
My soul longs for you.*

Of all these gifts, which one have you ignored in yourself, or have not developed well?

Which one would you like to develop more?

Write a prayer asking the Spirit to help you desire and love his gifts.

Procedure for Confirmation

The liturgy of Confirmation involves three important actions. These are

- the laying on of hands
- the anointing of the person's forehead
- saying 'Be sealed with the Holy Spirit'

1. The Laying on of Hands.

The laying of hands on a person's head has its origin in Old Testament times.

For example, when God picked Joshua to succeed Moses he told Moses

*'Take Joshua son of Nun,
and place your hands on his head...
Give him some of your own authority,
so that the whole community of Israel
will obey him...
Moses did as the Lord had commanded
him...
Moses put his hands on Joshua's head
and proclaimed him as his successor.
(Numbers 27:18,20,22-23)*

So the action of placing hands on a person's head comes from the Bible. It symbolizes the marking of that person to perform a special service.

2. Anointing with Oil

Anointing with oil also has its origin in the Bible. For example, God told Moses:

*'This is what you are to do to Aaron and his sons to dedicate them as priests..
Dress Aaron in the priestly garments..
then take the anointing oil..
and anoint him.
(Ex 29:1,5,7)*

Another example is when God instructed Samuel to anoint David as King of Israel:

*'Get some olive oil and go to Bethlehem,
to a man named Jesse,
because I have chosen one of his sons to be
King.
Jesse sent for David..
The Lord said to Samuel,
This is the one - anoint him!*

Samuel took the olive oil and anointed David.

(1 Sam 16:1, 12-13).

The Bible also speaks of prophets being 'anointed'. God says to Elijah:

*'Anoint Elisha..
to succeed you as prophet'
(1 Kings 19:16).*

So the action of anointing the forehead with oil is also copied from the Bible, where it is used to mark a prophet, priest or king for special service to the community.

3. Sealing with Spirit.

Some kings used to tattoo the hand of their soldiers with a sign, or 'seal'.

Some of our people also used to be tattooed with the marks of their clan.

We still have some of the talks given to the very early Christians. One talk says:

*'Come near
and receive the sacramental seal
so that you may be recognized by the Master'*

Being 'sealed' by the Spirit then, is like being marked with a special mark which says we belong to Jesus.



What the Bible says about the Holy Spirit

1. The Promise of the Spirit

1. Is 61:1-3,6,8-9
2. Ezek 37:14
3. Joel 2:28
4. Jn 14:15-17

2. The Coming of the Spirit

1. Acts 2:1-6
2. Acts 19:1-6
3. Mk 1:9-11

3. The Role of the Spirit

1. Rom 5:1-2, 5-8
2. Rom 8:14-17

4. Gifts and Signs of the Spirit

1. 1 Cor 12:4-13
2. Gal 5:16-25

5. Responsibilities of the Christian person in response to the Spirit

1. Eph 4:1-6
2. Mt 16:24-27
3. Jn 14:23-26

Activity: Read the Scripture passages given above, and next to each one copy three or four of the words that are important for your life

History of Confirmation.

During the first 5 centuries, Baptism and Confirmation were part of the one ceremony which was usually celebrated at the Easter vigil. Baptism *included* the laying on of hands, the anointing by the bishop and the prayer for the Holy Spirit.

When the Church was numerically small, it was possible for the Bishop to be present at each baptismal ceremony.

But when Christianity became legal, and the Church grew in numbers, the Bishops were unable to be present in all their parishes for all the initiation ceremonies.

But the Bishops still wished to have some role in this important ceremony, as they were the leaders of the Christian community and the successors of the Apostles.

So around the sixth century they began to keep for themselves the right of anointing after baptism and the various prayers for the coming of the Spirit. So gradually this part was separated from the baptismal ceremony so that the bishop could give the anointing at a time when he was available.

Also as the custom of infant baptism spread, Confirmation became a time for young people to learn about what Baptism means and its responsibilities. Confirmation then became both a learning opportunity and a chance for young people to say 'yes' to the faith they received at Baptism.

Some people today think we should go back to the way it was done in the early Church. They want only adults baptized and baptism to include the laying on of hands and the prayer to the Holy Spirit.

Others want to leave things as they are, but have confirmations delayed until a much later time, 19 years or older, so that the person is really making an adult decision.

What do you think?

There are good reasons for each practice, and probably not one way is better than all the others.



You might be interested to know that the Eastern Catholic Churches allow priests to baptize, confirm and give communion to tiny infants.

Living your Confirmation

Confirmation gives us the strength of the Spirit to live our vocation as God's special child. The power of the Holy Spirit enables us to live courageously the kind of life that will make a difference, the kind of life that will point to Jesus working in the world and to the Spirit working in our lives.

When we refuse to go along with others when they are doing something wrong, when we disagree with an unkind remark that someone has made instead of just keeping quiet, when we resist the temptation of sex and drugs, when we openly discuss our faith with others, we are witnessing to the Lord, and living out our confirmation.

Activity:

Think of an example for both home and school where you showed the following fruits of the Spirit in your life.

	Home	School
<i>Joy</i>
<i>Peace</i>
<i>Patience</i>
<i>Self-control</i>

Summary

1. Confirmation means making strong. In receiving this sacrament we are given the fullness of the Holy Spirit. We are showered with his gifts, we are more fully initiated into the Christian community and we are called to be strong witnesses of our faith.

2. The gifts of the Spirit include: wisdom, understanding, counsel, knowledge, piety, fortitude, and fear of the Lord.

3. Confirmation is a celebration of the Holy Spirit and of his gifts.

4. Over the centuries, the age for receiving Confirmation has changed.

At first, Confirmation was celebrated with Baptism and first Holy Communion.

Today, when children have been baptized at birth, it is usually given later, as a chance for the young person to make a choice about following Jesus, and as an opportunity to learn more about our faith.



Activities:

1. a) Look at the chart below. It contains the Sacraments of Initiation, their relationship to important moments in our lives, as well as the values of Jesus that they celebrate.

In the second two columns the words are all mixed up. Draw the chart in your books and place the words where you think they should go.

Sacrament	Life Event	Values of Jesus
Baptism	Sharing a meal	Life in the Spirit
Confirmation	Birth	Unity, Service
Eucharist	Growth	Conversion

b) From the Gospels, find words of Jesus that talk about

- Conversion
- Unity
- Service
- Life in the Spirit

Write both the reference and the sentence.

2. What gifts of the Holy Spirit does Our Lady show at

- a) the Annunciation
- b) the Visitation
- c) at Cana
- d) on Calvary

3. Copy this prayer onto a small card and keep it near you:

Lord, help me to be your witness today, and always.

Topic Four

The Sacrament of the Eucharist

The last Sacrament of Initiation is the great sacrament of the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is called the 'Sacrament of the Sacraments'. All the other sacraments are related to the Eucharist and the Eucharist itself is the greatest act of Christian worship.



We have all celebrated the Eucharist many times but perhaps we have forgotten some of the very great truths about this sacrament. Here are a few points for our reflection.

1. Of all the sacraments, the Eucharist most outstandingly reveals God's love for us. In this sacrament, Jesus, who accomplished our salvation, is given to us by the Father. What a tremendous gift and privilege, to be able to receive Jesus under the consecrated forms of bread and wine! The Eucharist is a continual reminder to us that God love us,

cares for us, and comes to us in the most intimate way. He becomes one with us so that we know in our hearts that we are truly united to him, who is the source of our life.

2. Another very important sign and reality about the Mass is its sign of unity.

All kinds of people, young and old, rich and poor, lovable and the unloved, saints and sinners, gather together and share the same food. It does not matter who we are, we all sit side by side and share the one bread. The (sometimes) sticky hands of children and 'written on' hands of students, the worn hands of labourers, the fancy hands with nail polish or rings, the hands full of grease from the workshop, the frail and trembling hands of old people, all reach out for pieces of the same bread. And we all say 'Amen', we agree to become what we have remembered, honoured, and listened to around the altar.

This bread that we share is truly Jesus, although it looks like bread, tastes like bread and stays the same (chemically) as bread.

Our faith however, tells us that despite the appearance, we truly receive Jesus. And because we eat of the same Lord, we are united more closely than if we were blood brothers and sisters.

3. The Eucharist reminds us 'to break ourselves', that is, overcome our selfishness and serve others as Jesus served us.

4. It tells us that we are a community, who need to gather together for strength and encouragement in order to live Jesus' life.

5. The Eucharist involves a sacrifice. The root meaning of the word 'sacrifice' is 'to make holy'. The Eucharist makes us holy, it restores us to unity with God the Father.

6. It offers us the opportunity to share in the life of the risen Jesus as we receive him in Communion. This invitation to receive the Lord and deepen our friendship with him strengthens us as a community.

7. This Christian family meal in Jesus' name gives us the strength as well as challenging us to go out into the world to serve as Jesus served.

8. The Mass is a great opportunity to draw closer to God on our journey through life. At Mass we talk to God. We listen to his word and tell him our needs. We offer him our gifts, especially the gift of our lives, and in return, God offers himself.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE MASS

The liturgy of the Eucharist unfolds according to a structure which has been preserved throughout the centuries, right down to our own day. This structure has two parts

- the Liturgy of the Word, with readings, homily and general intercessions;
- the Liturgy of the Eucharist, with the preparation of the bread and wine, the prayer of consecration and communion

These two parts form one single act of worship. The pattern is the same as when Jesus appeared to his disciples on the way to Emmaus.

'Walking with them he explained the Scriptures to them'; sitting with them at table 'he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.' Lk 24:13-25.



Apart from these two great hinges or sections, we have other rites, making up the big ones. These are smaller but very important, especially in the signs that they are to us.

First we gather together, sometimes this is called the *Gathering Rite*.

In the *Gathering Rite*, the Mass begins on a friendly note as the celebrant greets us as the people of God. In our gathering we see that God has no favourites, some of us are ugly, some beautiful, some intelligent, some have a job, some have no job and so on. God wants us all to be his children and love each other.

A short *Penitential Rite* follows where we express sorrow to God, especially if we have hatred in our hearts. We call out to Jesus 'Lord have mercy on us' as so many people did in Gospel times. After we have tidied up our hearts and made peace, we can turn our attention to the word of God.

In the Liturgy of the Word we listen to God, we have his word explained to us and we offer our own prayers and petitions.

During the Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts, the gifts are prepared and brought to the table.

The Eucharistic Prayer reminds us of the reason for our gathering. During it, by the power of the Spirit, the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus.

We begin the Communion Rite with the *Our Father*, the prayer which reminds us that we are all children of the one loving Father. To show our unity under the Father, we offer a sign of peace to one another.

Then we are invited to approach the Lord's table to share in the bread and wine of life, the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Jesus, in a mysterious and wonderful way, wants to be intimately united with us.

He wants to transform us, to make us like himself, willing to go into the world to continue his work of healing, of peace-making, of loving.

The Mass ends with a final prayer, a blessing and the dismissal: "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord."

The ending of the Eucharist reminds us of a powerful truth: Our prayer and our worship must be related to a life of service.

Off to Serve

We will now look more closely at some of these rites.

1. The Offering of Gifts:

At the Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts we take two important symbols of life - *bread and wine* - and offer them to the Father.

How can bread and wine symbolize our life?

In the bread and wine we bring our life before God, we give over to him our everyday existence, our work, our successes, our desires, our love, our joy. Many of our beautiful offertory hymns reveal this in their poetic words.

Look at some of these verses and write out one that really speaks to you. You may have learnt a new offertory hymn: write out one verse that you like. Or you may know one in your own language - write out one sentence.

One very visible action that we notice at the Offering of Gifts, is the priest holding up the bread and wine and offering them to God.

What are the words said by the priest?

In the offering of the gifts to God, this very action itself is very important. Jesus has said that we are not to cling to the things of this world, and he often said how hard it was for a rich man to enter heaven.

What does Jesus mean by a 'rich' man?

A story from the early monastic fathers might help us understand this parable.

Once a mother decided to go to the garden with her little daughter. She took some nuts in a bottle in case her child got hungry. This bottle had a narrow top. After awhile, the

All that I am, all that I do
All that I'll ever have I offer now to you.

All that I dream, all that I pray
All that I'll ever be, I give to you today.

*We have come to make our offering,
Lord, we haven't much to give.
You're our God and we're your people*

*And you know the way we live.
So we bring our simple offering
Bread and wine are what we give
As a symbol of ourselves Lord
And the daily life we live.*

**Take my life and let it be
Consecrated Lord to thee,
Take my minutes and my days
Let them all be filled with praise.**

**For all the living and the dead
For our poor lives so badly led,
We raise these gifts to you above
And join to them ourselves in love.**

Please accept our gifts of bread and wine

Fruit of the field, fruit of the vine.
Just as the many grains have been refined

Draw us together Lord in heart and mind.



child said 'Mummy, give me some nuts.' Her mother replied: 'You get some for yourself. The girl put her hand inside the bottle but was unable to bring it out. She cried to her mother: 'My hand won't come out!' Her mother said: 'My dear, let go of what you are holding, and it will come out.'



How was the child to get the nuts if she could not put her hand inside?

The monks used this story to say that the same thing is true of us. If we do not let go of earthly things, we cannot be saved. We have to let go of our pride, our possessions, our jealousies, our fears.

You might be interested to know that monkeys have the same problem as we do. Some people in Africa catch monkeys this way. They put some nuts in a small hole in a tree. The monkey finds the nuts, but when it makes a fist with its hand around the nut, its hand will not come out of the hole. So the monkey is trapped and people can catch it. The monkey screams and cries when it finds itself a prisoner with a rope around its neck, but of course if it only let go of the nut, it could run away. But does the monkey let go? No, like foolish human beings, it keeps holding on to what has trapped it.



When the bread and the wine are raised above the altar, we offer to God ourselves, our work and our joys. It is also the action of taking our hands out of the jug of the world, in which we keep hold of the nuts of our life. We let go of these things and hold up our life to God, to be transformed and healed. And with the simple bread and wine we offer, God returns us so much more - the bread that satisfies our hungry hearts.

2. The Eucharistic Prayer

The heart of the Eucharistic Prayer is a memorial of the salvation which Jesus accomplished for us. The priest recalls what took place at the Last Supper, where Jesus said 'This is my Body, this is my Blood. Do this in memory of me.'

The words of Institution are a holy and sacred time of the Mass.

We have already said the Eucharist involves a sacrifice.

A sacrifice is offering some gift to God. It is a sign that we know that God is greater than us, that he is all powerful and that we belong to him.

People have done this in many ways, with fruit, with animals and other things. Cain and Abel did it, at the very beginning. The Hebrew people offered lambs and goats and doves.

Our people too, offered gifts to the spirits, whenever they thought the spirits might have been offended, or when they wanted to ask for good crops and so on.

Gifts like these were the best people could find, before they had Jesus. But always people longed for a perfect sacrifice that would please God and take away sin.

This perfect sacrifice is Jesus. Jesus offered his life to God on our behalf. He made a sacrifice of his Body and Blood upon the Cross. We have no need of any other sacrifice. At each Mass, this same sacrifice is made present again.

The lifting up of Christ's Body and Blood at this most important part of the Mass, is the best gift that we can offer to our heavenly Father. The Mass is the Christian sacrifice, the one sacrifice for the whole family of God.

On the altar, in the centre is a crucifix. It is there to remind us that the sacrifice of the Mass is the same sacrifice which Jesus offered on Calvary, going on today. At each Mass, Jesus' sacrifice reaches down to our time, so that each one of us can draw near and share in it. And because Jesus has risen from the dead and lives in glory, he can now be offered in many places, in every country and by every people. The words of the prophet Malachi have come true!

'From the rising of the sun to its setting, my name shall be great among the nations, and in every place incense shall be offered to my name, and a pure offering'. (Mal:11)

At the consecration, Jesus' offering of himself on Calvary becomes truly present once more. Jesus of course does not die again. But just as Jesus is truly present in the bread and wine, so too his sacrifice of himself on Calvary is truly present again in each Mass.

3. Holy Communion

When we receive Jesus in Holy Communion, his flesh and blood enters into us completely, even into all of our fears and joys. If God is one with me, then I can also become one (at peace) with myself, with my life, my body, my strengths and my weaknesses. I can be at peace with myself, and with my life, and with all the people who come into my life. If God is in me, then everything in me has a new taste. It is not the sour taste that sin leaves behind. We taste in a new way. We can find a new taste in ourselves, and our life.

We find an image of what happens to us in Communion in the story of the wedding at Cana.

The Eucharist is the celebration of the wedding between God and ourselves. We

bring our life to the feast. But it is dull, like water. It has no taste. But when Jesus comes to us in Holy Communion, the water in the six stone water jars becomes wine.

The stone jars signify our earthly life which is stony, hard and cold. We carry water in the jars. But in the consecration it becomes wine and acquires a new taste and gives enjoyment to all people.

So for us. We receive Jesus. He turns us into wine for his people.

Preparing for Holy Communion

If a guest of great importance is coming to our village, the people sweep the ground, weed all around, clean the roads and make a feast. They do not want the important visitor to find anything dirty or untidy in their village. If he is to stay in the village they will give him a house in which to live.

We ought to prepare just as carefully for Holy Communion, because a great guest is coming to stay in our soul. When Jesus comes, he wants to find a place prepared. At one time in his life on earth Jesus said:

'Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.'

Two Gospel writers report Jesus saying this: Matthew (Ch 8) and Luke (Ch 9). Jesus must have said these words in a very sad way for the disciples to have them stick in their minds so clearly. Or perhaps he said it very often.

*What does a fox find in its hole?
Or a bird in its nest?*



In Papua New Guinea we have many beautiful customs for greeting visitors.

Firstly, we prepare beforehand.

We must do the same for Jesus.

How can we prepare?

Secondly, we make a special event of the arrival with words and actions.

We must do the same for Jesus.

How can we make his arrival special?

Thirdly, we look after our visitors while they are with us.

We must do the same for Jesus.

How can we look after him when he comes to us?

When not to receive Holy Communion

We must try not to stay away from Communion. To stay away is to starve our souls to death. Jesus tells us very plainly in John 6:50 'Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.'

There is however, one real reason for not receiving this Holy Sacrament. The reason is if I have had a bitter quarrel with someone, and there is hatred in my heart. If there is a person that I refuse to speak to and that I am not willing to forgive, how can I come to the meal of Christian fellowship, which is a sign of our oneness? First let me go and say that I am sorry, or do my best to put it right, then I can come to the meal. Jesus teaches us in Mathew 5:23 'If you bring your gift to the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.'



4. Concluding Rite

Jesus said:

"It is not those who say to me, 'Lord, Lord,' who will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the person who does the will of my Father in heaven" (Mt 7:21)

The Mass reminds us that because we have received the body of Christ we must *become* the body of Christ. We are his hands that touch and care for the sick, old and young. We are his feet that go out of their way to meet the lonely and befriend them. We are his understanding and forgiving heart that searches for the hurting and hopeless.

At the altar, I offer Jesus Christ to his heavenly Father, and there also, I learn to offer myself. Jesus teaches me to make a gift of my life to God, to lay it down on the altar to be joined to his sacrifice.

Eucharist involves much more than just 'receiving Jesus'.

It involves our gratitude for all we have and are, the offering of ourselves for the world, indeed it is our pledge to 'become' Christ for others, to be his *new wine* as we have said.

Just do it!

QUIZ

1. What are you doing right now to serve others at home?

.....

2. What are you doing right now to serve others at school?

.....

3. What are three things you can do to help others during a normal day?

a.

b.

c.

4. Which statement best describes you?

- I am doing a good job of helping others

- I am sometimes a help to others

ACTIVITIES

1.

Read this story of what St. Justin wrote to the pagan emperor Antoninus Pius, around the year 155, explaining what Christians did.

He writes:

On the day we call the day of the sun, all who dwell in the city or country gather in the same place.

The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read, as much as time permits.

When the reader has finished, he who presides over those gathered, speaks and challenges them to imitate these beautiful things.

Then we all rise together and offer prayers for ourselves, and for all others, wherever they may be.

When the prayers are concluded we exchange a sign of peace.

Then someone brings bread and a cup of water and wine mixed together, to him who presides over the brethren.

He takes them and offers praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and for a considerable time he gives thanks that we have been judged worthy of these gifts.

When he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all present give voice to an acclamation by saying 'Amen'.

When he who presides has given thanks and the people have responded, those whom we call deacons give to those present the bread of thanksgiving and the wine mixed with water, and also take them to those who are absent.

Questions:

1. Why might Justin have wanted to explain our customs to the emperor?
2. Is our way of celebrating the Eucharist today similar to this or very different?

2. You might like to try this Class project:

Form small groups to do the following:

- A. Select a group of people who need help.
- B. Name some actual needs of this group.
- C. Decide what actions your group can take to fulfil these needs.
- D. Share the results of each group.
- E. As a class choose *one* of the plans of action and plan a project that will involve everyone in the class.

3. Look at the painting of the Last Supper, which is on the front cover of this book. Now try to answer these questions:

Where is Jesus?

Can you see his hands?

What can you notice about his left hand?

What is his right hand doing?

Can you see Jesus' face?

In this picture the artist seems to invite us to look at the Last Supper from Jesus' point of view. This is because we do not see Jesus directly, but we are looking out from where Jesus is. So perhaps the first thing the picture is telling us is that we too, must look out on the world from the point of view of Jesus.

Think of an incident that has upset you lately

Write the story from Jesus point of view.

Begin like this: The other day, my friend (put your 'name') was sad because (put your problem).

I would like my friend to know that (write what Jesus says to you).

I would also like my friend (your name) to know this about the other person involved in the incident. (If you think for awhile, Jesus will tell you something he would like you to know about the other person).

From my point of view I Jesus, would like and I need my friend (write your name) to help me achieve my aim.

We see Jesus' (Greek) initials in the broken bread lying in the shadow of the Cross.

Does Jesus say to us 'You can find me in the bread broken and given, in the wine poured out and shared?

We cannot see Jesus but we can see his hands. The left hand is open, with a bit of red, reminding us that this hand is soon to be nailed to the Cross. The right hand of Jesus reveals his tenderness as he shares the bread with the disciple wearing red, the colour of love and passion.

Who do you think this disciple might be?

Can it also be you?

The action of the left hand suggests that the Eucharist is about self-emptying. It is giving one's life as service. As seen in Jesus' right hand, the Eucharist is also about presence; and deep personal relationship with Jesus.

As we look at the picture from Jesus' point of view, we see that the Bread of Life is given freely to all, no-one is refused, not even the one who betrays the Giver of life.

The artist shows lots of things in the different expressions on the faces of the disciples.

Look at all their expressions.

We see differences of faith, of readiness and of understanding of those gathered.

When we gather to celebrate the Eucharist on Sunday, we see the same differences. In our diversity Jesus offers himself, not as a reward for faith and goodness, but as food for the journey, as abiding presence and unconditional love.

We see Jesus' face only as a reflection in the chalice. What are his eyes saying?

Write down: I think Jesus' eyes are saying

.....
We sense reverence in the disciple in blue, who wearing the colour of authority, may be Peter. He holds the bread in his upright hand and pleads with his eyes about what it might mean and what he is to do with it. And we see in the beloved disciple the sense of

sacredness and intimacy of one truly at home in the mystery.

As Jesus looks out from where he sits at table, he sees his disciples surrounding him. Jesus knows the hearts of his friends and he accepts and embraces each one.

Jesus looks at them and sees some who are uncertain and confused. He sees in others, delight, appreciation and readiness for more. He also sees distraction and disturbance among them. He sees the one covered in darkness, clutching the bread that Jesus has given him. Jesus sees the same things amongst us, as we gather around the table of the Eucharist. Which expression fits you at the moment?

Deep in the shadows is one who is on the edge, one who cannot sit at the table and who creates an empty space by his absence. He is so consumed by darkness that his face cannot be seen. One of the disciples seems to be disturbed by his departure. What questions and feelings does he have about Judas? How do I feel when someone departs?

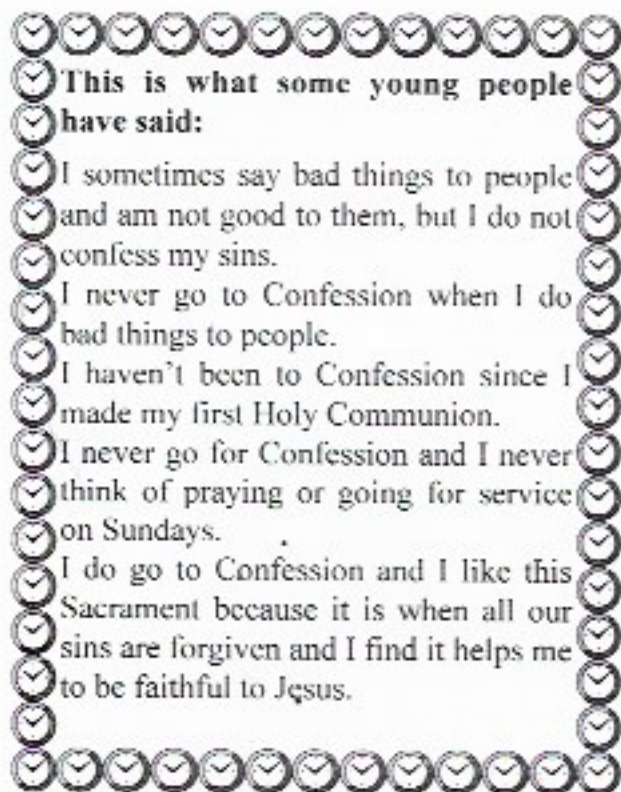
Jesus is very clear in his prayer for unity.

His prayer is for us to be one with each other as he is with his Father. This is much more than just being members of a community. This oneness is about being us being one body, the body of Christ, because of his own life within us. It is not enough for us to just sit beside each other in the Church and then later go out and fight.

We all receive Jesus. Jesus does not turn into us. Instead he makes us his home, his brothers and his sisters. He continues his most sacred and happy work of making us children of his Father and one with each other.

Look at the picture one last time.

Imagine Jesus inviting you to take your place at the table. Share with your friend where you would put yourself, and the disciple you would like to sit beside.



It seems that it is time to have a change in the way we look at this Sacrament or a change in the way we receive it.

Perhaps one comment we can make about the statements above, is that most of these students are still calling it Confession, which means the emphasis is on telling their sins, but Jesus wants us to be at PEACE.

His emphasis is Reconciliation.

What comes to your mind when you think about this sacrament? Write your thoughts in your book.

Sin

Has anyone ever stolen something from you?

Explain how you felt when something of yours went missing.

Has anyone spoilt your name?

How did you feel?

When you read about wars and suffering in the newspaper what is your reaction?

All these events are the result of sin in the world.

And what about ourselves?

How do you feel when you fall back into the same old things after making up your mind not to do them again, things like gossiping, spoiling property, drinking, being jealous or angry?

Sin is all over the place - it is in the world and it is in our own lives.

Many years ago St. Paul wrote:

"I cannot understand my own behaviour. I fail to carry out the things I want to do, and I find myself doing the very things I hate ... instead of doing the good things I want to do, I carry out the sinful things I do not want." (Rom 7:15,19).

It is important to remember however, that **temptations are not sins**. Jesus was tempted in the desert. *We only sin when we give in to the temptation*, and put **our** wants before the rights of others.

Even though some people have a problem with the Sacrament, many young people are concerned about sin in their lives. We both want and need our Lord's forgiving touch, a touch that warms our hearts to his love, and heals the damage of broken relationships.

Our Lord's whole ministry was a mission of mercy for sinners. Jesus died for our sins. Jesus came for sinners. He mixed with them, loved them and forgave them.

This association brought him much criticism. Jesus forgave the condemned criminal on the Cross next to him and promised him Paradise (Lk 23:32-43).

He loved the woman caught in adultery, he saved her life when she was threatened with death by stoning. But he also told her to avoid sin in the future.

Jesus' teaching about his Father, has at its heart a message about God's forgiving love. It has often been said that the greatest short story in the world is the one Jesus told about the Prodigal Son.

Read this parable in Luke 10:25-37



In this parable, there are two sons involved. Both of them sinned. The younger son was greedy and selfish. He did not care about his family relationships, only about how he could have a good time. Probably even deciding to go home was selfish (If I go home, at least I will have plenty to eat). But we do see the following things in his life: He

- *examined* his life (I am about to starve)
- *confessed* his sinfulness (Father, I have sinned)
- *intended to make up* (Treat me as one of your hired servants)

What sin did the eldest son commit? Well we know he was jealous. He refused to come in and join the party so he was also unforgiving. Even more than this though, he did not have a good relationship with his father. When he came in from the fields and heard the music, he did not go straight to his father and ask about it. Instead he called a servant *outside* and asked *the servant* for the story. Even when *the Father came outside* and pleaded with him, he would not listen. His heart was ?

In the paragraph above, some words have been put in *italics*. What do you think these words show about the son? about the Father?

The Father did beautiful things for his younger son, who **communicated** with him openly. He welcomed him home, forgave him and restored him as his child.

The Father was unable to do this for the elder son who stayed stubborn. Still he tells the elder son that he will always love him, but that it is right to forgive those repent.

The story of the younger son is a true picture of what happens to us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

We do what the son in the story did, when he made up his mind to return home, and God does what the father in the story did when he saw the son returning.

Most of us find that confessing our sins is the hardest part of the Sacrament.

Sometimes we have been disappointed with our friends when we have shared something and then they gossiped about it to someone else.

But this does not happen when we share with a priest in this sacrament. Priests make many mistakes and we hear a lot of criticism about them, but we do not hear that they speak about what has been said in the privacy of confession. In fact, some priests have chosen death rather than reveal what people say.

To show we are serious about changing our lives we need to:

- **make an effort to repair the damage caused by our sins**
- **make an effort to avoid situations that tempt us to sin.**

Do you think the younger son would have made the same mistake again? What do you think he has learnt?

We must never forget Jesus' words.

He said that he came to seek out and save what was lost. He reminds us that his Father will always forgive us, that his love is always there.

This is the outstanding Good News of Jesus. The Father loves us, he stands always ready to forgive us.

It is not that we first change, and then are healed and forgiven. Whether we are a prodigal, latecomer worker in the vineyard, or lost sheep; we are forgiven, overpaid, searched for and welcomed home *first*.

With God, everything is the opposite.

We have to make up first before someone forgives us, but God has forgiven us already and only awaits our return to him.

In the story of the Prodigal Son, the Father did not have a hard heart towards his older son, he just wanted him to have peace in his own heart, to have peace with his brother and to celebrate when what has been lost, is found.

Class Activity: Half the class write a letter from the younger son to the older son.

Half write from the older son to the younger son.

Read some of your letters to each other. Paste them on the wall of your classroom.

Symbols of Reconciliation

In the first topic of this book we talked a lot about the sacraments having symbols to help us understand what truly takes place in the meeting between God and ourselves in a sacrament. The symbols and signs of what happens in Baptism and Confirmation and the Eucharist are quite easy to see and understand.

It is a little more difficult to see the signs in the sacrament of Reconciliation.

We know that in this sacrament

- we are healed and welcomed by God
- we are made right with the community

We have seen that so far in the sacraments, we have used ordinary things like water, light, and oil as signs of events of grace that

are taking place in our souls. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we use an ordinary sign that is used in the world also.

What do we do in our places with people who have done something seriously wrong?

Yes, we take them to the village magistrate or the town court where they are judged. When the trial is over, everyone concerned accepts the sentence that is passed.

In the sacrament of Reconciliation the sinner takes himself to court, to the priest who represents Christ.

The priest hears the confession for Christ. The sinner's openness and sorrow are the grounds for a sentence of forgiveness.

The community accepts the judgement and allows the sinner to join in celebrating the Eucharist once again.

When a sinner confesses his sins with sorrow he/she always hears these words:

'I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'.

What a wonderful judgement! Who would not want to go to this court!

In our human courts, we are not sure what the judge will say.

Will he or she be for us or against us?

But in God's court, the judgement is always the same:

Go in peace, your sins are forgiven.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a very great gift from God, so try and celebrate it with joy and thanksgiving.

Another way of celebrating: When studying Baptism we mentioned that a large group of Catholics celebrate infant baptism by water, by anointing the baby (Confirmation) and even giving it a drop of the Precious Blood.

They also celebrate Reconciliation differently from us. **They confess while standing and facing an image of the Risen Christ.**

Do you think you would like to celebrate the Sacrament like this?

What do you think is the symbolism and the meaning for those Catholics who celebrate the sacrament in this way?

HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE GO?

This depends on our circumstances. Sometimes we do not have the opportunity to go very often. If we do have the opportunity, and we do want to be serious about following Jesus, and we have a good priest, the effort to celebrate this sacrament regularly (about every two or three months) will help us greatly.

It will overcome spiritual laziness, heal our spiritual weaknesses, deepen our unity with God and help us to hear God speaking to us in our lives.

If we do not have the opportunity to go to this sacrament very often, then we should try to go before Easter and whenever we have a serious sin spoiling our hearts.

An examination of conscience.

Jesus has said that the greatest commandment is to love God with our whole heart, our whole soul and our whole mind, and to love our neighbour as we love ourselves.

Following is an examination of conscience based on these three categories.

Think about just one thing in each group where you feel you need our Lord's special help. Take these areas that need growth to Jesus in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

1. Love God above all things.

Do I pray each day?
Do I think of God and thank him often for all he has done for me?
Do I participate in Mass
Do I go willingly to Mass or unwillingly?
Is the Father my friend?
Do I spend time with him?
Do I spend time with Jesus?

Do I ask for the strength of the Spirit?
Do I see Jesus in others?
Am I respectful of God in my language?
Am I respectful of Jesus' mother, Mary?
Do I try to learn more about my religion?

3. Love Self

Do I thank God for making me the way I am, or do I complain about my talents and gifts?
Do I mistreat my body with drugs or alcohol?
Do I study?
Do I stand on my own two feet, or do I let others make decisions for me?
Do I use my sexual powers lovingly and respectfully?
Am I modest?
Am I a good friend?
Do I waste money on unnecessary things?
Do I share with others?
Do I appreciate what I have?

2. Love Neighbour

Do I love others as much as myself?
Do I respect my parents, my teachers, other people in charge of me?
Do I help my parents?
Do I try to be the center of attention or do I go out of my way to involve others?
Am I jealous? Or selfish with my time?
Am I honest when talking about others?
Do I cheat on tests?
Do I steal?
Do I make fun of others who are different?
Do I make fun of those who don't walk around with me?
Do I make fun of those who disagree with me?
Have I done anything for the poor, the sick, the lonely, the old?
Do I use other people?
Do I use their bodies for my sexual pleasure?
Do I see others as made in the image of God?
Do I contribute to the Sunday collection?
Do I spread gossip?
Do I keep the secrets my friends tell me?
Am I obedient?
Do I respect the property of others?
Do I graffiti school property?

This sacrament reveals that God is concerned that we grow, that we become what he wants us to be. It also reveals God's great love for us, his wisdom in knowing we need to say 'sorry' and hear words of forgiveness, before we can be at peace.

Reconciliation through this sacrament is the normal way for Catholics to obtain forgiveness of their serious sins. We also receive God's forgiveness for lesser sins through the following ways.

- ♦ praying directly to God in our own words for forgiveness
- ♦ praying the Our Father
- ♦ giving generously to the poor
- ♦ suffering problems quietly and patiently, and offering them to Jesus
- ♦ making an examination of conscience at night and a promise to do better
- ♦ admitting guilt directly to someone we have offended
- ♦ discussing our spiritual progress, (which includes being honest about our problems), with a wise and sensible person, for the sake of growing more like Jesus
- ♦ receiving the Eucharist and trying to live like Jesus in our daily life.

Just like a road, every now and then we get full of potholes and need to be graded. If we are not graded then we just keep getting worse and worse. Not only that, but others can no longer use us to find their way to their destination. We can even cause them to get bogged or completely wrecked.



Activities:

1. Close your eyes and imagine that two of your friends haven't gone to confession for years. Now they are a bit afraid and don't know what to expect. Prepare a letter for them that would calm their fears.

Include the following:

Why they should go, what is going to happen and your own feelings about what you have been learning.

Also write out the Act of Contrition for them and the other usual words that are said.

2. Do you think it is a good idea to have a pattern of words to follow when you go to Reconciliation, or do you think it would be a good idea to be original each time?

What do you think the priest would favour?

3. Write your own version of the Prodigal Son - PNG style. Act it out in class with your friends.

4. Write a paragraph about a time when you either forgave someone, or were forgiven. Explain how you felt in this experience. Share your paragraph with another person.

5. (To do in your own time)

Imagine Jesus hanging on the cross and yourself standing nearby. His eyes meet yours. Miraculously, he comes down from the cross and embraces you. Picture this scene, and then write in your book what you think and feel.

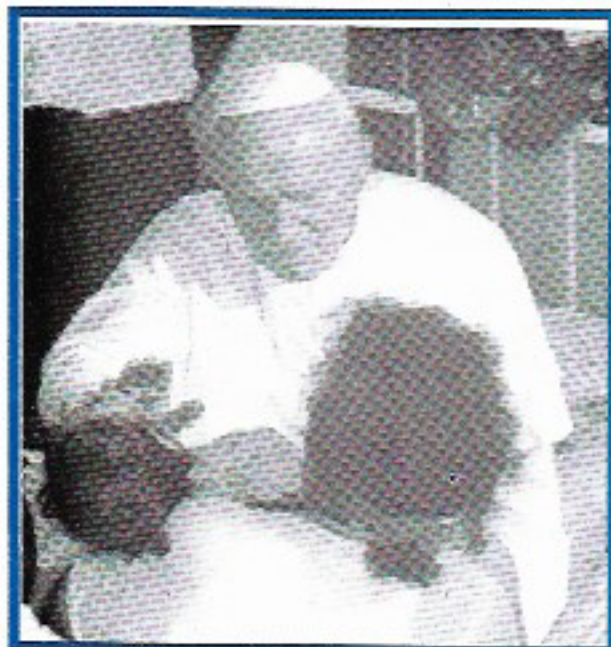
What does Jesus say to you?

What would you say to him?

What do you feel as he dies, in your arms? Now remember that Jesus is risen. Feel his risen life, the power of the Spirit and the love of his Father flow through him to you. Describe it.

Topic Six

Anointing of the Sick



Have you ever been really sick? How was it? Discuss your feelings with your friend.

Usually people say they felt miserable, the pain was really dreadful, and they sometimes felt very alone. Often people also say that they couldn't even pray.

A famous Jesuit theologian, Fr. Karl Rahner, said that the time of serious illness or great suffering, is a time of an important test. This test places us in the situation of making a decision for God.

This is the test:

We can believe in God's goodness and love, even though we are sick and suffering, or we can give into the temptation to reject God because we are weak, failing, worn out, tired and empty.

Satan tries to turn us away from God just when we are weak and defenseless.

This teaches us two things.

First: We should look after ourselves and others and avoid illness as best we can. Sickness is often a time of temptation, so it is to be avoided.

Jesus himself did everything he could to heal the sick. He also gave the power to heal to his apostles.

Second: In the times of great illness and suffering, we need the help of Jesus and of other Christians to get us through the illness. We need the strength, support, fellowship and peace of others to help us to endure the suffering.

We need their encouragement to offer up our illness and join it to Jesus' own sacrifice on the cross. We do this so that the power of evil and Satan, can be overcome.

Symbol for the Sacrament

The special symbol used in the sacrament of the sick, is holy oil, blessed at a special Mass in Holy Week, usually the day before Holy Thursday.

The words said over the oil are:

"May your blessing come upon all who are anointed with this oil, so that they may be freed from pain and illness and made well again in body, mind and soul".

All the sacraments are meetings with Jesus, with his saving love and mercy.

The Anointing of the Sick, brings with it healing, forgiveness and reconciliation.

We know that when we are sick, our illness means more than pain and physical suffering.

It causes us to be impatient. It makes us discouraged. It also makes us preoccupied

with ourselves. Communication can break down, and the sick person often feels that no one really understands them.

That is why Christ offers this Sacrament to those who are sick. The anointing is not just for physical healing, but benefits the whole person, overcoming the obstacles to grace and salvation which are a direct result of the sickness.

In the gospels we see that Jesus showed special concern for the sick.

Read Mt 11:5; Lk 14:21; Mk 1:30-34; Mk 1:40-41; Mk 2:10-11

Jesus also taught his Apostles and followers to have concern for the sick.

Read Lk 9:1-2,6; Lk 14:13; Mt 25:43; Mt 10:1; Mk 16:18.

This matter of helping the sick will even come up at the Last Judgement.

Read Mt. 25:31-46

Copy verses 36, 39, 43 into your exercise book.

When was the last time you helped a sick person?

Copy this sentence, and fill in your name, and the name of the person you cared for.

Come, , blessed of my Father, because was sick and you took care of him/her.

Scripture Background for the Sacrament of the Sick.

In Mark (6:13), the anointing of the sick is mentioned for the first time. Jesus sent the disciples out, two by two, and the Gospel goes on to say:

'So they went out and preached that people should turn away from their sins. They drove out many demons, and rubbed olive oil on many sick people and healed them.'

St. James, one of the Apostles, taught the early Christians to pray for the sick and to have them anointed with oil.

Read James 5:14-15

Who can receive this Sacrament?

Baptized people (old and young) who can receive this sacrament are

- the seriously sick
- a person with a long illness
- old people, even if they are not sick
- the dying
- the unconscious

It is our duty to look after the sick and especially to ask a priest to come to them.

Jesus has a special concern for the sick and he shows this by having a special sacrament for them. We have many ways of showing our concern for the sick. We can prepare their food, wash their clothes, visit them, pray for them, get the priest for them. Some of us can become doctors or nurses and devote our whole lives to helping the sick.

In his Church Jesus wants all of us to care for the sick, but priests have a special duty to anoint them with holy oil.



Activity

Close your eyes and think of a sick person you know or have seen.

Think of the effects of the sickness on the person.

e.g. pain, fear, loneliness, shame, ...

Think of the effects of the sickness on the person's community or family -

e.g. worry, sorrow, expense, problems at home, loss of work ...

Write down the name of the person you thought of, then write down all the effects that sickness is having on that person.

In the next column is a soldier's letter which describes his experience of receiving the sacrament of the "Anointing of the Sick".

The Anointing of the Sick has three main actions. We can see them in the soldier's experience. He describes the chaplain as

- **praying over him**
- **laying hands on him**
- **anointing his forehead with oil.**

These three actions are the three necessary actions in the liturgy of the Anointing of the Sick.

Do you know?

This sacrament may be celebrated with a baptized person who is not a Catholic, if that person asks for it and believes that Christ acts through the priest's actions.

The Sacrament of the sick

- **brings spiritual healing**
- **wipes away sin**
- **gives strength to bear suffering**
- **gives confidence in God's mercy**
- **protects the person from the devil**
- **sometimes restores them to health.**

So we are very foolish if we do not want to call a priest to help those who are seriously ill. Sometimes there are special masses held in parishes called 'Anointing Masses.'

Read this story of his experience. He wrote this story in a letter to a friend, after he came back home to the hospital.

From the split second I was hit,
I was completely alone.
I've heard it said, but never realized it,
when you are dying, there is no-one but you.

You're all alone.

I was badly hurt.

My left leg was gone,
my left arm badly ripped,
I was hit in the back, head, hip and right heel and ankle.

Shock was instantaneous but I fought it,
knowing that if I went out,
I'd never wake up again.

There were three or four medics
hovering over me,
all shook up at the sight of me.
I tried to pray but couldn't.

I asked the guys to talk to me
and most of all, to help me pray.

With a lot of luck

I lived to make it to the chopper
two hours after being hit.
After they carried me
into the first aid station,
someone bent over me
and began to pray.

I wasn't sure who it was
but I thought it looked like our chaplain.
Then he placed his hands on my head.
As my eyes closed I heard Father say,
'Are you sorry for your sins?'
With my last breath and all I had
I whispered, 'Hell, yes!'

A split second before I went unconscious,
I felt oil on my forehead.
Then something happened
which I'll never forget -
something which I never experienced
before
in all my life!

Suddenly I just burst with joy.

I felt free in body and mind.

After this I was conscious
about three or four times
during the next ten days.

I never worried about dying.

In fact, I was waiting for it.

But God had other plans for me.

And I live.

At these Masses, the priest calls anyone in the Congregation to come forward to be anointed with the holy oil if they have the special need and the desire to receive this Sacrament.

Many people testify to the help it gives them. In it they know that the same compassionate Jesus who healed people in Gospel times, heals them today.

When we talk about helping the sick, we are talking about doing something good for someone. These good things that we do are called 'works of mercy'.

There are two kinds of works of mercy, spiritual works and what are called 'corporal' or bodily works. Although there is probably no end to the different kinds of things we can do for people, the Church has constantly named the following ones as very important for any true follower of Jesus.

The Corporal Works of Mercy

feed the hungry
give drink to the thirsty
clothe the naked
visit the imprisoned
shelter the homeless
visit the sick
bury the dead

Jesus' compassion towards all those who suffer goes so far that he even identifies himself with them:

'I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least important of these followers of mine, you did it for me!'

Mt 25:40.

Which of these corporal works of mercy have you done recently?

Which one haven't you done, but you feel attracted towards doing?

The Spiritual Works of Mercy

to advise the sinner
to teach the ignorant
to counsel the doubtful
to comfort the sorrowful
to bear wrongs patiently
to forgive all injuries
to pray for the living and the dead

When during the last week have you done one of these spiritual works of mercy? Which do you think would be the hardest to practice? Explain the reasons for your choice to your friend.



Activities: 1. Why do you think oil is used in this sacrament?

(It might help if you read the story of the Good Samaritan - Lk 10:30-37) and also remember some of the traditional uses of oil of our own people.

2. Make a list of the things you would get ready in a sick-room if the priest was coming.

Topic Seven

The Sacrament of Orders

The last two remaining sacraments are

- the Sacrament of Orders
- and the Sacrament of Marriage.

These sacraments are called sacraments of service or sacraments of commitment.

Why?

Another word for service is **MINISTRY**. We use this word a lot today. We talk about 'youth ministry' or a 'eucharistic minister' or the 'ministry of the laity'.

All Christians are called to minister to others. We have just talked about the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

These are not optional!

By Baptism and Confirmation we are called to some form of ministry, to continue the work of Jesus in some concrete way.

But different people serve in different ways. Some are called to teach, others to work with the sick.

Some are called to witness to their faith in the area of politics, some to bring the witness of love to the business world.

Others are called to raise families to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

Each of us ministers in our own special way, according to our gifts and talents.

Each of us is called to holiness. We live our lives as married people or single people as brothers or sisters in religious orders, or as priests, with one purpose in mind.

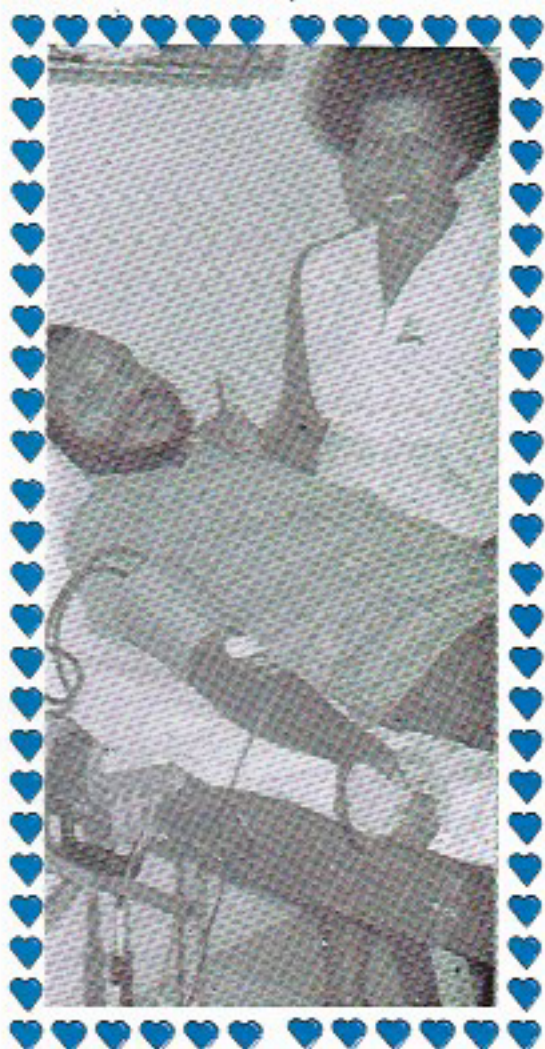
What is this purpose?

Answer: How best can we serve God, and Jesus, (present in those around us), with the gifts, talents, and particular call God has given us?

The Sacrament of Orders and the Sacrament

of Marriage, are also sometimes called the Social Sacraments. Their first purpose is not to make the individual person holy.... (each person has this call already in Baptism, in Reconciliation, the Eucharist and so on).

The purpose of these sacraments is to give witness to God's faithful love, and to live a special life of service to others.



Let us now look at the Sacrament of Orders.

Why use the word 'Orders'?

The word order or orders, comes from Scripture, where we read,

"You will be a priest forever, in the priestly line or order of Melchizedek" (Heb 5:6).

Because this 'order' brings us into contact with Jesus who is the source of holiness, this sacrament is often called *Holy Orders*.

Jesus made a special call to twelve men from among the many who were his disciples.

The special ministry of the twelve was

1. To go out into the world with Jesus' own authority to preach and to forgive sin.

2. To make Jesus present in the Eucharistic bread and wine (Do this in memory of Me)

The early Church recognized what Jesus had done, in calling certain people for certain tasks, and they did the same.

For example, a replacement for Judas was found. Helpers were chosen to help preach the word. Successors to the apostles were appointed.

As a result, the early Church began to be organized. This happened in the form of a *hierarchy*.

This means that it was organized in a certain way according to particular tasks and also according to what Jesus indicated on earth.

The Church is organized in such a way that certain people whom God himself chooses, serve the Lord in special ways for the benefit of the entire community.

When a person receives the sacrament of Orders, it means that they are consecrated to a role of service and leadership, a role which has certain responsibilities.

Through ordination they receive the special power and authority to minister in the name of Jesus. The priesthood is a vocation, just as marriage and the single life are vocations. The word 'vocation' means a calling, an invitation by the Lord to a special kind of service.

Two kinds of service that priests are to do, have been mentioned, what are these?

Another help to understanding the way in which priests serve is to think of the common name by which they are all called. This word is 'Father'.

Just as it is the special privilege of a human father is to pass on human life, so the priest has the special privilege to pass on spiritual life. When we use the title 'Father' it is a reminder to us of the mystery of the priesthood, and of the life-giving mission of Jesus continued in his priests.



THE ROLE OF THE PRIEST

- to proclaim the Gospel
- to build up the community
- to give us new life in Baptism
- to take away our sins
- to offer the perfect sacrifice of Jesus to God
- To bless marriages
- To prepare us to meet God in death.
- To give us the bread of eternal life

A Frenchman, Lacordaire, wrote this poem about the way of life of a priest.

The Priest

To live in the midst of the world
without wishing its pleasures

To be a member of each family
yet belong to none.

To share all sufferings,
to penetrate all secrets,
to heal all wounds...

To have a heart of fire for charity,
and a strong heart for chastity.

To teach, and to pardon, console,
and bless always.

What a life!

And it is yours,

O Priest of Jesus Christ.

What do you think is the hardest thing about the life of a priest?

Most of us think of Orders as just *one* kind of ordination, that of priests. However, there are *3 kinds* of Ordained Ministry.

Scripture uses three Greek words to refer to the three forms that ordained ministry can take:

episcopoi (Acts 20:28)

presbyteroi (Acts 14:23)

diakonoi (Acts 6:1-6)

From these words come the English words episcopate (bishops), presbyterate (priests) and diaconate (deacons).

BISHOPS

Bishops are the direct successors of the Apostles.

They are responsible for the Church in a diocese and they are appointed by the Pope, after consultation with the people of the diocese. They have power to ordain priests to help them, and they usually give the

Sacrament of Confirmation.

(Priests owe obedience to their bishop and they do not have the power to give the sacrament of Orders. In other words, they cannot ordain another person as a priest.)

The Sacrament of Orders confers on Bishops the responsibility to continue the work of the Apostles.

As successors of the Apostles, Bishops exercise the same leadership role that the Apostles did.

Bishops have the special responsibility to
shepherd the Church
lead it in worship and service
teach it in the way of salvation.

Because our Bishops are successors of the Apostles, and continue to teach what the Apostles taught, we say that our Church is Apostolic, it comes from the Apostles.

DEACONS

Deacons are single or married people who have felt God's call to the ordained ministry. Deacons serve the community in a variety of ways.

They preach, baptize, marry and can also conduct funerals.

They cannot be the celebrants of Eucharist Confirmation, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, or Holy Orders.

Deacons are helpers. They assist the bishop or priest in preaching and teaching, in distributing Communion, in caring for the poor and the sick.

Today deacons are becoming more common, and their numbers are likely to continue to grow in the years ahead.

PRIESTS

Page 41 already contains a lot of information about priests. Perhaps you do not know that there are two kinds of priests. Some priests are called 'diocesan'. This is because they were ordained by a Bishop *for the service of a diocese*. They work in this diocese and are

under the authority of the Bishop of the diocese.

There are also priests that belong to a particular religious order, such as the Marist, Franciscan, Divine Word, M.S.C., Dominican Order and many others. These priests are called 'religious'.

Religious priests belong to a community and are also under the authority of their religious superior. Religious priests are *invited* to work in a diocese by the Bishop. A priest who belongs to a religious order would most probably work in many different dioceses in his lifetime. A diocesan priest usually stays in the same diocese in his lifetime.

Activities

1. Ask your priest to come and give you an outline of a typical week of work.
3. What seminary do you know? See if you can find out something about it.
Write an outline of a priest's training.
4. Read the following references in which St. Paul speaks about his own work
1 Cor 3:7-9, 19-22, 2 Cor 5:18-20
Eph 3: 7-9

Which of these references describing the work of a priest do you like the best?
Copy it out.

5. Think of one or two priests that you know. Remembering the main work of a priest, write down jobs they are doing which you think could be done by lay people.



How can we help and support our priests?

We can welcome them into our houses..

We can treat them with respect..

We can trust them, eg. call them into our houses when relatives are dying

We can contribute food and make sure they eat enough

We can

We can

Write two more things we can do



Topic Eight

The Sacrament of Marriage

When the Church prays and celebrates the Sacraments, it does so in ways meant to help us to understand that God meets us in our ordinary lives.

It is very deliberate that the Sacraments touch our natural human experiences. They are ways to get in touch with the deeper areas of ourselves. We are spiritual as well as physical beings, emotional as well as rational.

It is Marriage, as understood in the Christian tradition, that gives us the clearest example of our sacramental faith. Marriage is not a ceremony, but a way of life. Of course the other sacraments are too, but in Marriage this everydayness of God meeting us, stands out very clearly.

Marriage is about sharing life together. It recognizes that being selfish and doing exactly as we like as independent people is not as wonderful as living in relationship.

We believe that God is Trinity, that God is not solitary, but communitarian - God is a community of three persons. Creation itself exists because of God's free desire to extend life to others.

Like God's love, marital love is creative. In Marriage, people discover that we are made for partnership, for love. It is in loving and being loved, and extending our love to another that we show forth that we are made in God's image and likeness.

Marriage is also about mission.

In their loving partnership, the married couple witness to the world that living for the other is the way to go.

These are some of the words spoken by the priest in the Marriage ceremony.

Copy out some of the ones that you like best.

Lord, bless these rings which we bless in your name. Grant that those who wear them may always have a deep faith in each other. May they do your will and always live together in peace, goodwill and love. Amen.

*"I take you for my lawful wife
husband, from this day forward,
for better, for worse, for richer, for
poorer, in sickness and in health,
until death separates us."*

In blessing those being married, the priest says:

May you be blessed in your children, and
may the love you give them be returned a
hundredfold. May the peace of Christ dwell

in your hearts and in your home, always.

They witness that togetherness is more important than possessions, that differences and problems can be overcome through loving commitment and through the effort to have good communication. In working through the difficult times together, married couples make the world a better place, and a more peaceful place. And in this, God can be seen at work.

In this sacrament:

- ♦ a man and woman promise themselves to each other
- ♦ before God (witness) and others
- ♦ this coming together of the couple is blessed specially by God through the priest.

Jesus gave us the sacrament of marriage to reveal the holiness of the married way of life, and to provide special helps and blessings for those being married. These helps are necessary because marriage demands sacrifice and generosity, and it is not easy to remain faithful to one another throughout life. There are wonderful times of joy and happiness and success, but there are also times of sorrow, disappointment and failure.

Activities

Name four occasions that might bring great joy to a married couple

Name times that might bring great sorrow.

Find out from your parents or guardians what have been the happiest times in their married life.

Write them down.

What usually causes tension in marriages?

Close your eyes and think of a really old married couple that you know.

Watch them (in your mind) as they sit or work together.

Is there respect between them?

What is really nice about them?

Thomas and Anna received the Sacrament of Marriage nearly 3 years ago...

Thomas woke. Then remembering that he was on late shift, he glanced at his watch. He felt something pulling him and realized then what had woken him. He grabbed his little son and sat him on his chest. Usually Anna was very good and kept Henry quiet and out of his way when he had to sleep in the day time, but now it was nearly time to get up.

Thomas had been an employee of Porgera for the last two years, his first position after long courses at Lac Uni Tech. It was while he was studying there that he met Anna, who was a community health nurse. She was a very ordinary looking girl but it was her kind and happy personality that he really liked. She was able to laugh about things when he was too serious, and she was really wise and intelligent.

He thought back to the time when the little boy, now playing happily on the mattress beside him, was born. It was a worrying time. Anna had gone back to her village when she found she was pregnant. He had no married quarters, still being a student. He was very concerned when he went to the village after his course had finished.

He hardly recognized Anna; she was thin and lifeless. The village was in a poor and isolated area. The people there relied on their own food crops and these had failed, so food was scarce. Henry was born - weak and small. Thomas blamed himself and tried to get work quickly.

He asked about a position with Porgera but then he realized that it meant Anna would have to be away from her village for a very long time. They talked about it, and she agreed, so he accepted the position.

At first it was very difficult. Little Henry was often sick, probably because Anna had not eaten well before his birth. Also she was not used to living in a town house, surrounded by very different people. There were no close

women wantoks around, but Anna never complained, as she knew that Thomas was trying to get started in his new work. He was a very serious person and he wanted to do well and there were many difficulties starting a new job in a new province. She tried to encourage him and brighten him up when he came home, troubled about some mistake he thought he had made. She never spoke to him of how much she missed her own family, here in this unfamiliar place.

Anna spent most of her day looking after the child who needed a lot of attention. She did not really know how to look after a house with a stove and running water. At the time of the house inspection, the small fridge was not working and the house was not well cared for. Thomas was cross at first, but then he realized that he was far more used to European houses than she. He remembered how on his next day off, they had gone together to buy curtains and things for the house.

He finished the small amount of money he had saved. Anna did not want to disappoint him, but he knew she wanted to spend the money on clothes for her little boy or a laplap. There were other difficulties. He was not really happy when he had to work night shift, as Anna was frightened in the house by herself at night. He bought a dog and made sure that all the locks were secure.



But there was one thing that they often argued about his wantoks. They would come every weekend, sometimes with cartons of beer, and would never offer to replace the food that they ate. Anna complained to Thomas. Thomas got angry and told her that he couldn't tell them not to come. Anna told him crossly that because they had no food garden, they couldn't be feeding everyone.

Finally they agreed to have enough food for themselves only, in the house at weekends.

Thomas' thoughts were interrupted by Anna appearing at the door. She picked up her small son and swung him onto her hip, and reminded Thomas that he had only a few minutes to be at the pickup point.

Name one thing that Thomas understood about Anna.

Name one of the things that Anna understood about Thomas.

Name a time when Anna had to be unselfish to help her marriage.

Name a time when Thomas had to be unselfish to help his marriage.

Name 2 problems Anna and Thomas faced in their marriage.

How did they solve their problems?

When do you think God's grace may have helped them?

We know there are many kinds of love. Love for our parents, love for a friend, love for a boyfriend or girlfriend, love for a brother or a sister, and many more.

There is one love however that stands out above all the rest. It is the love that Thomas and Anna are showing. It is the love that Jesus blessed and raised to the level of a sacrament. It is the love between a woman and a man in marriage. *Of all the loves a person can enjoy, only this one was raised by Jesus to the level of a sacrament.*

St. Paul tells us that marriage is
a mystery of grace
in which God acts
in the lives of a man and woman
so that they become
a symbol of God's love
for the human race,
and of Christ's love
for his Church.
(Eph 5:25).

How can marriage be a symbol of God's love for us and of Christ's love for the Church?

The love of husband and wife never stops but continues to grow each day.

Their love imitates God's unending love for us and Christ's unending love for his Church.

Christian marriage is also forgiving.

Husbands and wives forgive the hurts they give one another.

Their forgiveness of one another imitates God's forgiveness of us and also Christ's forgiveness mentioned so often in the Gospels.

Christian marriage is life-giving. The love of husband and wife brings forth new life. *Their love imitates God, whose great love generates our life. It imitates Christ's love who is always bringing forth new life in his Church, especially in Baptism.*

As well, Christian marriage nourishes life. It creates the climate of family love in which new life can grow and mature into Christian adulthood.

Again this imitates God who loves us unconditionally, and whose love allows us to grow and accept ourselves. It imitates Jesus who has left his Body and Blood to sustain and nourish the lives of members of his Church.

Husbands and wives give their independent lives up, out of love for one another.

Jesus gave up his whole life out of love for us.

When is a marriage not a marriage?

Sometimes parents or elders have their own reasons, political or financial, for wanting a particular couple to marry.

When either one or both of the couple are: reluctant to marry, or when there is force or fear, *then certainly no marriage takes place.*

It is clear Catholic teaching that it is the **mutual consensus** of the couple that makes marriage. A ceremony without true consent does not make marriage. If there is no mutual consent, there is no marriage. This mutual consent is also required by law. Without it there is no valid marriage in the first place, and therefore no sacrament either.

In the Sacrament of Marriage the couple state that they are willing to live out a great mission - to witness to God's love for each other and for the whole community, by promising themselves to each other freely, forever, and with the desire to share their faith with any children they may have.

Sometimes people are too immature or too selfish to give themselves to another totally. In that case, they cannot be considered to be truly married. At other times, they might be married according to the law, but they are not married sacramentally, because they did not intend to reflect God's love and to give their lives to each other as Jesus gave himself for us.

Of course many people do not know about the great mystery and great meaning and witness of a Christian marriage, even though St. Paul writes about it clearly. To prevent this lack of awareness, the Church asks for a time of preparation for marriage. This time is very important and all young people intending to marry should prepare for it and learn all they can. After we leave school, there is very little opportunity to learn more about our faith but this is one chance. Use it!

All sacraments, including the sacrament of marriage are sacraments of faith. Without this faith, two people can enter into a valid marriage, but they cannot enter into a valid Christian sacrament.

When two people have faith, they understand marriage as a redemptive experience, which draws its power from the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Life, in marriage or outside it, only unfolds its riches when we overcome our individualism and selfishness and become persons for others. Marriage is a very good way of achieving this aim.

Marriage is permanent.

The tradition of the Church has long valued the permanence of marriage. This quality of marriage corresponds to that feature of God's love where God chooses and loves each person intensely, unconditionally and constantly, with a passion and depth human beings can only roughly imitate. It would make no sense to be showing God's love through marriage and then say 'Well, I am tired of this person now. She is no longer beautiful. He is no longer interesting. I think I'll get divorced.' *Just imagine if God treated us like that!*

We all know of people who live together for some time and then break up. Usually there is much unhappiness as a result. We are made in the image of God. We find our true happiness in living in a God-like way, especially in imitating God's faithfulness. It is easy to live with someone. It is easy to walk out. It is hard to be faithful.

But when two adults, do promise themselves to each other, freely, and forever, placing their trust in God and in each other, it is totally awesome. We can only stand back in wonder and say **WOW!**

SUMMARY



In the Gospel, there are stories of people in the past who came to Jesus to be shown the way. Today, we too want to be shown the way. We too, want to have life and have it to the full (Jn 20:31).

An understanding of what is involved in sacramental marriage shows us how to blend our spiritual journey to God, with the day to day events of married life.

Through marriage we can be witnesses to God's love, for the individual, for children and for the community. God will support us in our task, through the strong arms of his sacraments and he will not leave us, because even when we are unfaithful, God is always faithful.

GOD SAYS	SACRAMENT	MEANING TO US
I want you to share in my life and love forever.	Baptism	We belong to God and to each other and promise to live like Jesus
I want you to share in my mission.	Confirmation Orders	We are needed. God uses us to bring about his Kingdom on earth.
I want you to be my image by the way you love and give life.	Marriage	We reveal God's faithful and life-giving love.
I love you and I heal you in your sinfulness.	Reconciliation	We rejoice in and receive God's merciful love and forgiveness
I want to draw you close to me through the cross .. the pains and trials of life.	Anointing	God is with us in our pain and he can use it for the redemption of the world
As my special friend, please sit at my table with my other friends	Eucharist	Jesus longs to share his Passover meal with us and reminds us of our unity as children of his Father

