

## ***Catechetical Sessions on Liturgy and the Sacraments: An Overview***

Many experts feel that one reason it is harder today to appreciate the meaning of liturgy and the sacraments is because of modern technology and modern media (*CFH*, p. 135). Youth have a wide variety of stimuli competing for their attention. Liturgy and the sacraments may seem bland in comparison to the entertainment industry, which is always changing, new, and attractive. Once young people understand the nature of liturgy and the connections between the sacraments and their own lives, however, they can appreciate the fact that they can encounter the living God within these celebrations. Liturgy and the sacraments have everything to do with young people and what is most important to them.

The young people may have heard the word *liturgy*, but the opening sessions teach them about the meaning of liturgy and how the liturgical year is organized. The young people will explore the nature of signs, symbols, and rituals before moving into a study of the sacraments themselves. Though they may have learned about the sacraments earlier in their lives, the young people are now ripe for understanding them with greater insight. The sessions on the sacraments offer the young people an overview of the major symbols and their meaning, and an introduction to the rites themselves.

Such knowledge about the sacraments will enable the young people to give liturgy and the sacraments the rightful place they deserve in their lives—not as events that compete with entertainment, school, and sports, but as events that give meaning to all of life's experiences.

## Session Outcomes

### Chapter 1: "Introduction to the Liturgy"

- The learner will understand that the liturgy is the public, communal, and official worship of the Church.
- The learner will understand that in the liturgy God is at work bringing everyone to salvation.
- The learner will explore the truth that in the liturgy people experience the Holy Trinity at work, and that in the liturgy the mystery of the Holy Trinity is more deeply revealed.

### Chapter 2: "The Liturgical Year"

- The learner will see that the liturgies within each year celebrate God's saving power made real in the historical events of Jesus' birth, death, and Resurrection and point toward the Parousia, the Second Coming of Christ.
- The learner will become acquainted with the symbols, feasts, colors, and meanings associated with each of the six major divisions of the year: Advent, Christmas, Ordinary Time, Lent, the Triduum, and Easter.

### Chapter 3: "Introduction to the Sacraments"

- The learner will recognize signs, symbols, and rituals and understand their importance in the sacraments.
- The learner will be introduced to the seven sacraments, which will be more fully discussed in later chapters.
- The learner will experience ritual prayer that engages him or her in symbolic gestures and the use of symbolic objects.

### Chapter 4: "The Sacrament of Baptism"

- The learner will understand the many effects of Baptism.
- The learner will study the rite of Baptism and understand the significance of the sacrament's symbols.

### Chapter 5: "The Sacrament of Confirmation"

- The learner will understand that Confirmation is about becoming a fully initiated Catholic and that the sacrament has several important effects on those who receive it.
- The learner will understand the symbols of Confirmation and the significance of the ritual of Confirmation.

## **Chapter 6: "The Sacrament of the Eucharist"**

- The learner will understand that the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life.
- The learner will understand several significant meanings that Catholics find in the sacrament of the Eucharist.
- The learner will be able to make concrete connections between the Eucharist and daily life.

## **Chapter 7: "The Eucharistic Rite: An Intergenerational Session"**

- The learner will become familiar or will refamiliarize himself or herself with the movement of the Eucharistic rite.
- The learner will understand the rich meaning of the four different parts of the Eucharistic liturgy.
- The learner will understand the effects of attending the liturgy and receiving the Eucharist.

## **Chapter 8: "The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation"**

- The learner will explore the different dimensions of the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.
- The learner will reflect on the steps a person goes through when receiving the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation and will recognize the connections between the healing power of the sacrament and the injury of sin.
- The learner will be able to make connections between the sacrament and the sin and reparation that occur in daily life.

## **Chapter 9: "The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick"**

- The learner will recognize how Jesus' work of healing continues in the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick.
- The learner will understand the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick as a sacrament that brings spiritual and physical healing to people who are aging or who have a chronic illness as well as to those who face an imminent death.
- The learner will understand that the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick has significance for the way we live our lives. This sacrament invites us to be a healing presence in the world, to see God as the source of all healing, and to view our own suffering within the Paschal mystery of Jesus Christ.

## **Chapter 10: "The Sacraments at the Service of Communion: Holy Orders and Matrimony"**

- The learner will recognize that the sacraments at the service of Communion focus on serving God and the Church.
- The learner will recognize the connection between the rite of Holy Orders and the rite of Matrimony and the lived life of these calls, as well as characteristics unique to each sacrament.
- The learner will become more conscious of the everyday noise that can make it difficult for people to hear how God calls them.