

**Leader's Guide for**  
***INITIATION SACRAMENTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE***  
**The New Birth Day Club**

Baptism is the sacrament that marks our initiation into membership in the Church, the faith community. The celebration of Confirmation and Eucharist strengthen, nourish and complete the stages of initiation. This spirited video tells the story of Charlie and his desire to become a member of a community, the New Birth Day Club. Through the building of a clubhouse and the initiation of Charlie into this neighborhood club, the meaning of the symbols used in the rites of Baptism is explored. Under each of these rites, discussion questions and learning activities are offered. A prayer experience concludes the study of Baptism.

1. BELONGING

How does it feel to belong to a family? Describe, name and draw a picture of your family or a group to which you belong. Charlie says, "I'd like to belong to something that is important. Can I join?" Would you like to belong to the New Birth Day Club? List what Charlie was asked to do in becoming a member of the neighborhood club.

2. WELCOMING & SIGNING WITH CROSS

"Charles W. Swanson, we call you by your name." Like Charlie, we too are called by our name in Baptism. A name is important and reminds us we are special and unique. God knows and calls each of us by our name. How does it feel to hear someone call you by your name? Design and decorate your name. In ceremony, place your name on a banner to show your "yes" in belonging to God. Across the top of the banner place the words: *I have called you by name. You are mine.*

In the rite of Baptism we are welcomed and accepted by name. At the entrance of the church, the celebrant greets, questions and signs. "What name do you give your child? What do you ask of God's Church for your child?" How similar is the question asked of Charlie, "Why are you here?" In a rite of touch, the celebrant in Baptism signs the candidate. "I now trace the cross on your forehead and invite parents and godparents to do the same."

The Sign of the Cross shows that we are Christians and belong to God and God's people. When we see a cross, we remember that Jesus died, rose and will come again. Have students gather twigs and make a cross. Put their name on cross. These will be placed around a water bowl and ritually given to them during the closing prayer service. Like Charlie who was asked to "carry a rock to show you belong," so we carry our cross as a sign that we belong to Jesus.

3. PROFESSION OF FAITH

Sonya tells Charlie, "You have to do certain things to show you believe in the club."

“I, Charles W. Swanson, promise...” What promises does Charlie make? Like Charlie, we make a promise to Jesus at our Baptism. What do we promise? Jesus also makes a promise to us. What does he promise?

A creed is a statement of people’s beliefs. At Baptism we respond “I do” to a threefold profession of faith in God, Jesus, Holy Spirit. “This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it.”

Ask: What do you believe? Write a creed with the children. Make flags and have children place their beliefs on their flags. These belief flags will be used in the closing prayer service.

#### 4. IMMERSION or POURING OF WATER

Why is water important in our life? Draw an experience you remember with water: swimming, rain shower, wading in a creek, a bad snowstorm, being thirsty. How can you be like water (sign of life) for others? Name stories from Scripture that deal with water.

Why do you think Charlie had to run through the sprinkler? Juan says, “Now you’re ready to begin a new life with us.” And Charlie responds, “Some new life, soaking wet. My tennis shoes squeak.” In the immersion or pouring of water three times at Baptism these words are spoken, “(Name), I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” We are plunged into water, a reminder that life will have its difficulties. Invite children to draw a picture of a difficulty in life.

In the anointing with Chrism, the chest and forehead are signed as God is asked to strengthen our heart and mind. Ask: Where do you need courage right now? Tell a story of someone who gave you strength in a difficult time. Talk about ways you strengthen others.

#### 5. CLOTHING WITH WHITE GARMENT

“We place this sheet upon your shoulders as a sign of a new beginning,” Juan tells Charlie. Like Charlie, at our Baptism we were clothed in a white garment, challenging us to live a responsible life and to care for others. “(Name), you have become a new creation and have clothed yourself in Christ.”

Imagine and draw your garment of Baptism. Put signs of life and care on the garment.

#### 6. LIGHTED CANDLE

In our story, Alex says, “You have to hold the candle, Charlie, and stand in the middle of the circle.” Charlie quickly responds, “Hey, it’s spooky in here.” Draw a time when things were dark in your life, or a time you couldn’t see too well: dusk, light bulb blew out, storm and no electricity. What did you need to see again? Charlie is given a candle. At our Baptism, we too received a candle. Light is taken from the Easter Candle. The celebrant of Baptism says, “Receive the light of Christ. Walk always as children of the light.” As a group, talk about ways you can become a light and guide for others. Make and decorate a group candle.

## 7. BLESSING

The New Birth Day Club chanted and recited together. Usually a song is sung at Baptism. Recall the song/chant in the video:

*BELONG*

*We belong and we are free.*

*Good to see you, good to say,*

*“Come and be our friend today.”*

Sing together or create your own song with musical instruments.

To show our belief in God and our relation as brothers and sisters in one family, the Our Father is prayed at a Baptism. A blessing is given.

The club meeting ends: “Hey, it’s time for supper. I gotta go.” As the children go forth, name some of the things they are going to do. When we become Christians, we become disciples of Jesus. Ask: What are some words or actions of care, love and help you could do as a follower of Jesus and a member of the Christian community? Invite children to draw, cut out and make their footprints. On newsprint, write a prayer of thanksgiving for being a follower of Jesus. Display in class.

Charlie says, “I like belonging. I’m going to tell Keith tomorrow.” Who are we going to tell of Jesus and our faith community? Who and how would you invite someone to belong? Design an invitation.

## 8. FOR REVIEW

Sacraments are celebrations of the Christian community. How did the children celebrate? “Here is the best part, we have a ceremony.” Sacraments are meeting places for Jesus and us. How and when does the club meet? Sacraments are actions of Jesus giving his Spirit to us. Name the other sacraments. Talk specifically about the sacraments of initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist.

The children in the neighborhood club tell Charlie he can belong but “First, you have to be initiated.” What does it mean to be initiated?

Create a club. Choose a name, a special sign, password, handshake. List what you will do as a club. Have a welcoming ceremony.

Sometimes we show the way we feel and think through signs. A handshake says, “Good to see you, friend,” a smile says, “I like you,” a pat on the head affirms your goodness. Signs are silent language which give messages and tell us something. Jesus used signs. He touched the blind, blessed children and laid hands on his friends, the apostles. He spoke, and his words were signs too. Have children recall signs Jesus used in Scripture. Have the group name again the signs they saw and heard in the *New Birth*

*Day Club* video. Recall the signs and gestures of the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism.

## 9. PRAYER EXPERIENCE

Materials needed: Bible, candle, sprig of green and crosses around a bowl of water on a table, name banner displayed, belief flags

### RITE OF WELCOME

(Process in with flags and stand in a circle around table.)

Welcome. We light our Christ candle. Jesus is with us. God says, "I have called you by name. You are mine." From our banner I call each of you by your name. As you hear each name spoken, give thanks in your heart for that person.

### RITE OF THE WORD

A reading from Matthew 5:14-16

Our response will be: "We are children of the light."

We comfort and care for one another... "We are children of the light."

We remain at peace and are patient toward all... "We are children of the light."

We cheer the fainthearted and support the weak... "We are children of the light."

We seek one another's good and rejoice in the other's goodness... "We are children of the light."

We pray and give constant thanks... "We are children of the light."

### RITE OF FAITH PROFESSION

We proclaim our creed. Please state your belief from your flag. Our response will be: "I do."

### RITE OF WATER

(Stir water with sprig of green three times. Dip and sprinkle water for each of these blessings.)

We bless all rivers... "So be it. So be it. So be it."

We bless all trees... "So be it. So be it. So be it."

We bless all seeds... "So be it. So be it. So be it."

We bless North, South, East and West... "So be it. So be it. So be it."

*(Add your own).*

Please come forward and bless yourself with this gift of water, a sign of life, and receive your cross. We are followers of Jesus.

### CLOSING BLESSING

We pray the prayer of oneness as the family of God. "Our Father..."

(Sing and march with flags and musical instruments.)

Leader's Guide written by: Gaynell Cronin

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**Leader's Guide for**  
***INITIATION SACRAMENTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE***  
**The Spirit and Confirmation (Part One)**

“The mystery called God moves above the smallest blade of grass, as above the mighty cedar, in grains of sand, as well as huge mountains. Wherever you may turn, there you will find God’s footprints.”—Jean Pierre de Caussade.

Where do you find God’s footprints?

Discuss the image of the Spirit like a ribbon connecting, binding, making us one, moving through, around and in all times and places. What images speak of the Spirit for you?

1. Make a rainbow, a natural sign of God’s presence in our lives. Ask participants to design their names on a card. These names will be placed on the rainbow during the closing prayer service.
2. As *giver of life*, the Spirit meets us where we are. What video scene helped you remember a time you experienced the Spirit (e.g., in joy, sadness, doubt, problems, success, friendship)? Tell your story.
3. As *giver of gifts*, the Spirit moves us toward becoming our best selves and helps us see and accept our unique gifts and talents as we change and grow. What are your gifts, talents, abilities? What are the gifts of others? How do you use your gifts in Christian service and ministry?

Read I Corinthians 12:1-4. Design a bookmark with the words: *What you are is God’s gift to you. What you become is your gift to God.*

4. As *maker and keeper of promise*, the Spirit breathes in all times and places.

Read John 16:5-7. What is the promise Jesus made?

Create a living time line of the presence of the Spirit through history. Pair students and have them choose one event. (Use events mentioned in video or others.) Research in Scripture and relate to life today. Share with group.

5. Ask: Who is the Holy Spirit? Write answers on board/newsprint. (The Holy Spirit is God’s presence and activity in us and among us, the Spirit of Jesus with us, the one who brings life to the Church, creating, empowering, filling the whole world with life.) What Scripture stories do you know about the Holy Spirit?

6. Jesus experiences the Spirit in his own life and calls the Holy Spirit a paraclete, one who is a *helper, teacher, friend, comforter, protector, companion*. In which of these ways do you experience or meet the Spirit through others?  
Read John 16:5-7. Discuss the meaning of advocate.  
How can you show that you have accepted the gift of the Spirit to be your helper?
7. In different qualities of goodness which we call the Fruits of the Spirit, we show how the Spirit is with us. In which video scenario did you see yourself? Which of these qualities—Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Generosity, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self Control—are strongest in your life right now? Weakest? By which action do you show the Spirit is with you? How would you describe the ways the Holy Spirit works in your life? Write a prayer on one of these qualities which will be shared in the closing prayer service.  
Read Galatians 5:22-25. How can each of these qualities be used in everyday life?
8. Create a web page of pictures and phrases that tell others about the Spirit. Or create a newspaper headline that shows how the Spirit is active in the world today.
9. Read Isaiah 11:1-9. Describe the work of the Spirit in the life of Jesus and in the early Church. What is the Spirit's work in the Church today? Candidates for Confirmation do hours of service in the community to show they are active followers of Jesus. Which services to your parish and world community do you do now? Which do you want to do after you are confirmed? Write a note to someone involved in a parish ministry and thank them for their service.
10. We take a stand for justice, peace and compassion in renewing the earth. What does the Holy Spirit help you stand up for? Imagine that your Sunday newspaper magazine section, *People Focus*, has chosen to do an article on you and the way you are making the world a better place to live. Write the opening paragraph of the article.

#### 11. CLOSING SPIRIT PRAYER SERVICE

Materials needed: rainbow and name cards from #1, bowl of water, container of oil, bread, prayers from #7, roll of ribbon.

#### WE GATHER

Spirit of God, you are our Helper, Friend, Guide, Teacher, Comforter, Protector, Companion. As we gather in prayer, we place our names on this rainbow as a sign of our willingness to be a gift for others. We remember:

*What we are is God's gift to us. What we become is our gift to God.*

(Call names.)

#### WE LISTEN

Spirit of God, as *giver of life*, you meet us where we are. As *giver of gifts*, you move us toward becoming our best self. As *maker and keeper of promise*, you breathe in all times and places.

A reading from Galatians 5:22-25

In different qualities of goodness which we call the Fruits of the Spirit, we know your life, God, in us. We share these prayers. (Written prayers from #7 are read.)

#### WE CELEBRATE

Through Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation, we are initiated more deeply into the faith community. Water, oil, bread are signs of the Spirit of Jesus with us now. And so we say:  
*Be welcomed in the Spirit* through Baptism.

(Pass bowl of water. Each person dips one hand and makes the Sign of the Cross.)

*Be sealed in the Spirit* through Confirmation.

(Pass container of oil. Each person dips thumb in oil and makes the Sign of the Cross in their hand.)

*Be gathered in the Spirit and fed by the Body of Christ* through Eucharist.

(As bread is passed, break off a piece. Hold. Then eat together.)

#### WE SEND

*Look. Be aware. Be awake to the Spirit* connecting us, binding us, making us one like a ribbon moving through, around and in all people. (In a circle, pass a roll of ribbon.)

We stand for justice, peace, compassion in making this old world into a new one. Send us to the four directions: North, South, East and West. Clothe us with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let us remember that we are not alone. Deep in our hearts, may we hear your voice:

*I Am With You Always.*

*Look. Be aware. Be awake in the Spirit.*

*Amen.*

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**Leader's Guide for**  
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**The Spirit and Confirmation (Part Two)**

1. Discuss the story of the three wise people. Where is God hidden for you? In what places do you find it difficult to find God? What does this statement of Augustine mean for you:  
*"God is nearer to us than we are to ourselves"?*
2. How do you speak of the Spirit? What is the sound of the Spirit for you? Choose one image from Scripture and tradition which best describes your experience of the Spirit: *wind, fire, water, dove, breath*. Every image speaks of the nearness of God to us. In groups divided according to the image chosen, reflect and describe experiences. Research where this image appears in Scripture. Draw/design/color image. Write a paper on image. Report and share.
3. Offer experiences of the work of the Spirit in one of these areas: joy, delight, forgiveness, healing, justice, liberation, unity. Design a web of life which shows the Spirit like a ribbon weaving, bonding, connecting, making all one.
4. The poet Jessica Powers says, "To live with the Spirit is to be a listener...it is to keep the vigil of mystery, earthless and still." Talk about ways to be aware, awake and a listener.
5. The Church names seven special Gifts of the Spirit. But since the Spirit's gifts are limitless, the number seven is a symbol meaning fullness, wholeness, totality. What person or need did you identify with in the video as the seven gifts were expressed? Choose one Gift of the Spirit you need right now.

Recall and name gifts in these categories: gifts of awareness (wisdom, understanding, knowledge); gifts of action (courage, right judgment); gifts of appreciation (reverence, wonder and awe). Design a t-shirt which reflects one of these gifts in being clothed with the power of the Spirit. Divide class into seven groups according to the Gift of the Spirit. Have each group design a sign for their gift and write a prayer which will be used in the closing prayer service.

6. Read Romans 12:6-8. How can each Gift of the Spirit help you? What decisions do you need to make? How can each gift contribute to helping you make this decision?
7. Talk about the way the three sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist initiate us more deeply into the faith community.

8. Read or tell the story of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). As the Spirit came at Pentecost, so at Confirmation we celebrate the presence of the Spirit in a special way through the anointing with chrism and laying on of hands. Both of these gestures prepare us for special work—to be witnesses of Jesus. Confirmation seals and completes Baptism.
9. We express, through symbols and symbolic actions, some of the deepest realities of our faith. Divide in groups and have them explain the symbolism of each element in Confirmation: Christian community, bishop, sponsor, laying on of hands, anointing with chrism, sign of the cross, your name.
10. Name some people who have given and continue to give witness to the presence and activity of the Spirit. How does your chosen sponsor do this? Make a photo or newspaper collage of how the Spirit is moving in your parish, school, family.

#### 11. CLOSING SPIRIT PRAYER SERVICE

Materials needed: rainbow banner from *The Spirit and Confirmation: Part One*, study guide, seven candles, perfumed oil, group prayers and signs from #5, choose readers, a Bible

#### WE GATHER

Spirit of God, you clothe us with your power and presence. Let us know the light and warmth of your life in us as we use your gifts in the service of others.

Reader 1: Spirit of God, you come like the *wind*, gentle and powerful, cooling and comforting. Look. Listen. Feel. Be awake to the Spirit as *wind* in your life.

Reader 2: Spirit of God, you come like *fire*, brilliant and transforming, cheering and energizing. Look. Listen. Feel. Be awake to the Spirit as *fire* in your life.

Reader 3: Spirit of God, you come like *water*, cleansing and refreshing, life-giving and sustaining. Look. Listen. Feel. Be awake to the Spirit as *water* in your life.

Reader 4: Spirit of God, you come like *breath*, invisible and elusive, essential and indispensable. Look. Listen. Feel. Be awake to the Spirit as *breath* in your life.

Reader 5: Spirit of God, you come like a *dove*, gentle and peaceful, soaring and freeing.  
Look.

Listen. Feel. Be awake to the Spirit as a *dove* in your life.

#### WE LISTEN

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles 2:1-4.

Reflect: What does God's word say to us today?

## WE RESPOND

We listen to these prayers from our groups and welcome their signs of the Gifts of the Spirit on our rainbow banner.

## WE CELEBRATE

In silence, we light our seven Gifts of the Spirit candles. (Do so.)

With hands extended, palms upward, we pray:

Send your Spirit upon them to be their helper and guide.

Give them the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of right judgment and courage, the Spirit of knowledge and love, the Spirit of reverence in your service.

Amen.

(Invite each participant to name a Gift of the Spirit that they need in their life right now.)

In silence, pass perfumed oil and rub some into our hands.

We are named, sealed and claimed for the life of the Spirit.

## WE SEND

Like a ribbon weaving the web of life, the Spirit bonds and connects us, making us one: North, South, East and West. Like the colors of the rainbow, we are clothed with the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit. Our response will be: Amen.

Through the Spirit, the risen Christ is present with us everywhere and in every moment,

As the wind blows... "Amen."

As fire that warms... "Amen."

As water that refreshes... "Amen."

As air we breathe... "Amen."

As the life that flows through us... "Amen."

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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**Who Is the Spirit?**

1. The Holy Spirit is God's life in us and among us, the Spirit of Jesus with us, the one who brings life to the Church. Ask: Who is the Spirit? What image of the Spirit did you like most: *wind, breath, fire, water, a dove*? Tell of a time when you felt the Spirit in this way. Draw your favorite image of the Spirit and on it write a prayer.
2. As *giver of life*, the Holy Spirit is God's presence among us, creating and filling the whole world. What gifts of nature did you see and hear? Draw a picture of creation. Show a colored ribbon connecting everything and everyone into a community of life.
3. As *giver of gifts*, the Holy Spirit moves us toward becoming our best self and helps us see and accept our unique gifts, talents and abilities as we change and grow. Like the children in the video, choose and draw a picture of one of your gifts that you can share with others. Place your name on your picture. Make a rainbow (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, purple). The rainbow is a natural sign of God's presence in our lives. Your name and gift picture will be placed on the rainbow during the closing prayer service.

Read Isaiah 11:1-9. List the Gifts of the Holy Spirit: Wisdom, Knowledge, Understanding, Courage, Right Judgment, Reverence, Wonder & Awe. There are different gifts but the same Spirit gives them.

4. As *maker and keeper of promise*, the Spirit breathes in all times and places. Jesus reminds us that God's presence in the Holy Spirit has been and always will be with us. Divide the group for acting out these stories from Scripture: Creation, Noah, Annunciation, Jesus' Baptism, Jesus' Promise (John 14:15-17), Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). How has the Spirit, Jesus' promise, been a helper to you?
5. When have you felt the Spirit's presence in a special way? Have the children pantomime one of these scenes from the video: being afraid, sad, at peace, patient, in trouble, generous, angry, alone or happy, doing a difficult thing and getting bad news.
6. Jesus says we meet the Spirit through others who give witness as *helper, guide, friend, teacher, protector, comforter, companion*. Display these names. Invite the children to name people they have met in this way.

7. Tell the story of Pentecost. As the Spirit came at Pentecost, so at our Confirmation, we celebrate the presence of the Spirit in a special way through the anointing with chrism and the laying on of hands. Both of these gestures prepare us for special work, to be witnesses of Jesus. Confirmation seals and completes Baptism.
  
8. Talk about the way these three sacraments initiate us more deeply into the faith community:
  - Baptism—“Be sealed with the Spirit.”  
(Design a welcome Spirit banner with symbols of Baptism.)
  - Confirmation—“Be sealed with the Spirit.”  
(Offer chrism for children to smell and touch.)
  - Eucharist—“Be gathered and fed by the Body of Christ in the Spirit.”  
(Draw a picture of your parish faith community.)
 Bring water in a bowl and invite the children to dip a finger and make the Sign of the Cross. Bring a container of oil and make the Sign of the Cross in the hand of each child. Bring bread and break it for each child to eat.
  
9. Remind the children that with the Father and the Son, the Spirit is one God, the Blessed Trinity. As Christians, we praise God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit with this prayer:
 

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

 Choose gestures to accompany this prayer.
  
10. Sing the song from the video: *Look. Be aware. Be awake to the Spirit.*  
Ask: How can we do this? What hymns do you sing about the Spirit at Mass?

#### 11. SPIRIT PRAYER SERVICE

Materials needed: bells, colored crepe paper, streamers, rainbow, Spirit prayer signs from #1, gift pictures from #3

WE GATHER

(Ring bells.)

We hear the sound to gather and celebrate the life of the Spirit in us and in our world. Our response will be to ring bells, wave streamers and say: “So be it. So be it. So be it.”

The Spirit is like *wind*... “So be it. So be it. So be it.”

The Spirit is like *breath*... “So be it. So be it. So be it.”

The Spirit is like *fire*... “So be it. So be it. So be it.”

The Spirit is like *water*... “So be it. So be it. So be it.”

The Spirit is like a *dove*... “So be it. So be it. So be it.”

Holy Spirit, you are like a ribbon moving through all times and places, making us one.

And so we sing (or say): *Look. Be aware. Be awake to the Spirit.*

#### WE LISTEN

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles 2:1-4

Take a moment to be quiet. Close your eyes. Relax your body, hands, shoulders, face, feet. Listen to your breathing. This is the breath of the Spirit in you. For a few moments, breathe in and out the life of the Spirit. (Pause)

We listen to the prayers we have written to the Spirit. (Prayers are read from the Spirit signs of Activity 1.)

#### WE RESPOND

As your name is called, please place your gift picture on the rainbow. Tell how you will share your gift with others. (Calling of names)

#### WE SEND

We bow our heads for the blessing of the Spirit. Our response will be: “So be it. So be it. So be it.” (Ring bells and wave streamers.)

Go forth, one in the Spirit... “So be it. So be it. So be it.”

Live your gifts in the service of others... “So be it. So be it. So be it.”

Remember the promise: I am with you always in the North, South, East and West... “So be it. So be it. So be it.”

And so we sing (or say): *Look. Be aware. Be awake to the Spirit. Amen.*

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