



Anglican  
Learning Centres

# Baptism

by  
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Reproducible

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## Anglican Learning Centres

# Baptism

A learning centre is a designated place where students go to find information, activities, and material to direct their learning on a particular theme. A centre may occupy a corner of a classroom, be found on the back wall of a church, or be placed on a cart or bookshelf in the parish hall.

A centre includes display space to illustrate the theme, and pockets or clips to hold student information sheets and activity cards. Students come to the centre and select activities, then work at them individually or in small groups.


## Objectives

1. To supplement regular curriculum materials.
2. To provide a variety of materials from which students can direct their own learning.
3. To develop in students a sense of responsibility and independence in learning.

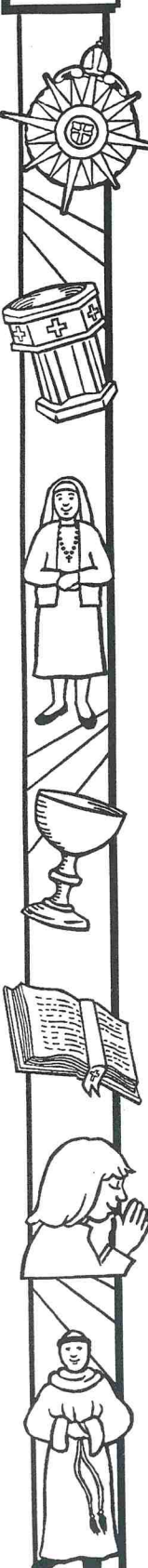
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4. To provide materials to suit a variety of ages, activities, and learning styles.
  5. To foster individuality and creativity in students.

Learning centres can be used in church schools, both large and small. They have some advantages for the **tiny church school**.

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1. No special furniture or classroom equipment is needed. Students can work on tables, on the floor, on the pews.
  2. The material is intergenerational. From the suggestions in the packet, the teacher can choose activities that suit the ages and abilities of this particular group of students. It does not matter if there is one 4 year old, two 8 year olds, and a 10 year old. Each student can find suitable activities, and all are working on the same theme.
  3. In a multi-age setting, older students can help younger children. Some common activities are provided for all ages.
  4. Children who are developmentally or physically challenged can choose from activities that they can complete and enjoy. Academically gifted children can choose challenging projects.

## How to set up a learning centre

### *A learning centre includes*

- a display of materials to illustrate and explain the theme
- information sheets for the student
- activity cards for individuals and groups
- supplies needed for each activity
- resources such as cassette tapes and player, books, pictures


### *A learning centre may be*

- a triptych created from heavy cardboard
- a "science fair" or display board purchased from a teaching supply store
- a bulletin board with pockets for activity cards
- a hula hoop or clothesline to which are clipped information sheets and activity cards

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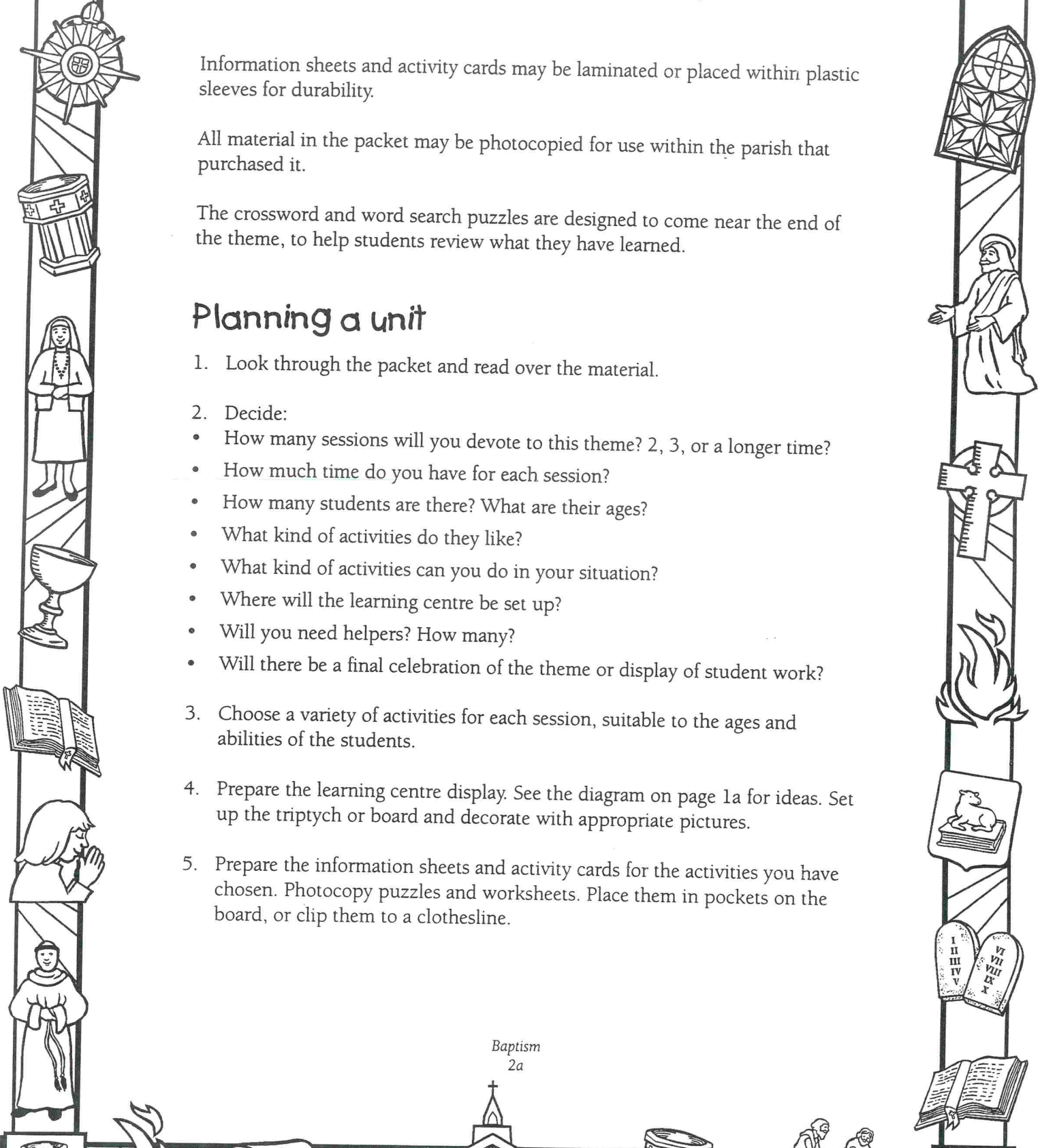


Information sheets and activity cards may be laminated or placed within plastic sleeves for durability.

All material in the packet may be photocopied for use within the parish that purchased it.

The crossword and word search puzzles are designed to come near the end of the theme, to help students review what they have learned.

## Planning a unit

1. Look through the packet and read over the material.
  2. Decide:
    - How many sessions will you devote to this theme? 2, 3, or a longer time?
    - How much time do you have for each session?
    - How many students are there? What are their ages?
    - What kind of activities do they like?
    - What kind of activities can you do in your situation?
    - Where will the learning centre be set up?
    - Will you need helpers? How many?
    - Will there be a final celebration of the theme or display of student work?
  3. Choose a variety of activities for each session, suitable to the ages and abilities of the students.
  4. Prepare the learning centre display. See the diagram on page 1a for ideas. Set up the triptych or board and decorate with appropriate pictures.
  5. Prepare the information sheets and activity cards for the activities you have chosen. Photocopy puzzles and worksheets. Place them in pockets on the board, or clip them to a clothesline.
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## Using the centre with the students

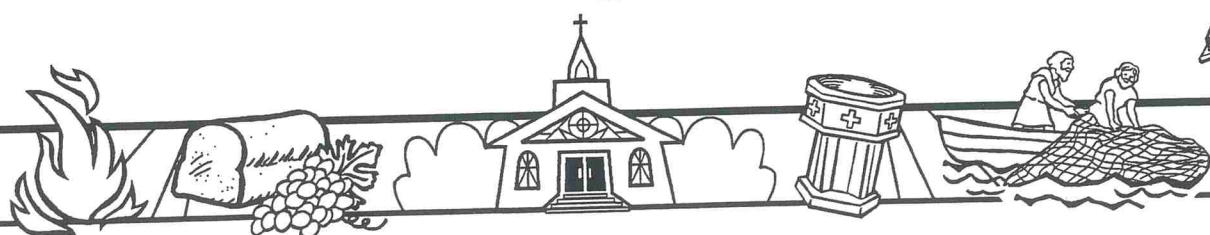
Introduce the centre to the students. Spend some time with the whole group. Talk with them about the theme. You may want to read aloud one of the information sheets, or tell the story in your own words. Or students may read the information sheets for themselves, then choose an appropriate activity card.

### **Set up rules for using the centre**

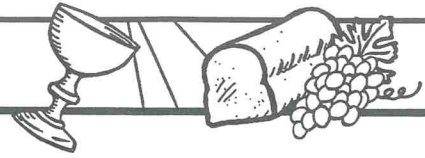
- Do students need to take turns using resources?
- Are some activities suitable for the whole group, or will students work individually?
- Where are the supplies?
- Are students to complete an activity before proceeding to another? You may want to create a chart that allows students to indicate that they have completed an activity.
- What will be the signal that the session is coming to an end?
- To whom can the student go for help?

At the end of the activity time, call the students back together. Ask them to report on what they have learned. Do together any closing activity, song, prayer.

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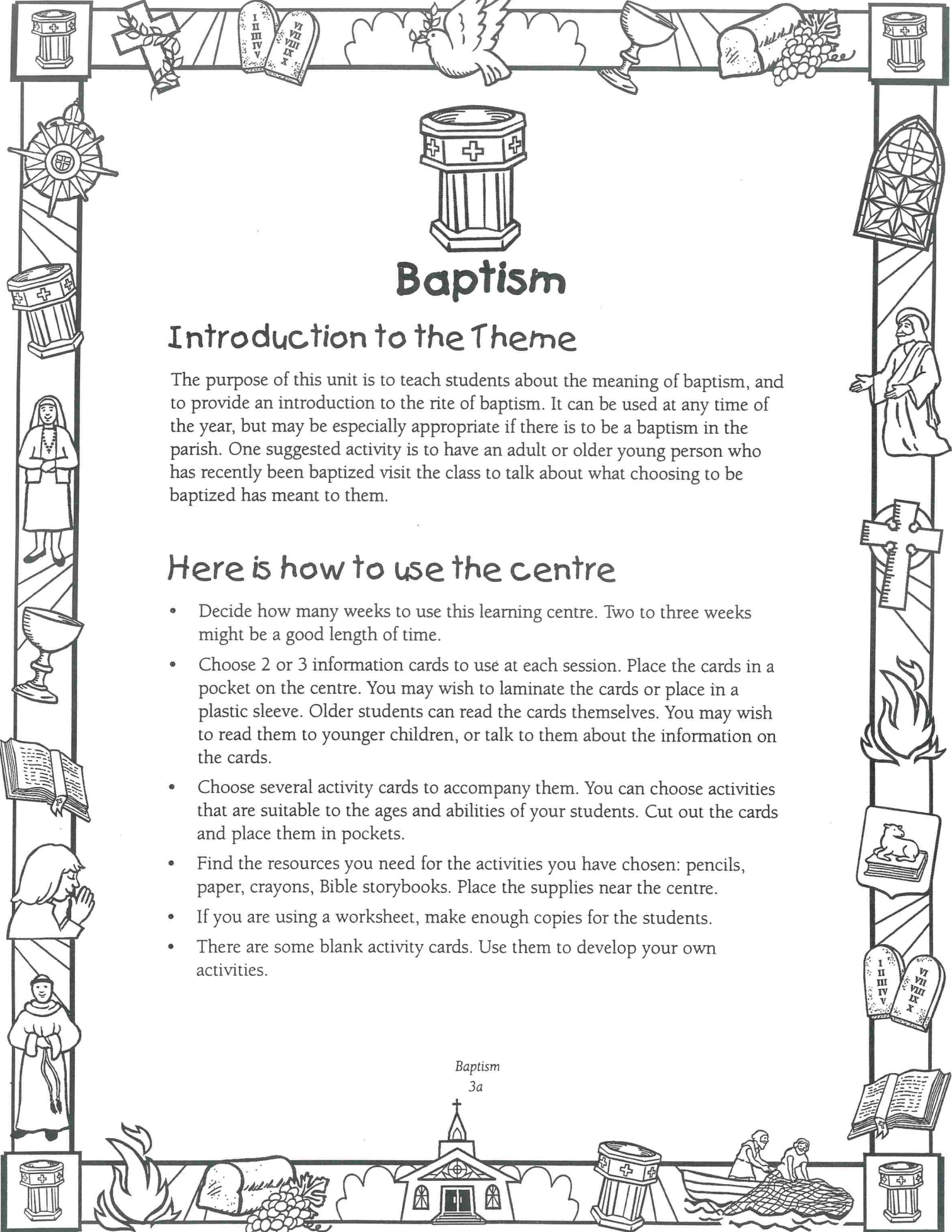
## Introduction to the Theme

The purpose of this unit is to teach students about the meaning of baptism, and to provide an introduction to the rite of baptism. It can be used at any time of the year, but may be especially appropriate if there is to be a baptism in the parish. One suggested activity is to have an adult or older young person who has recently been baptized visit the class to talk about what choosing to be baptized has meant to them.

## Here is how to use the centre

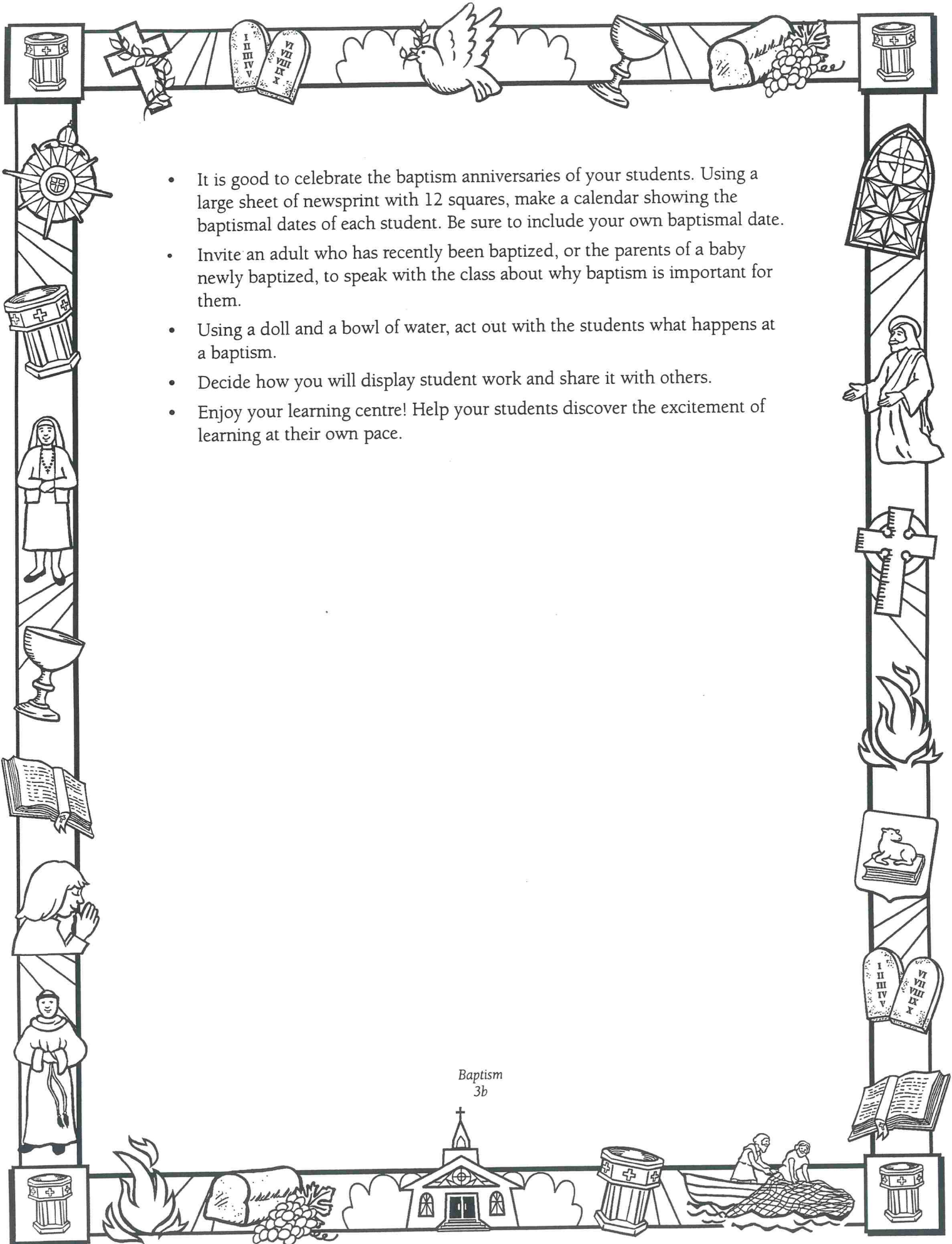
- Decide how many weeks to use this learning centre. Two to three weeks might be a good length of time.
- Choose 2 or 3 information cards to use at each session. Place the cards in a pocket on the centre. You may wish to laminate the cards or place in a plastic sleeve. Older students can read the cards themselves. You may wish to read them to younger children, or talk to them about the information on the cards.
- Choose several activity cards to accompany them. You can choose activities that are suitable to the ages and abilities of your students. Cut out the cards and place them in pockets.
- Find the resources you need for the activities you have chosen: pencils, paper, crayons, Bible storybooks. Place the supplies near the centre.
- If you are using a worksheet, make enough copies for the students.
- There are some blank activity cards. Use them to develop your own activities.

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- It is good to celebrate the baptism anniversaries of your students. Using a large sheet of newsprint with 12 squares, make a calendar showing the baptismal dates of each student. Be sure to include your own baptismal date.
- Invite an adult who has recently been baptized, or the parents of a baby newly baptized, to speak with the class about why baptism is important for them.
- Using a doll and a bowl of water, act out with the students what happens at a baptism.
- Decide how you will display student work and share it with others.
- Enjoy your learning centre! Help your students discover the excitement of learning at their own pace.

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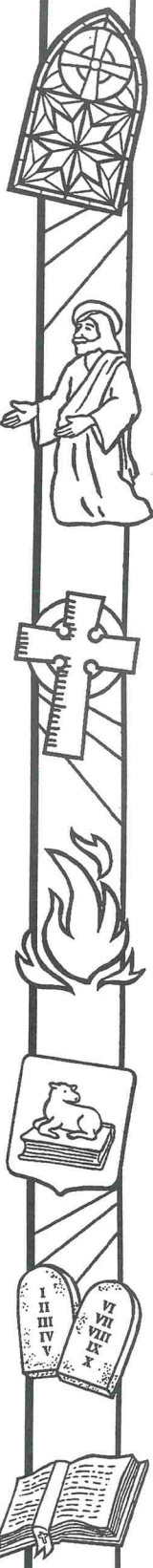








# Resource List

## **Books for Children**

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- Chase, Edith Newlin and Ron Broda. *Waters*. Richmond Hill: North Winds Press, 1993.
- Getty-Sullivan, Mary Anne. *God Speaks to Us in Water Stories*. Collegetown: The Liturgical Press, 1996.
- Lewis, C.S. *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. Harmondsworth: Puffin, 1965 (Chapters 6, 7).
- Milton, Bev. *My Baptism*. Kelowna: Wood Lake Books, 1998.
- Perry, Marilyn. *Our Baby's Being Baptized*. Kelowna: Wood Lake Books, 1993.
- Speir, Peter. *Noah's Ark*. New York: Doubleday, 1977.
- Wangerin, Walter. *Water, Come Down! The Day You Were Baptized*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1999.

## **Books for Teachers**

- A Gift for the Journey: A Baptismal Preparation Kit*. Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1993.
- Bays, Patricia. *The Great Adventure*. Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *This Anglican Church of Ours*. Winfield: Wood Lake Books, 1995.
- Gasslein, Bernadette. *Your Child's Baptism*. Ottawa: Novalis, 1994.
- Halmo, Joan. *Celebrating the Church Year with Young Children*. Ottawa: Novalis, 1988.
- Micks, Marianne. *Deep Waters: An Introduction to Baptism*. Cambridge: Cowley Publications, 1996.
- O'Driscoll, Herbert. *Baptism: Saying yes to being a Christian*. Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1995.
- Ramshaw, Elaine. *The Godparent Book*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1993.
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Ross, Robert. *Preparing for Baptism*. Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1993.

Westerhoff, Caroline A. *Calling: A Song for the Baptized*. Cambridge: Cowley Publications, 1994.

### **Books for Parents**

Berends, Polly Berrien. *Gently Lead: How to Teach Your Children About God while Finding Out for Yourself*. New York: HarperCollins, 1991.

Eitrem, Jean Brown. *That Reminds Me: Family Story-Starters for Passing on the Faith*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1998.

Fitzpatrick, Jean Grasso. *Something More: Nurturing Your Child's Spiritual Growth*. New York: Viking, 1991.

Marrocco, Nancy. *Growing in the Dark*. Ottawa: Novalis, 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Homemade Christians*. Kelowna: Wood Lake Books, 1985.

### **Resources You Will Need**

*Book of Alternative Services, Book of Common Prayer*

The hymn book *Common Praise*.

A book showing the meaning of names.

Bible storybooks about water stories: Creation, Noah's Ark, the Exodus, Jesus' Baptism. The Arch Book series features the baptism of Jesus.

Craft supplies for the activities you have chosen.





## Information Sheet # 1

# What is Baptism?

Baptism means joining God's family,  
the church

Who are the members of your family?  
Were you born or adopted into your family?

Baptism is the sacrament that makes us members of a bigger family, the church. The church is an unusual family because all its members are adopted into it.

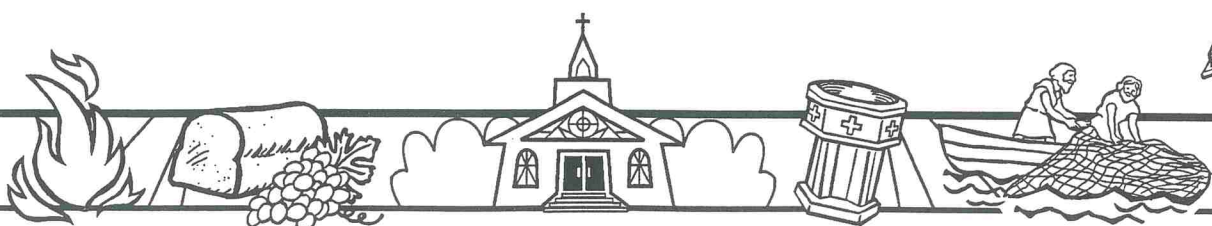
What does your family enjoy doing together?  
What chores do you do to help out your family?  
What do members of your family do to care for each other?

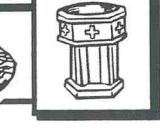
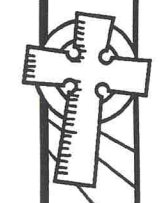
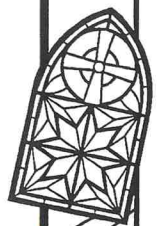
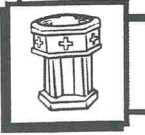
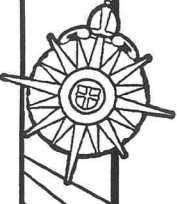
As members of God's chosen family, the church, we worship together. We hear stories of Jesus and his friends. We join in the family meal, the eucharist. We learn to take our part in expressing God's love to our families and friends and to those we meet at school and in our neighbourhood. We pray for each other and help each other out when needed.

## Baptism means initiation

An initiation ceremony makes you a member of a group. It is a new beginning. Baptism is the ceremony that initiates you into the Christian church.

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Are you a Brownie or Guide, Cub or Scout? How were you initiated as member?

What other initiations do you know?

The church, which has been around for almost 2,000 years, is made up of people all around the world of every race and language. Christians believe that God made all the people on earth and cares for them. Members of the church are marked at baptism as people chosen by God to share in God's work on earth. We have been chosen to love God and share the good news of God's love to all people. This is a big privilege and a big responsibility.

### Baptism means new life

People are always starting new lives. When you join a new sports team and get very involved in it, that's a kind of new life. So is starting a new school year. Going away to summer camp for the first time is another new life beginning. If a family moves to a new town where they don't know anyone, that means starting a new life. If a baby is born, a new life is begun. If a member of a family dies, the rest begin a new life without that person, or if parents separate or divorce, everyone starts a new life.

New beginnings aren't always easy, but with time and perseverance, people build new lives, and deep down they are often better, stronger people as a result.

In baptism, we leave behind our old lives, and build new ones as Christians in relationship with God, who made us and loves us.





- Water transforms and changes things. In a river, water washes earth away and sets it down somewhere else. Water changes what it touches.
- Water makes plants grow, and refreshes and renews the earth.

## We are baptized in water

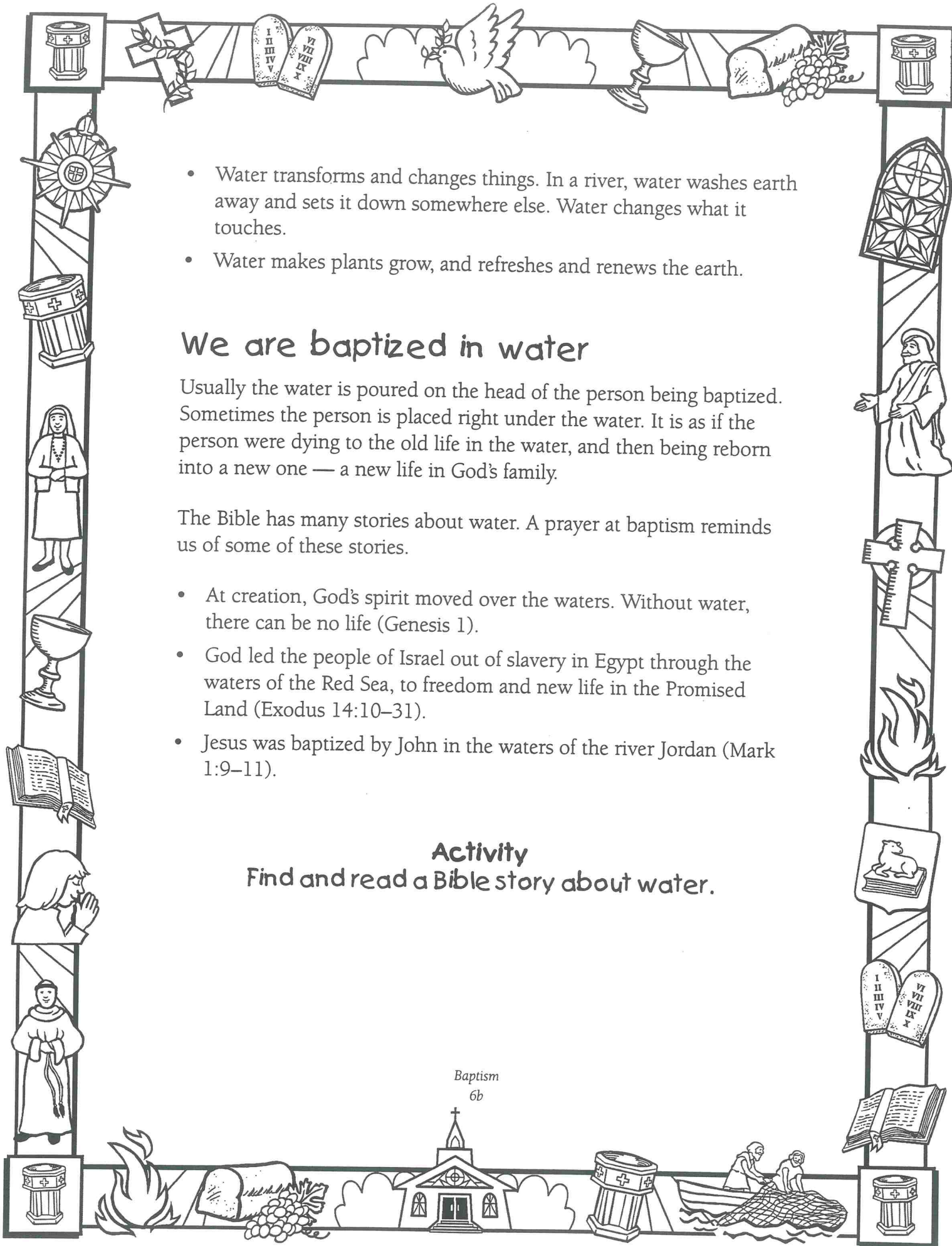
Usually the water is poured on the head of the person being baptized. Sometimes the person is placed right under the water. It is as if the person were dying to the old life in the water, and then being reborn into a new one — a new life in God's family.

The Bible has many stories about water. A prayer at baptism reminds us of some of these stories.

- At creation, God's spirit moved over the waters. Without water, there can be no life (Genesis 1).
- God led the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt through the waters of the Red Sea, to freedom and new life in the Promised Land (Exodus 14:10–31).
- Jesus was baptized by John in the waters of the river Jordan (Mark 1:9–11).

### Activity

Find and read a Bible story about water.





## Information Sheet # 2

# Water

Without water, there is no life

**W**hat are some of the ways in which water is important? Take a minute to write down some of your answers before you read the rest of this sheet.

Here are some ways in which water is important to us. How many of them did you think of? Did you think of some that are not in this list?

- Water makes us clean. It washes dirt away.
- Water cools us when we are hot.
- Water satisfies us when we are thirsty.
- Water helps us to have fun. We swim in it. We sail on it.
- Water is beautiful. It makes us glad when we can walk beside a lake or ocean.
- Water is a home for fish and other sea animals.
- Water helps us to stay healthy. Our bodies contain a lot of water. It is part of our blood and our skin. It is even part of our hair and our nails. We need to drink water to replace what we lose every day.
- Before we are born, we float in water inside our mother's body.
- Water is powerful, sometimes bringing life and sometimes bringing death.

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## Information Sheet # 3

# The Font

**B**aptisms in church take place at the **font**. It may be a big stone bowl at the back or at the side of the church. It may be a wooden stand on which a bowl is placed. It may be a small bowl positioned near the front of the church so that everyone can see the baptism. When the font is placed at the back of the church near the door, it reminds us that baptism is the doorway through which we become members of the church.

Take a good look at the font in your church.

The word **font** means fountain. The font is really a substitute for a lake or a river. In the early days of the church, people walked out into the river or lake, and were dunked in the water. This was a symbolic drowning from which they rose up into new life. It was a symbolic washing from which they emerged pure and clean. Even now in warm climates or in summertime, baptisms sometimes take place outside in a natural body of water.

When a baptism takes place in a font, water is first poured from a large pitcher into the font. We should be able to hear the water splashing when we are getting ready for baptism. At the moment of baptism, the officiating minister scoops up some water in a small container that is often shaped like a seashell, and pours it over the head of the person. It still symbolizes being washed clean in order to begin a fresh new life.

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## Information Sheet # 4

# Names



**N**ames are extremely important. Each one of us is different. There is no one exactly like you. Your name is a sign of the special person that you are. We recognize each other by name. Our name also stands for the way God recognizes each of us as a different person.

Our names are very important to us. We feel uncomfortable when others call us by the wrong name or use the wrong spelling. It hurts us when others make fun of our names or use them in the wrong way. That is because our name, in some deep way, represents who we really are.

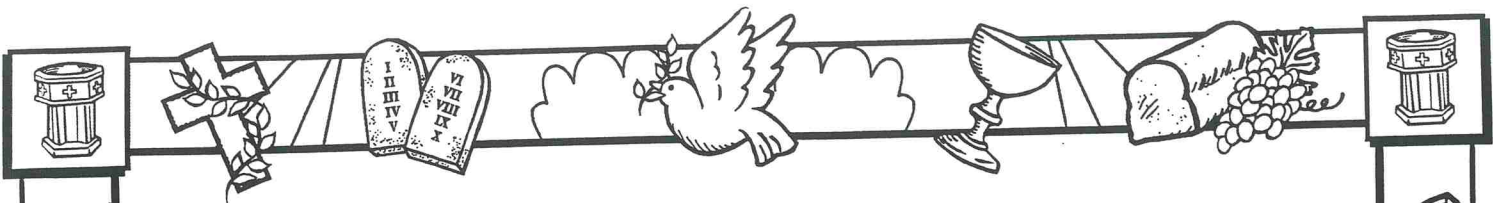
Ask your parents how they chose your name.  
Were you named after someone else? Why?  
Do you have a nickname? How did it arise? Do you like it?

Your parents named you at birth. In baptism, God names you and calls you God's own. The name you are given at baptism is usually the same as the one you were given at birth, but sometimes, especially when an older person is being baptized, that person takes a new baptismal name to show that this is the beginning of a whole new life and identity.

At baptism, the officiating minister speaks the name of the person being baptized, and then pours water over the person's head three times, saying,

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I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

After baptism, the name with which you were baptized is called your Christian name.

Notice that you are baptized in the threefold name of God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When we say that we are doing a thing “in the name of” someone else, we mean that we have been given authority to act on behalf of that other person. So God, in whose name you are baptized, is baptizing you. God is making sure you know that you belong to God.





## Information Sheet # 5

# Promises: The baptismal covenant

### Why do we make promises?

**W**hen you join a new group, you are often asked to make promises to show that you truly want to be part of the group. When you become a Spark or a Brownie, a Beaver or a Wolf Cub, a Scout or a Guide, you learn the promises and you stand up to make those promises in front of the whole group. You promise that you will do your best. You promise that you will try to be a good group member.

When we are baptized and become part of God's family, the church, we make promises. We promise to turn away from what destroys life and to do our best to follow God's life-giving ways.

Look on pages 153 and 154 of the *Book of Alternative Services* to find the baptismal promises.

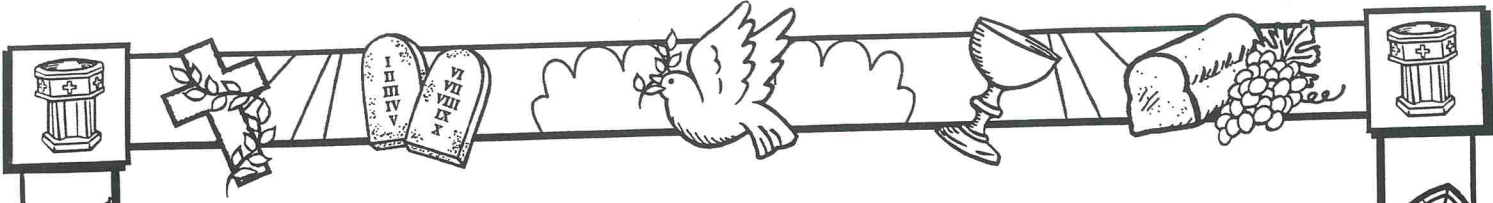
### What do we promise?

We promise

- to renounce or give up what is evil and wrong
- to turn to Jesus Christ and believe in him, so that we may grow in God's new life
- to trust in Jesus' love for us and others
- to obey Jesus as our Lord

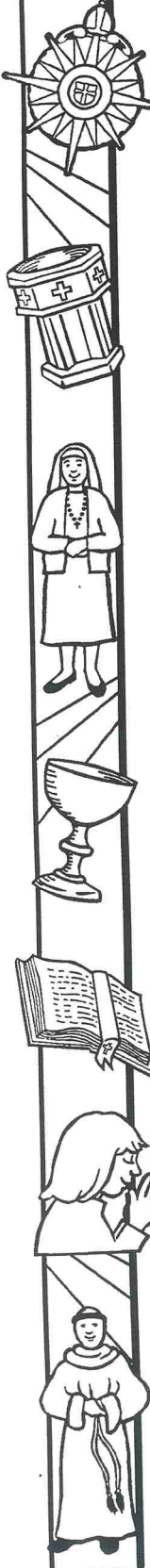
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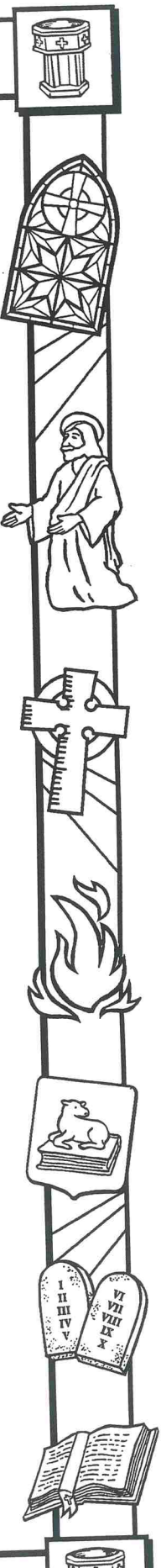


In the early church, people who wished to be baptized turned to the west to renounce or give up evil. The west, the direction of darkness, seemed to represent the forces that work against God. Then they turned to the east to affirm their belief in Jesus Christ. The east, where the sun comes up, seemed to represent the light and life that come from God. So we are asked to “turn” to Jesus Christ. This turning takes place inside us as we choose to follow God’s way.

## Who makes the promises?



Children, young people, and adults can make these promises for themselves. But babies who are baptized are too young to make the promises. Their parents and godparents or sponsors make the promises for them. The parents and godparents promise to make sure that the child is raised to live the Christian life, is brought to church, and is taught the stories of the Christian faith. They promise to pray for the child and to set a good example of Christian living.



Parents need support in bringing up their children and helping them to learn the Christian way. That is why other people are asked to help. The godparents take a special interest in the child as he or she grows up, and they pray for the child. Often godparents are members of the family or close friends of the family who strongly believe that Jesus offers new life to us all. Sometimes the whole church congregation becomes godparents and takes on the loving responsibility of helping the child grow to maturity as a Christian.

The congregation always plays a part at a baptism. It makes promises too. Members of a family try to help each other. So the people of the church family promise to help and support those who are making the promises.

What are some ways that your church helps you to learn more about Jesus?

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## Information Sheet # 6

# More Signs

### The sign of the cross

**A**fter water has been poured three times on the head of the person being baptized, the priest makes the sign of the cross on the forehead. In this way, all baptized persons are marked forever with an invisible sign showing that we belong to Jesus Christ.

This is like using a seal to mark sealing wax on a document, or like marking cattle with a brand. Although it is invisible, the sign of the cross is a permanent mark, like a brand, reminding us that we belong to Jesus. No one can see it, but you know that you are marked as Christ's own forever.

The cross reminds us of the cruel way in which Jesus died for us. But even after he died, Jesus' followers experienced his presence and knew that he was alive again among them. When we are signed with the sign of the cross, we are reminded that following Jesus isn't always easy. We must turn away from selfishness and sin, and must struggle to do what is good. Sometimes that hurts, but it allows Jesus to bring new life to the world and to ourselves.

In worship, some Anglicans trace the sign of the cross by touching their forehead, their chest, their left shoulder, and then their right shoulder. Some people like to have a cross on the wall of their room or wear a cross on a chain around their neck. These are other ways of reminding us that we are followers of Jesus, who died on the cross and rose again to bring us new life.

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## Anointing with oil

In making the sign of the cross, the priest may use a special oil that has been blessed by the bishop. The oil is called *chrism*, from a Greek word that means anointing. The word *Christ*, a title that we give to Jesus, comes from the same word and means *the Anointed One*. In ancient times, anointing someone with oil was a way of confirming that this person had special work to do for God. The oil of baptism is a symbol of the gift of the Holy Spirit, given to us in baptism to guide and strengthen us. It shows that we now share in Christ's work of drawing the whole world back to God.



## Giving a lighted candle

At baptism, the priest may give a candle to the person who has been baptized or to a sponsor, saying,

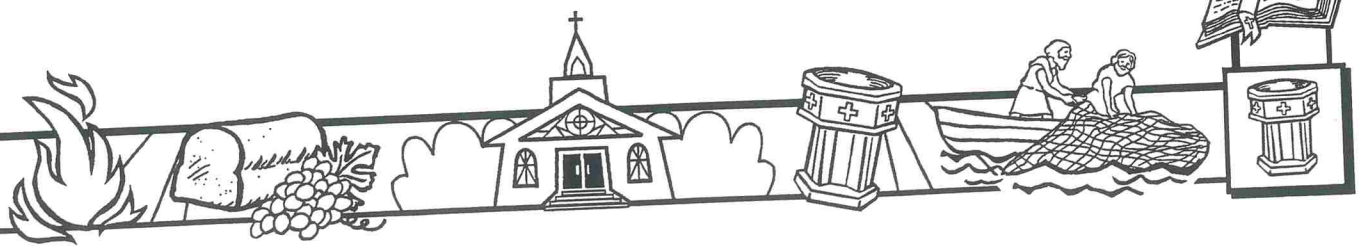
Receive the light of Christ, to show that you have passed from darkness to light.

The candle is lit from the paschal or Easter candle, which burns in the church at every baptism.

Some children are afraid of the dark because it represents evil and frightening things for them. They like to have a night light burning in the room where they sleep. The candle is like a night light. It reminds us that Jesus, the Light of the World, rose from the dead and is with us always, driving away gloom and fear. In our lives we can show God's light to others.

After the baptism, you can take your candle home with you. Light the candle on the anniversary of your baptism to remind you of this very special day.

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## Information Sheet # 7

# The Baptism Service

*The Book of Alternative Services, page 151*

### The Gathering of the Community (page 151)

Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ, the community of the church. The celebrant (the bishop or priest) calls the community together. The collect of the day gathers up (“collects”) our prayers and focuses our thoughts.

### The Proclamation of the Word (page 152)

We listen to the readings from the scriptures, and we hear the preacher explain them to us.

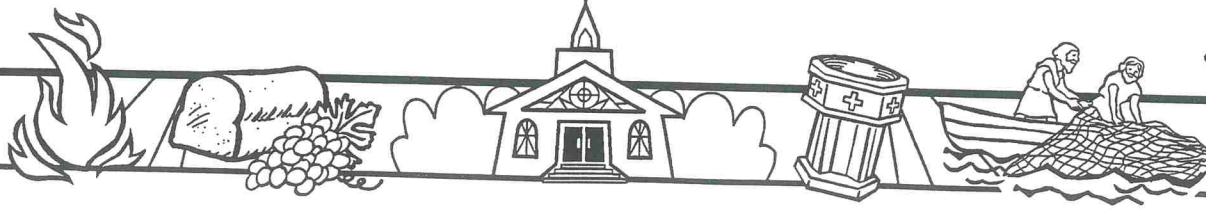
### The Presentation and Examination of Candidates (pages 153–156)

Baptism requires promises from those who are old enough to speak for themselves. We promise to renounce evil and to turn to Jesus Christ. Because baptism means incorporation into the Christian family, the church baptizes infants when other Christians are willing to make the promises on their behalf. Parents and godparents or sponsors make the promises for the infant. The congregation too makes a promise: to support the newly baptized in their Christian life.

### Thanksgiving over the Water (pages 156–158)

The celebrant gives thanks for God’s gift of water, and reminds us of the many water stories in the Bible. We pray that the baptized may be cleansed from sin, and brought to new birth in the family of the church. We ask the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen them.

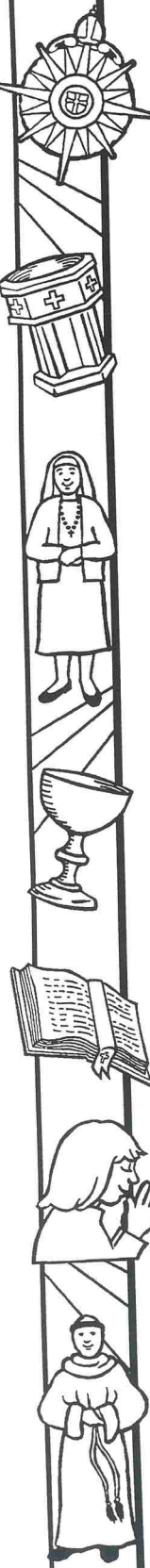
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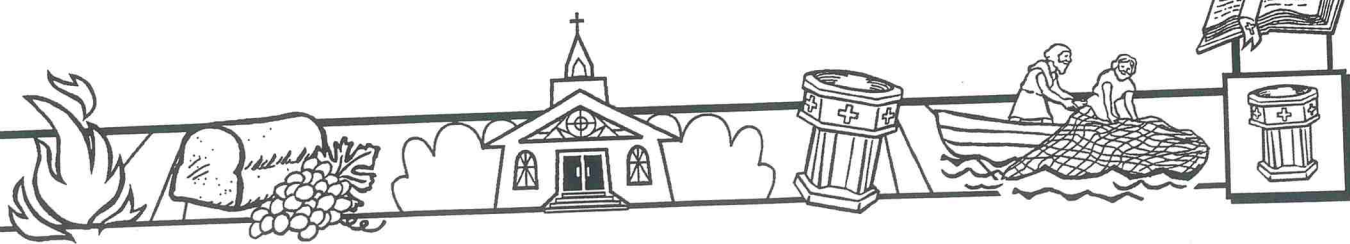
**The Baptismal Covenant** (pages 158–159)

The whole congregation joins the candidates in reciting the Apostles' Creed, the early baptismal creed of the church. Each time a baptism is celebrated, all baptized people who are present renew the promises made in their own baptism. We promise to continue in worship and prayer, to resist evil, to turn back to God when we do wrong, to proclaim to others the good news of God that Jesus Christ brought us, to seek and serve Christ in all persons, and to work for justice and peace among all people.



**The Baptism** (pages 160–161)

Baptism begins with the speaking of the person's name and continues with the pouring of water over the person's head in the name of God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then follows the signing with the sign of the cross, and a prayer for the gifts of the Spirit. The newly baptized person may be given a lighted candle. The community welcomes the newly baptized people as members of the church.








## Information Sheet # 8

# Baptism in the early church

### How baptism began



**E**ven before the time of Jesus, the Jews had a form of baptism to welcome converts into Judaism or to recognize symbolically that people were making a fresh new start to their lives. John the Baptist was called “the baptist” because he baptized people. When doing so he explained that he was preparing them for the coming of the Chosen One whom God was sending to them. This person was called the Messiah. We believe that Jesus was the Messiah. Yet, even though he was the Messiah, he was baptized by John the Baptist in the river Jordan.

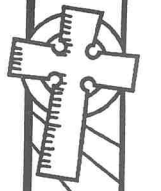
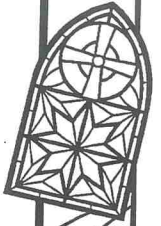
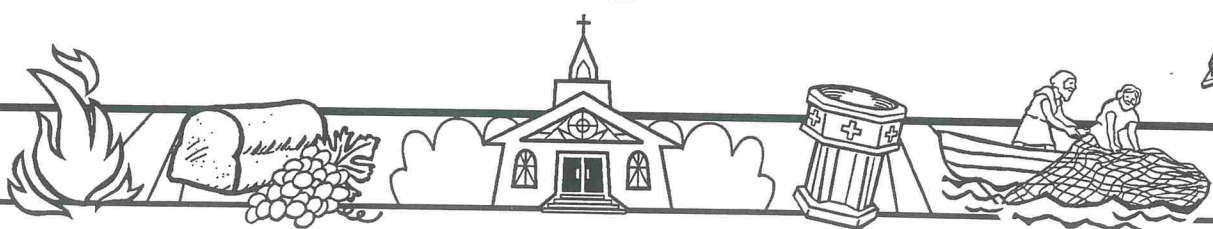
You can read about this in Mark 1:9–11.

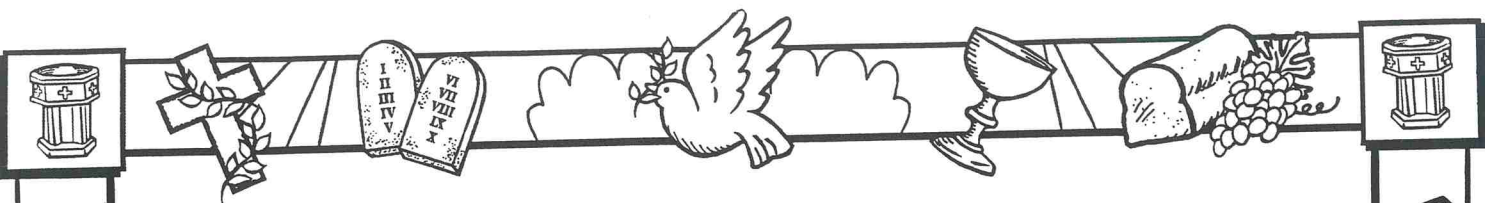
After Jesus died and rose from the dead, his friends began to gather together to tell each other stories of Jesus and to recall his teachings. They met to celebrate a special meal called the Lord’s Supper or eucharist, to remember Jesus as he had commanded them to do (Luke 22:19, 20). When other people heard the stories of Jesus and of God’s love for them, many wanted to become members of the Christian family because they saw that it was full of love and caring. They were initiated into the family by baptism.

### Adult baptism and infant baptism

Most of the new Christians were adults. But sometimes whole families would decide to become Christians, and so babies and children and

Baptism  
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teenagers would be baptized too. As time went on and the whole society became Christian, people who had already been baptized wanted their newborn babies to be baptized as well, so that they would be members of the church family from the very beginning of their lives.

## The cost of being a follower of Jesus

For the first 300 years of the church, being a Christian meant being an outlaw. The government did not allow people to be Christians. The church members had to meet in secret. Christians could be arrested for being baptized or for coming to worship together.

The followers of Jesus met in homes or sometimes in underground burial areas called *catacombs*. They would meet very early in the morning before going to work, and would gather in the dark, hurrying along the streets in groups of two or three so that no one would notice that they were gathering for worship.

Sometimes the house where they met was marked with the secret sign of the fish, drawn in the dirt road outside the door or marked on the wall of the house. When Christians saw the sign of the fish, they knew that they would meet other Christians in that house.

Why a fish? The letters of the Greek word for fish spelled out the first letters of "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour." Fish live in water like the water of baptism. Many of Jesus' disciples caught fish for their living. So the fish was a good choice as a symbol for the followers of Jesus.

It took a lot of courage to decide to become a Christian, because you could be tortured and put to death if you were caught. But, for the early Christians, following Jesus was worth all the risk. It was the most important thing in their lives.

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## Information Sheet # 9

# An early baptism

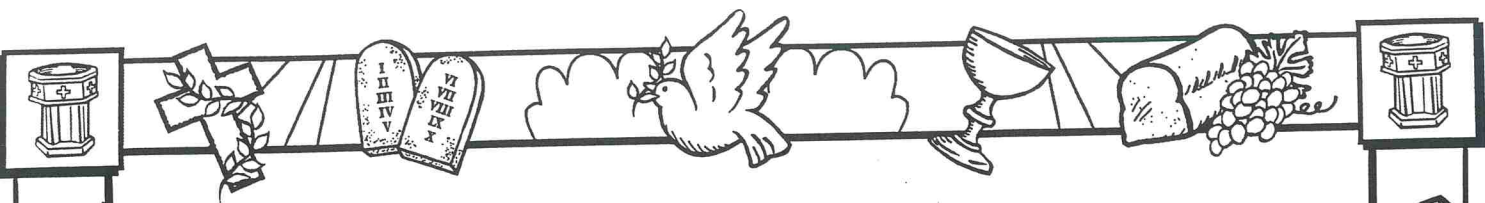
**W**hen people decided to become Christians, other Christians spent a long time telling them about Jesus' life and teaching. New Christians learned the stories of the Hebrew scriptures. The stories of Jesus were just beginning to be written down, but people would remember stories that they had heard when Jesus travelled around the country teaching and healing. It took new believers a couple of years to prepare for baptism. There was so much to learn about what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

In the early church, baptisms took place at Easter, the day when we celebrate Jesus' resurrection from the dead. On the night before Easter, Christians would gather in darkness for the Easter Vigil. Perhaps there were only a few oil lamps to help people find their way into the room. Those who wished to be baptized promised to turn from sin and to follow Jesus. Then they were led into a courtyard or room where there was a pool of water. A minister dipped them under the water to show that they had died to their old way of life. Then the minister raised them up from the water to show that they had risen to the new life of Jesus Christ. A new white robe was placed on them, and sweet-smelling oil was poured on them. Everyone carried lamps as a sign that Christ had brought them out of the darkness of ignorance into the light of true knowledge and true love.

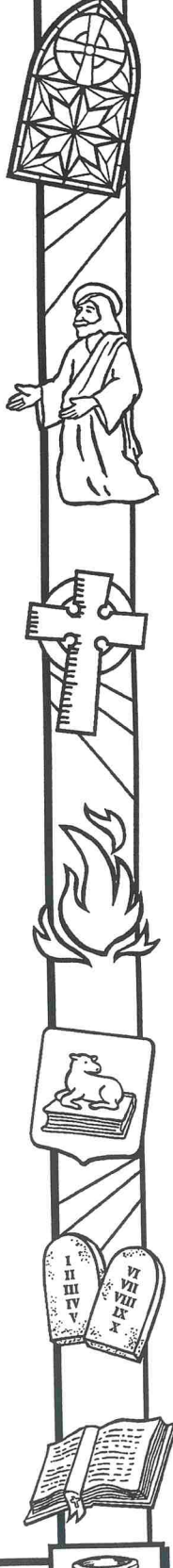
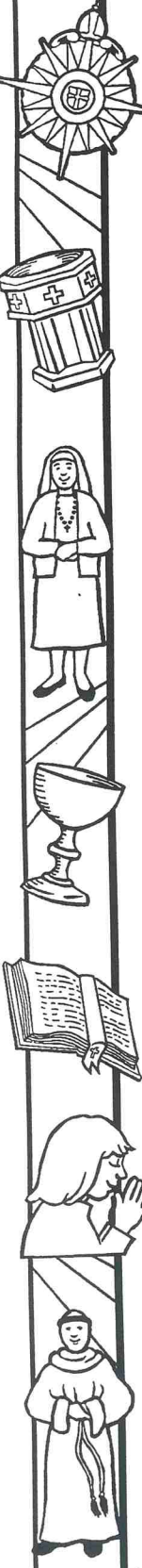
The group of new Christians was then led to the bishop, who welcomed them with prayer, laying his hands on the head of each one. The bishop signed each one on the forehead with the sign of the cross, a mark to show that they belonged to Jesus Christ. As the sun came up

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and the new day dawned, the whole Christian family would celebrate the eucharist, the church's special meal. For those who had been baptized, this was the first time that they had been able to share in the eucharist.



In the early church, baptism was celebrated only once a year, at Easter. We have baptisms more often, usually at the regular Sunday morning service. Many Anglican churches also have baptisms at the Easter Vigil, celebrated the night before Easter. That service begins in darkness, with the lighting of the Easter candle, and ends with the church brightly lit and decorated for Easter. This celebration reminds us of baptisms in the early church, which began in darkness and ended at sunrise.

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13b








## Information Sheet # 10

# Baptism is a sacrament



Jesus was a great teacher. He talked to people about things they could see and hear — the flowers of the field, the birds of the air — to tell people about God's love for them. Once he picked up some mud and put it on a blind man's eyes to make him see again. Jesus was very comfortable with ordinary things, and he used them to help us learn to understand ourselves and our relationship to God.

A sacrament uses something often quite ordinary — something we can see and touch — to bring God's special gifts to us. In baptism, we use water to bring God's gift of new life to us. In the eucharist, we use bread and wine to bring God's grace and love among us.

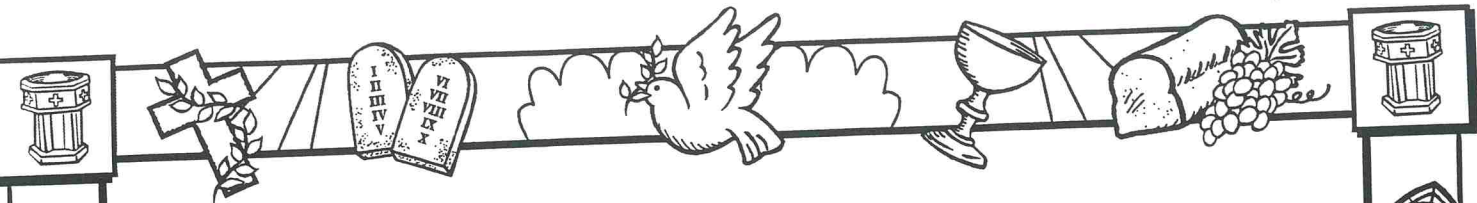
The Catechism defines a sacrament as "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace" (BCP, page 550). In other words, something we can see and touch makes inward and invisible changes in us. It changes the way we see the world and live our lives. It makes us love God's world and everything and everyone in it, so that we want to prevent them from suffering and to help them when they do.

You can find the Catechism in the *Book of Common Prayer* on page 544.

In baptism, we can see the priest pour water on a person's head and we can hear the words of the prayers. But through the water and the prayers something happens that we cannot see. The baptized person is made a member of God's family, the church, and is brought into a new, closer relationship with God.

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The sacraments invite us to use all our senses — sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell, movement — in the worship of God. We can see the baptism at the font. We can smell the candles, the oil, and the flowers that decorate the church. We hear the music and the prayers and the water being poured into the font. Sometimes we hear the babies cry as the water washes over their heads! We touch and taste the bread and wine of the eucharist. We touch hands as we pass the peace. We move about the church, and stand and kneel for worship.

The sacraments remind us that God speaks to us through everyday things.



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## Information Sheet # 11

# The creeds



The word **creed** comes from a Latin word that means "I believe." The creeds set out, in a short form, the basic story of Christian faith. Belief and faith mean trust. When the early Christians came to be baptized, they proclaimed their trust by saying, "Jesus is Lord." Over the centuries, this brief statement expanded into the form that we call the Apostles' Creed, because it represents the teaching of the basic story that has come down to us from the time of Jesus' apostles.

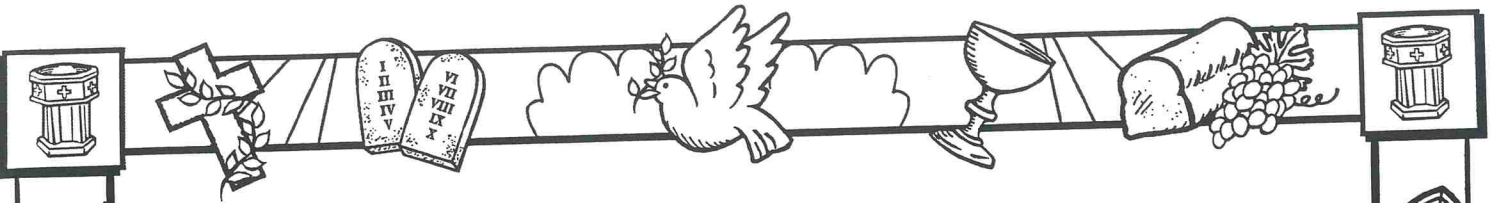
You will find the **Apostles' Creed** in question and answer form on page 158 of the baptism service in the *Book of Alternative Services*, or as a full statement on page 189. This creed is found on page 526 of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

The creed has three paragraphs. In the first paragraph, we proclaim our belief in God, the creator of heaven and earth. In the second paragraph, we proclaim our belief in God's only son, Jesus Christ. He was born for us as a human being, died on the cross, rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven to reign forever with God. He comes again to judge all people and draw them back to God. In the third paragraph, we proclaim our belief in God, the Holy Spirit, who guides and strengthens us, who works through members of the church, who creates the community of holy people, who forgives sin, and who gives us the hope of eternal life.

The Apostles' Creed is used at every baptism. Every Christian makes this statement of belief when they become members of the church, the body of Christ. Sometimes we use this creed at the eucharist.

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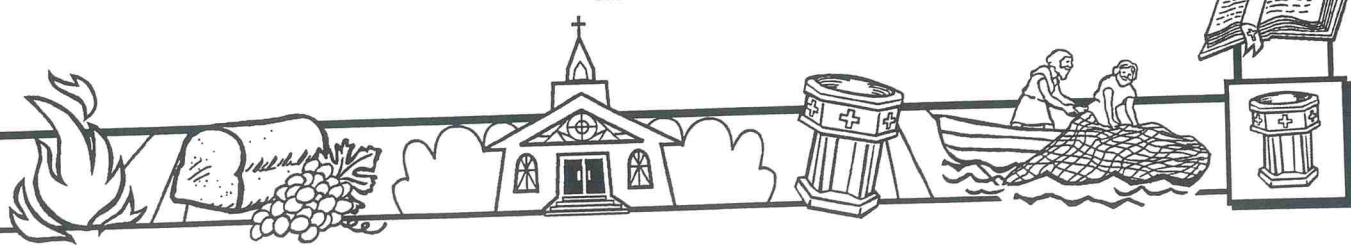


The **Nicene Creed** is a longer statement of faith. You will find it on page 188 of the *BAS* or, in an older form of language, on page 234. It is found on page 71 of the *Book of Common Prayer*. We use this creed at the eucharist. It follows the same pattern of three paragraphs.

Sometimes the creeds seem hard to understand. They are not so much statements of our own personal beliefs, but statements about what the church believes. As members of the church, we join in trusting in God's love for us as shown through the life of Jesus Christ. By saying the creeds over and over again for many years, we come to understand more and more about the way God acts in our lives.



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## Information Sheet # 12

# Living the Christian life

**B**aptism starts us on our Christian life as followers of Jesus and as members of the church. Over time, we learn ever more about God and how God wants us to live so that the world is a better place.

We read stories from the Bible. In the Old Testament, we see God's laws for us summarized in the Ten Commandments. We read of people who rebel against God and are drawn back to God time and again. We hear the call to right living in the words of the prophets. In the New Testament, we learn Jesus' teaching on how we should live and see the example he set. We read letters written to early Christians to help them understand the Christian way of life.

We are called to habits of daily life that include prayer, reading of the scriptures, and joining in the life of the Christian community. We join with other Christians to worship God and to share in the family meal, the eucharist. We are called to show our Christian faith everywhere we go by the way we live — in our families, in our schools, with our friends and neighbours, and with everyone we meet. We are called to love and serve others, and to help to build a just and caring society.

Sometimes it is helpful to draw up a Rule of Life, a pattern of Christian living that we try to follow. The *Book of Common Prayer* suggests a rule of life on page 555. A rule might include:

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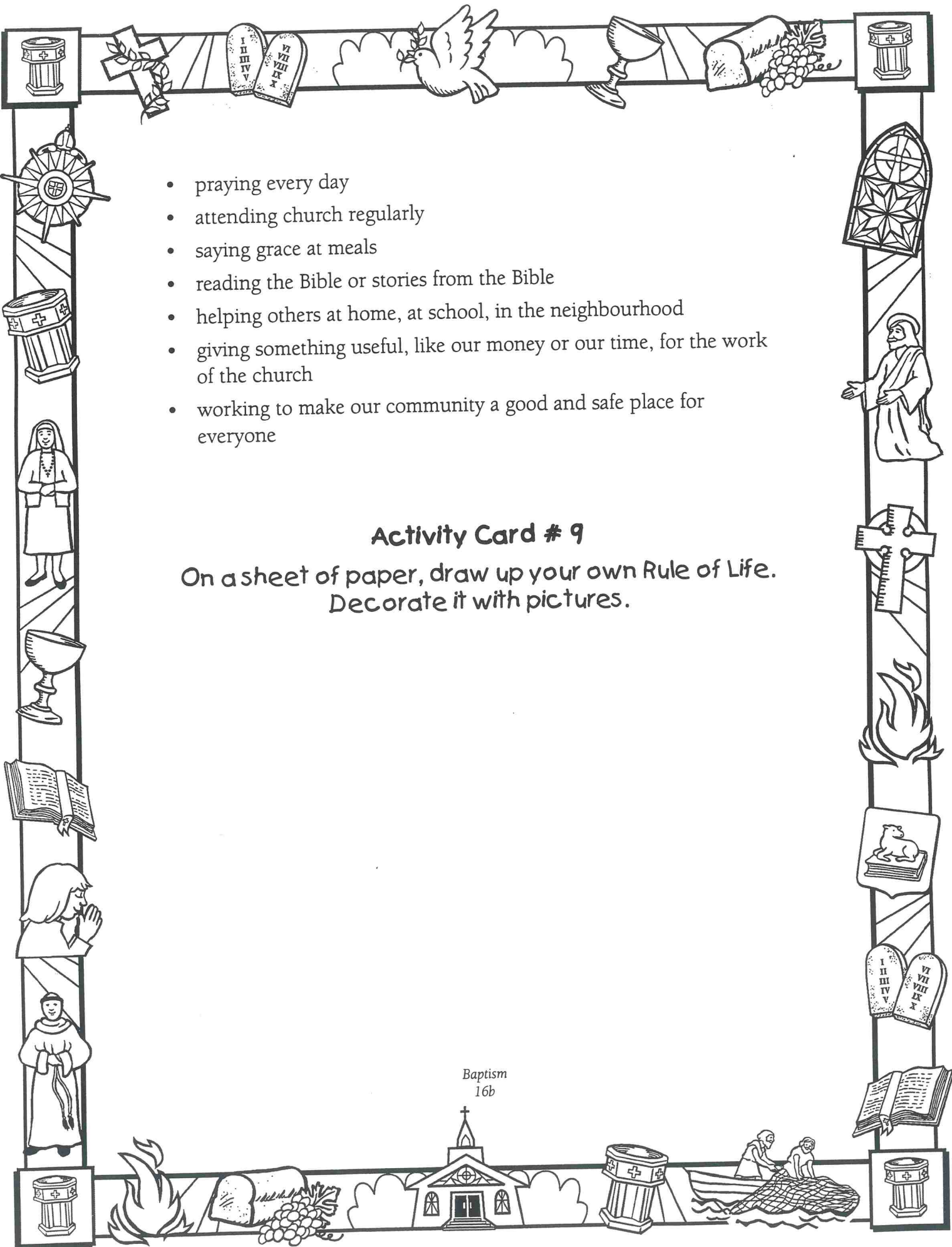


- praying every day
- attending church regularly
- saying grace at meals
- reading the Bible or stories from the Bible
- helping others at home, at school, in the neighbourhood
- giving something useful, like our money or our time, for the work of the church
- working to make our community a good and safe place for everyone

### Activity Card # 9

On a sheet of paper, draw up your own Rule of Life.  
Decorate it with pictures.

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Worksheet # 1  
**My Baptism**

I was given the name

\_\_\_\_\_

in my baptism.

I was baptized on \_\_\_\_\_

in \_\_\_\_\_ Church

My parents are \_\_\_\_\_

and \_\_\_\_\_

My godparents are \_\_\_\_\_

and \_\_\_\_\_

A special memory of my baptism is

\_\_\_\_\_

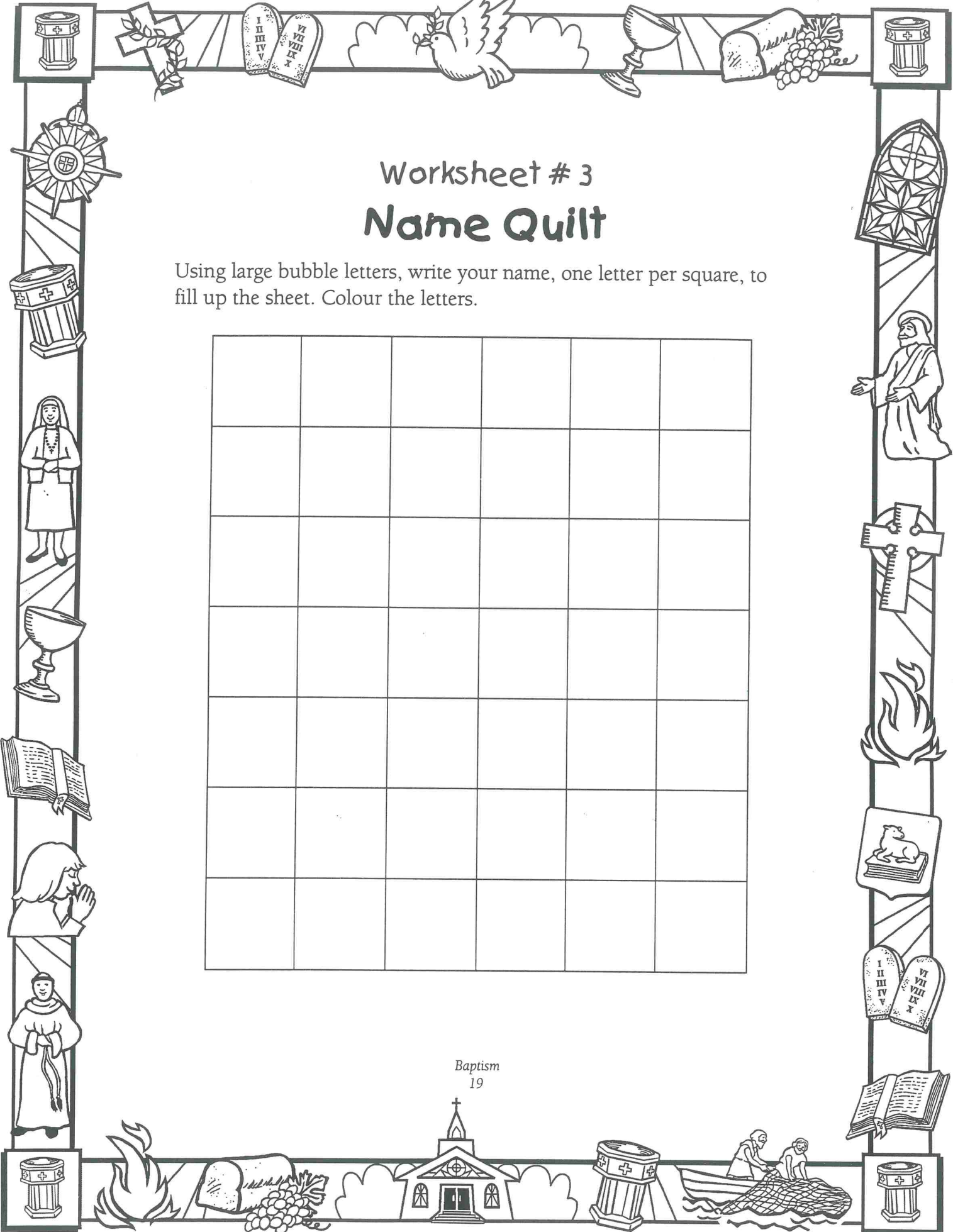




# Worksheet # 3

## Name Quilt

Using large bubble letters, write your name, one letter per square, to fill up the sheet. Colour the letters.

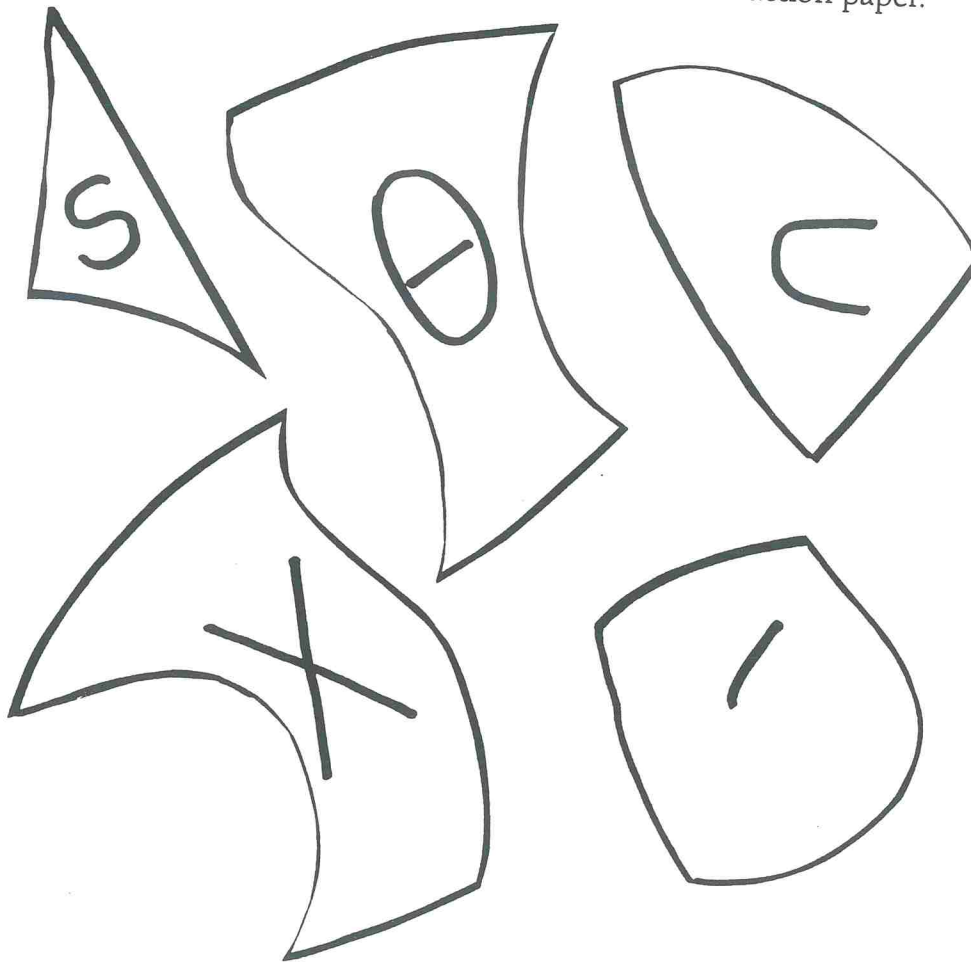




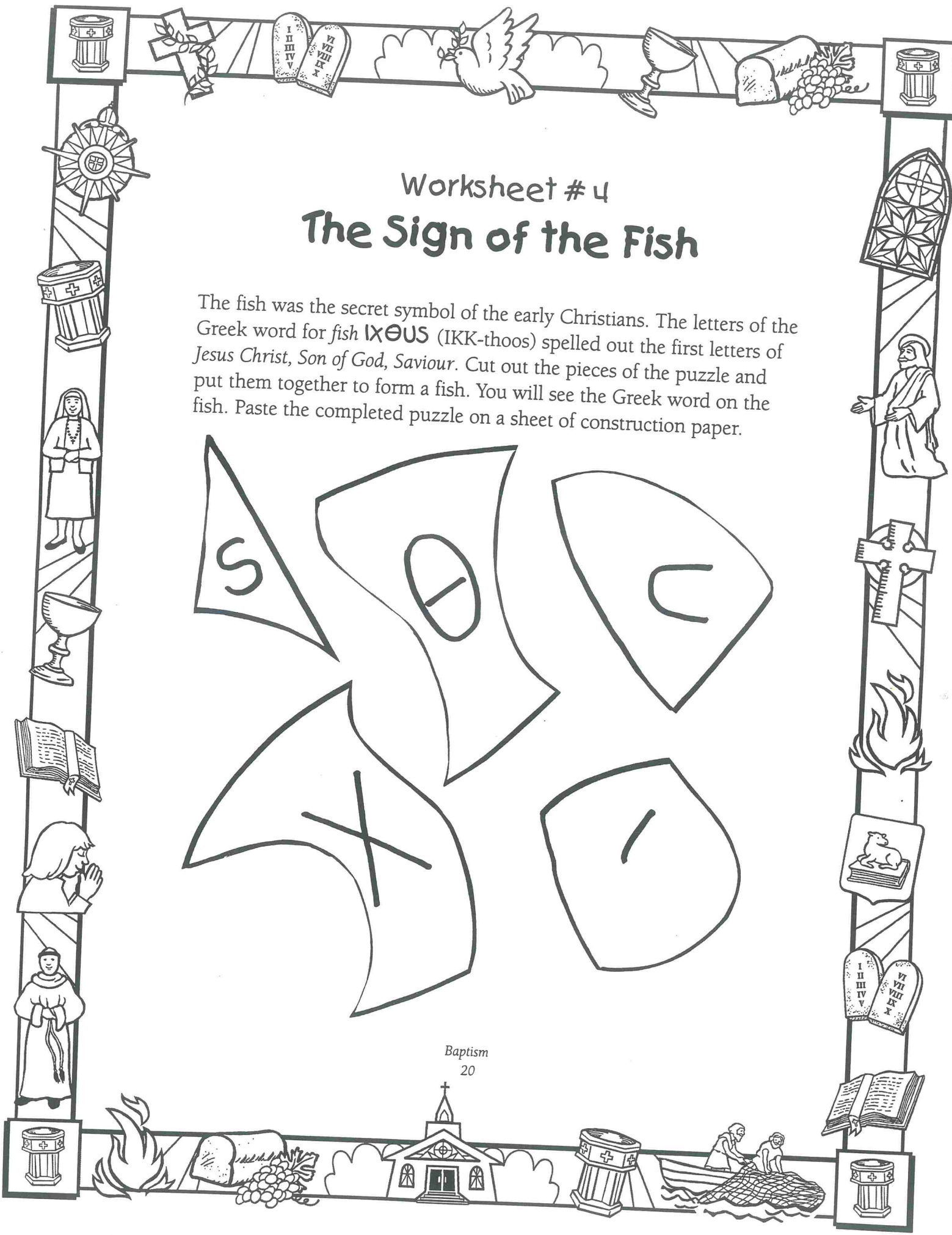
# Worksheet # 4

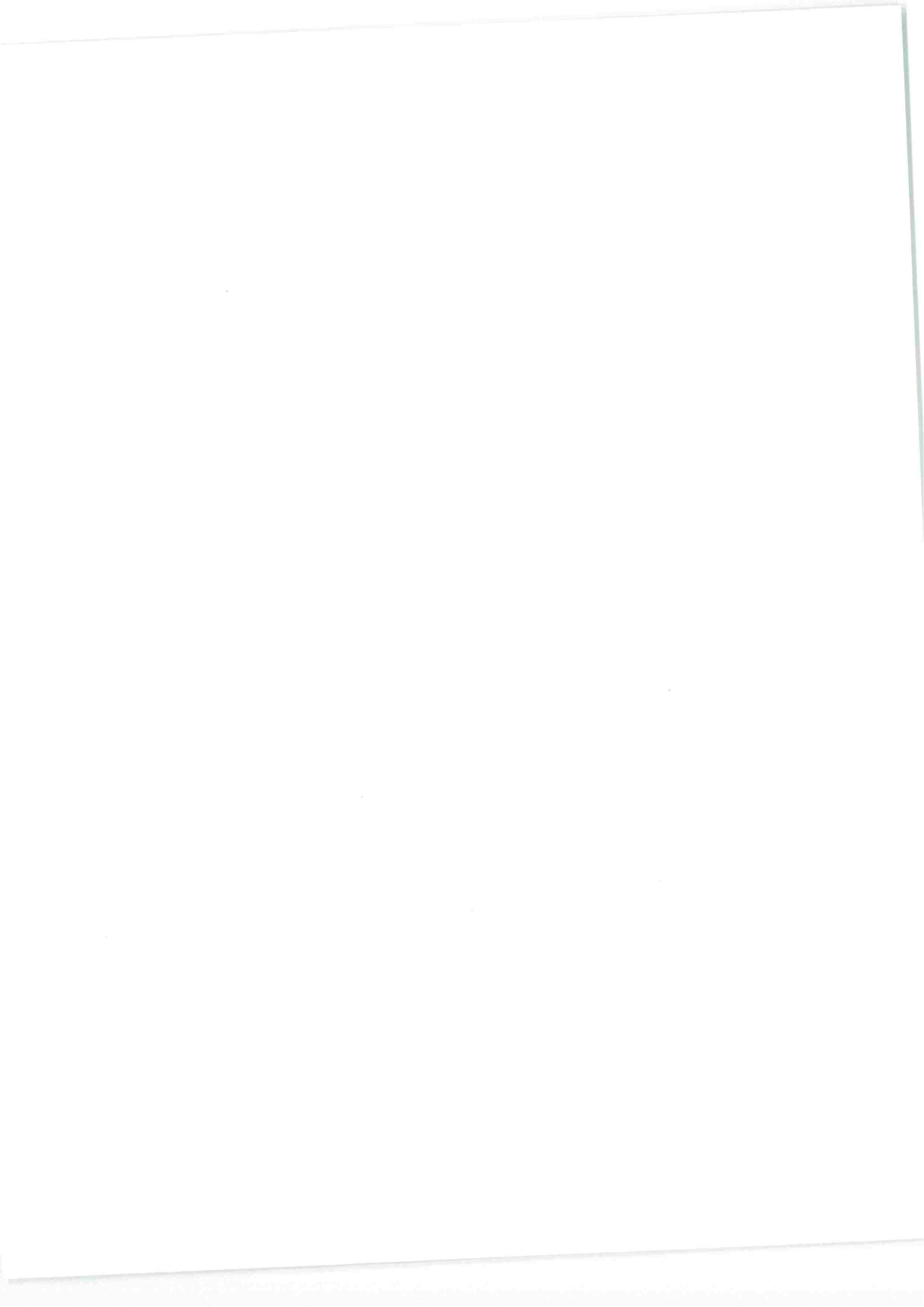
## The Sign of the Fish

The fish was the secret symbol of the early Christians. The letters of the Greek word for fish **ΙΧΘΥΣ** (IKK-thoos) spelled out the first letters of *Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour*. Cut out the pieces of the puzzle and put them together to form a fish. You will see the Greek word on the fish. Paste the completed puzzle on a sheet of construction paper.



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## Activity Cards

1.  
In the church,  
find the font.  
Make a map  
of your  
church  
and mark  
the font.

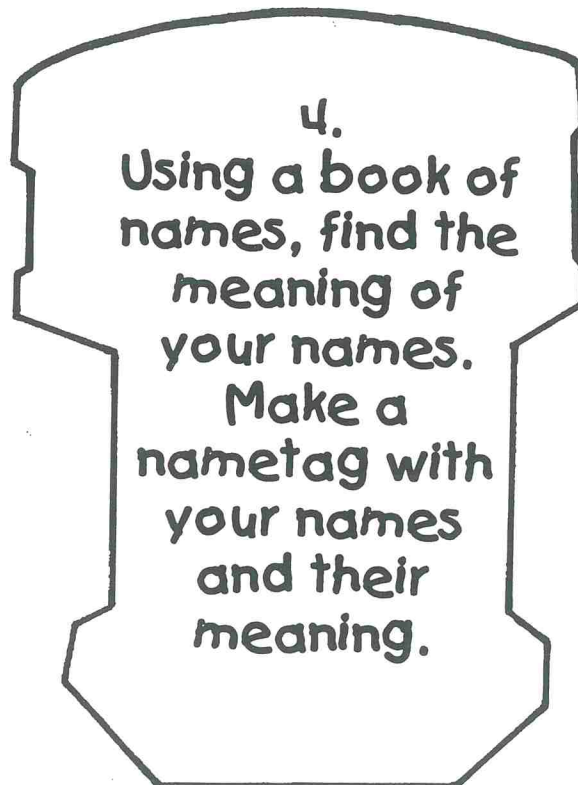
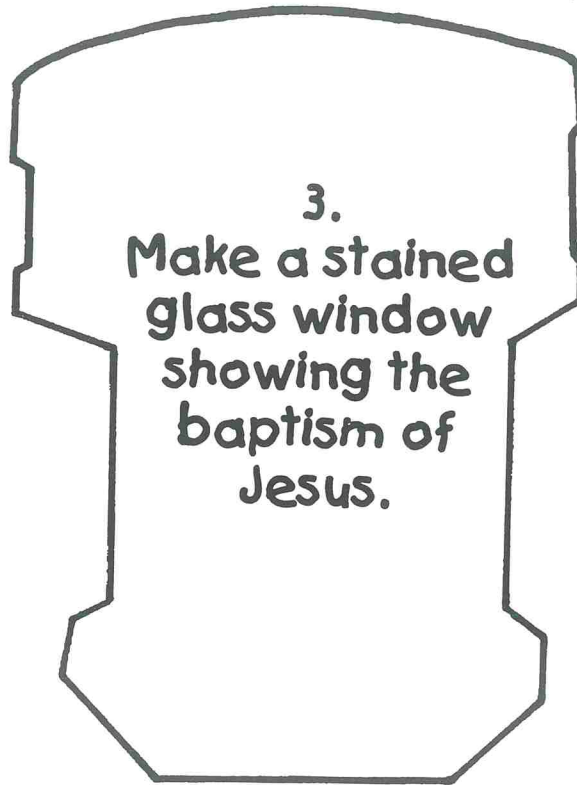
2.  
In the Bible,  
find Mark 1:9-11  
and read the story  
of Jesus'  
baptism.  
Read the  
story to others  
in the class.







## Activity Cards









## Activity Cards

5.

Are you named  
for a saint or  
biblical  
person?  
Find the story  
of that  
person and  
share it with  
the class.

6.

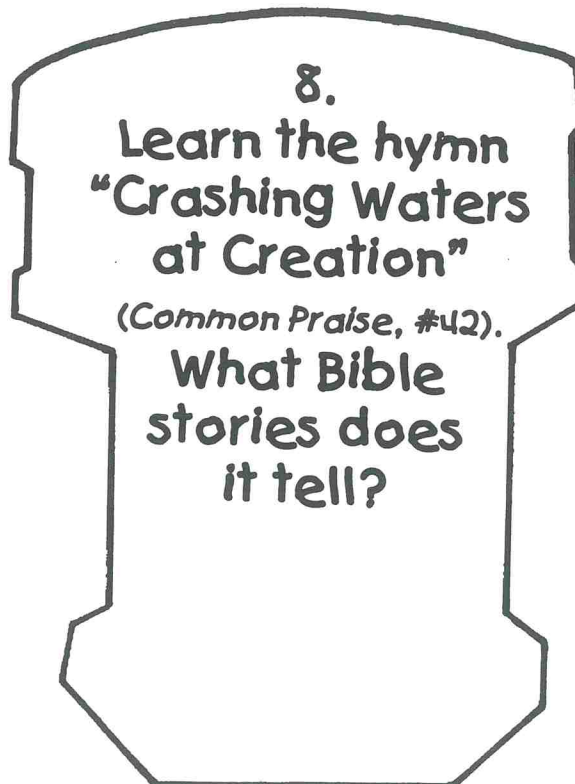
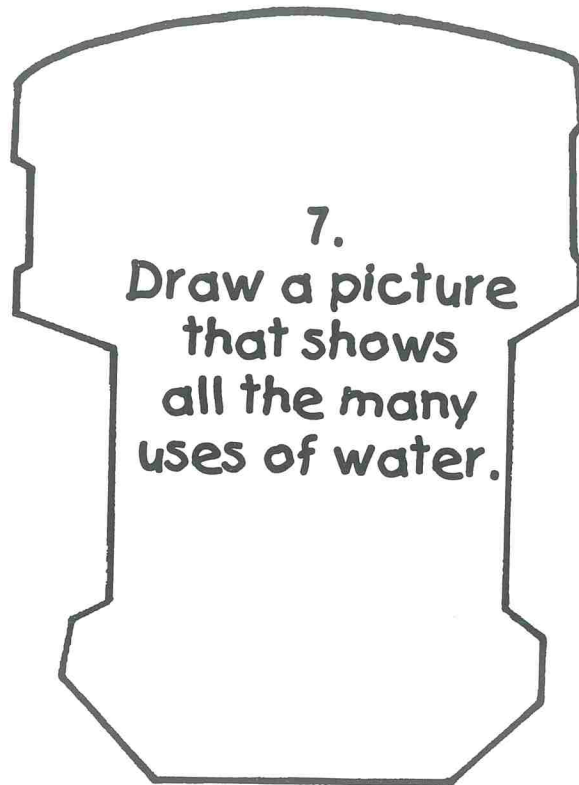
Are you named  
for a parent or  
grandpaent? Write  
down something  
about that  
person and  
why you were  
named for  
them.







## Activity Cards

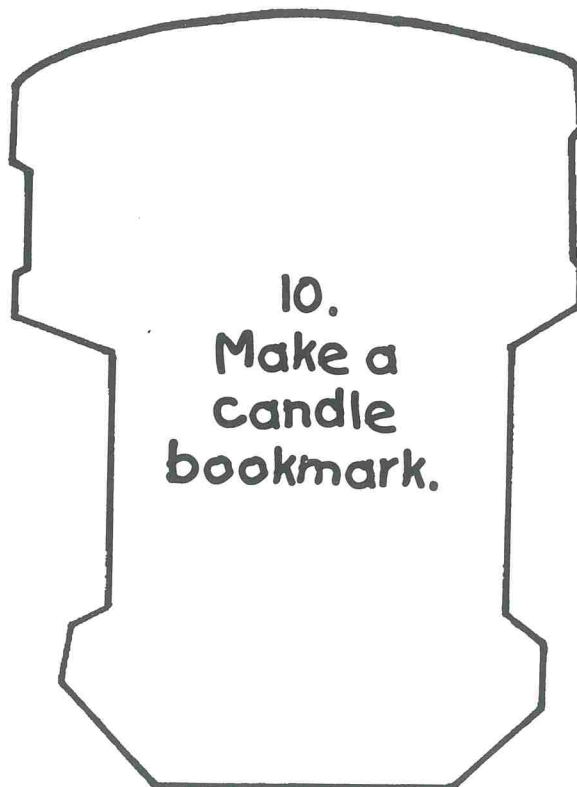


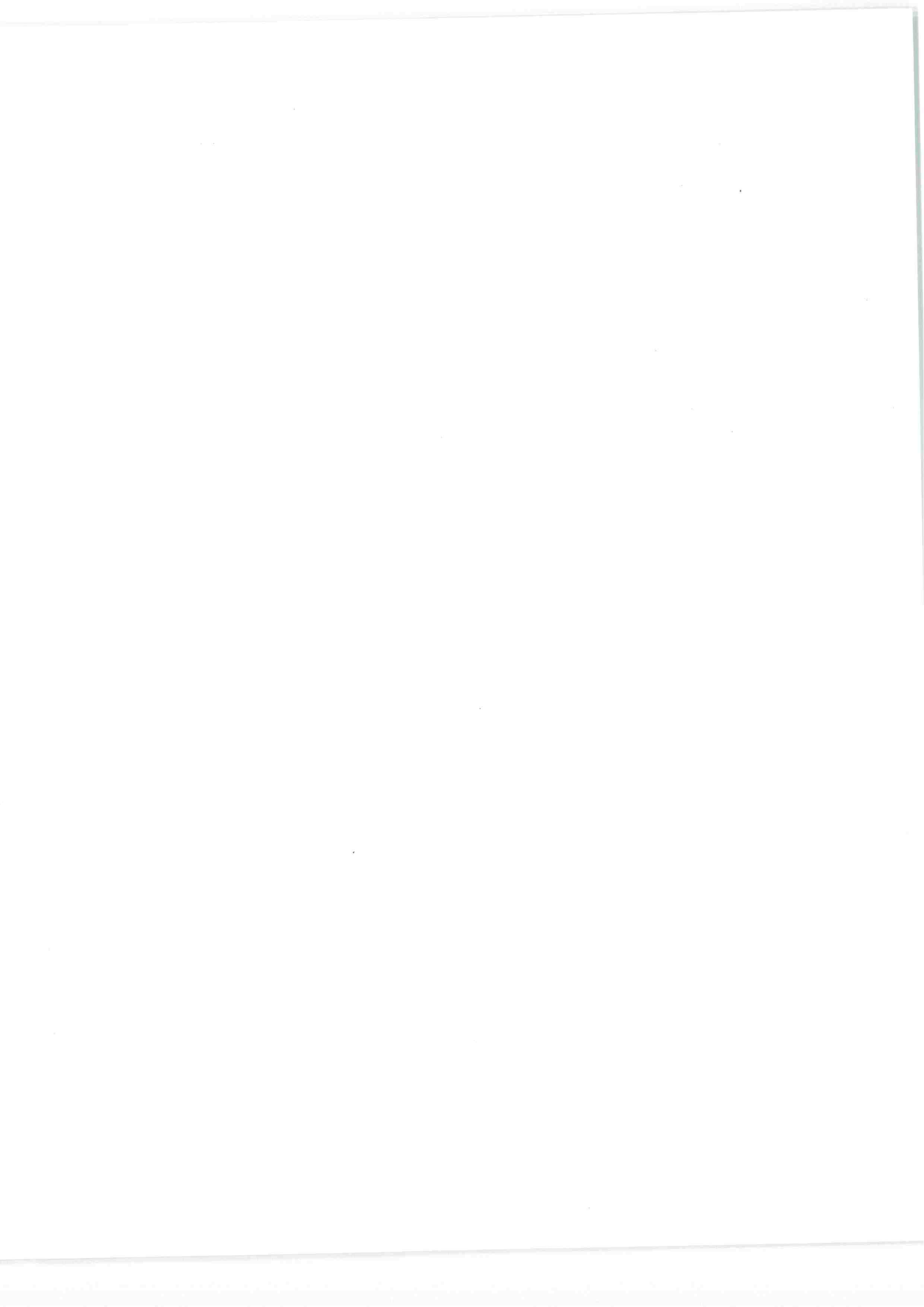






## Activity Cards





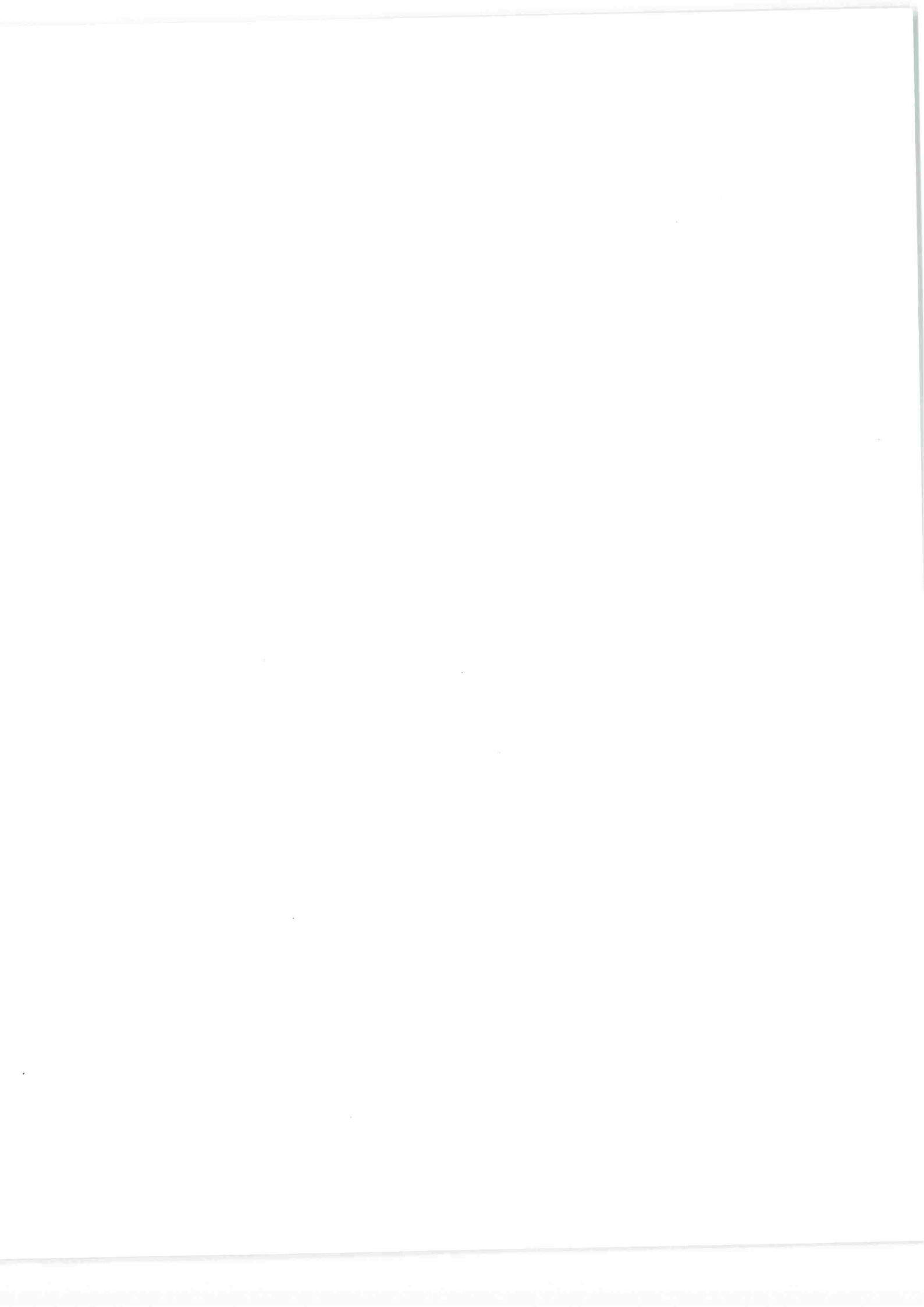


## Activity Cards

11.  
Make a baptismal  
card for  
someone  
about to be  
baptized.

12.  
In the Bible,  
find Matthew  
16:19-20.  
Write down  
what Jesus  
asked his  
followers  
to do.







## Activity Cards

13.

Write a thank-you card to your godparents, telling them what you have learned about baptism.

14.

Make a name card to put on the door of your room.

Write your name in glue on coloured paper.

Sprinkle the glue letters with glitter.







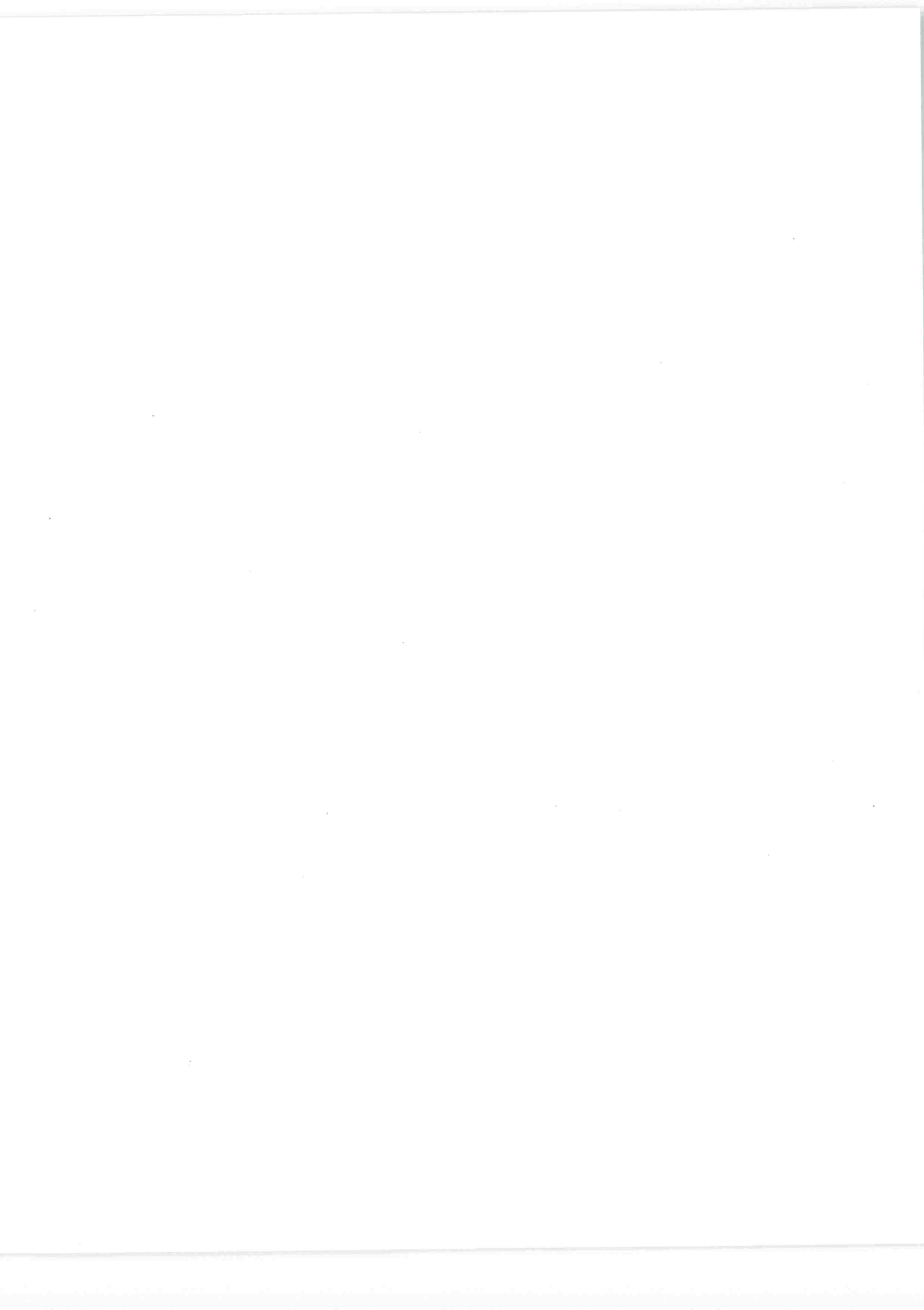
## Activity Cards

15.

In the Bible  
(Exodus 14) or  
Bible storybook,  
read the story  
of Moses and  
the children  
of Israel  
crossing the  
waters of the  
Red Sea. Draw  
a picture of  
this event.

16.

Write a list of the  
things that your  
family does  
to show  
that they  
are followers  
of Jesus.





## Activity Cards

17.

Imagine that you are a child in the time of the early church. Write a story about coming secretly to be baptized.

18.

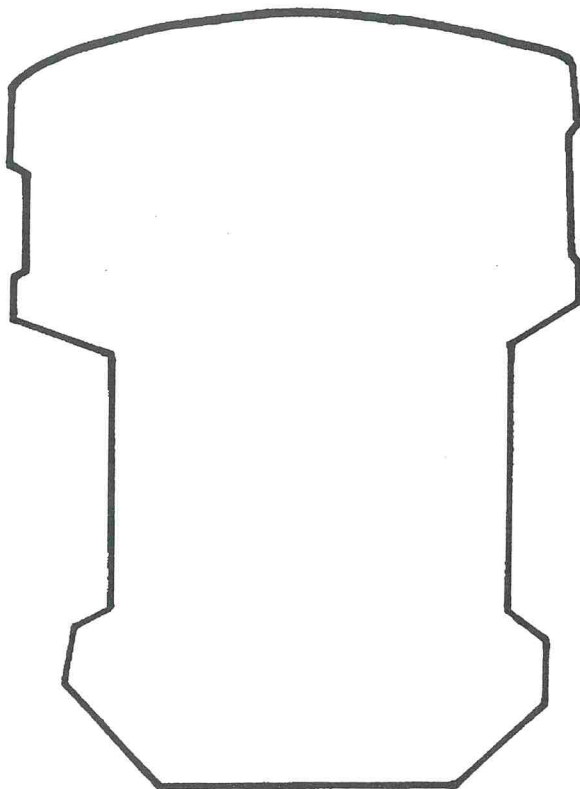
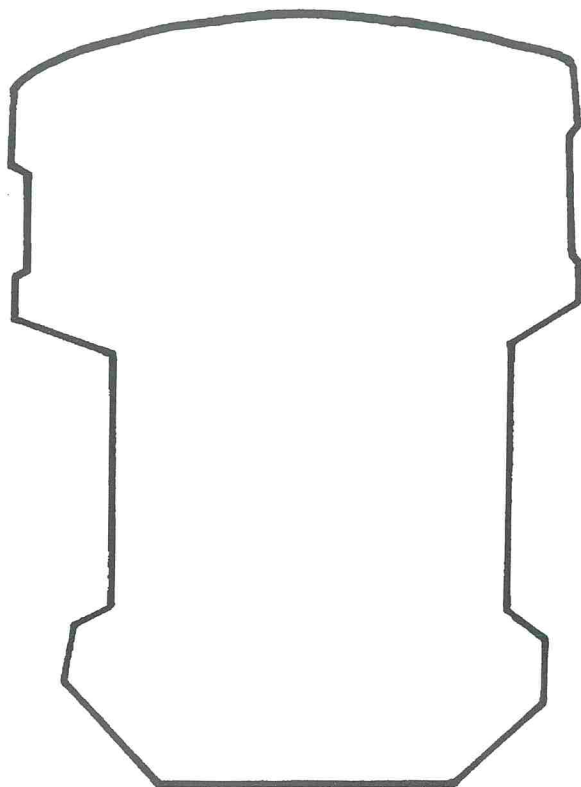
Look in the *BAS* on page 147, and find out the days of the church year that are most appropriate for baptism.







# Activity Cards

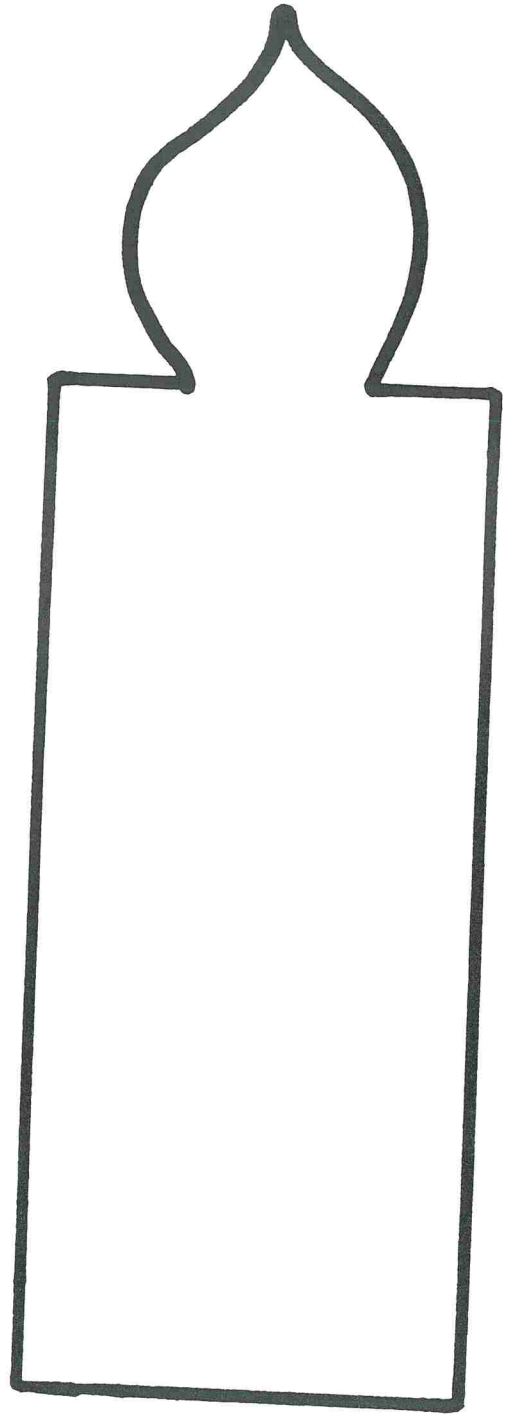
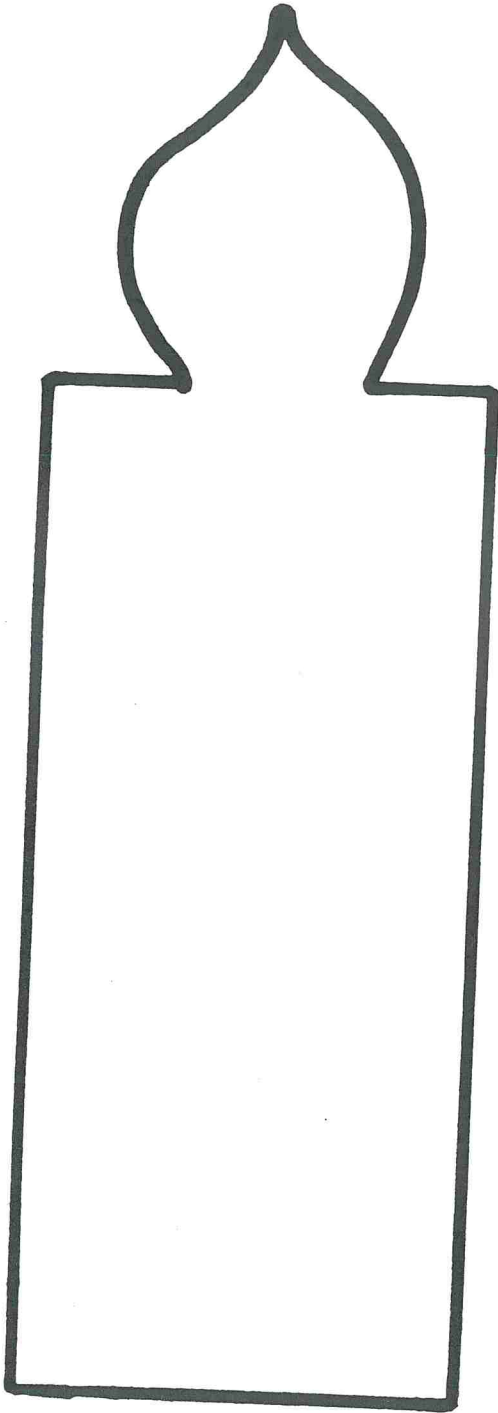


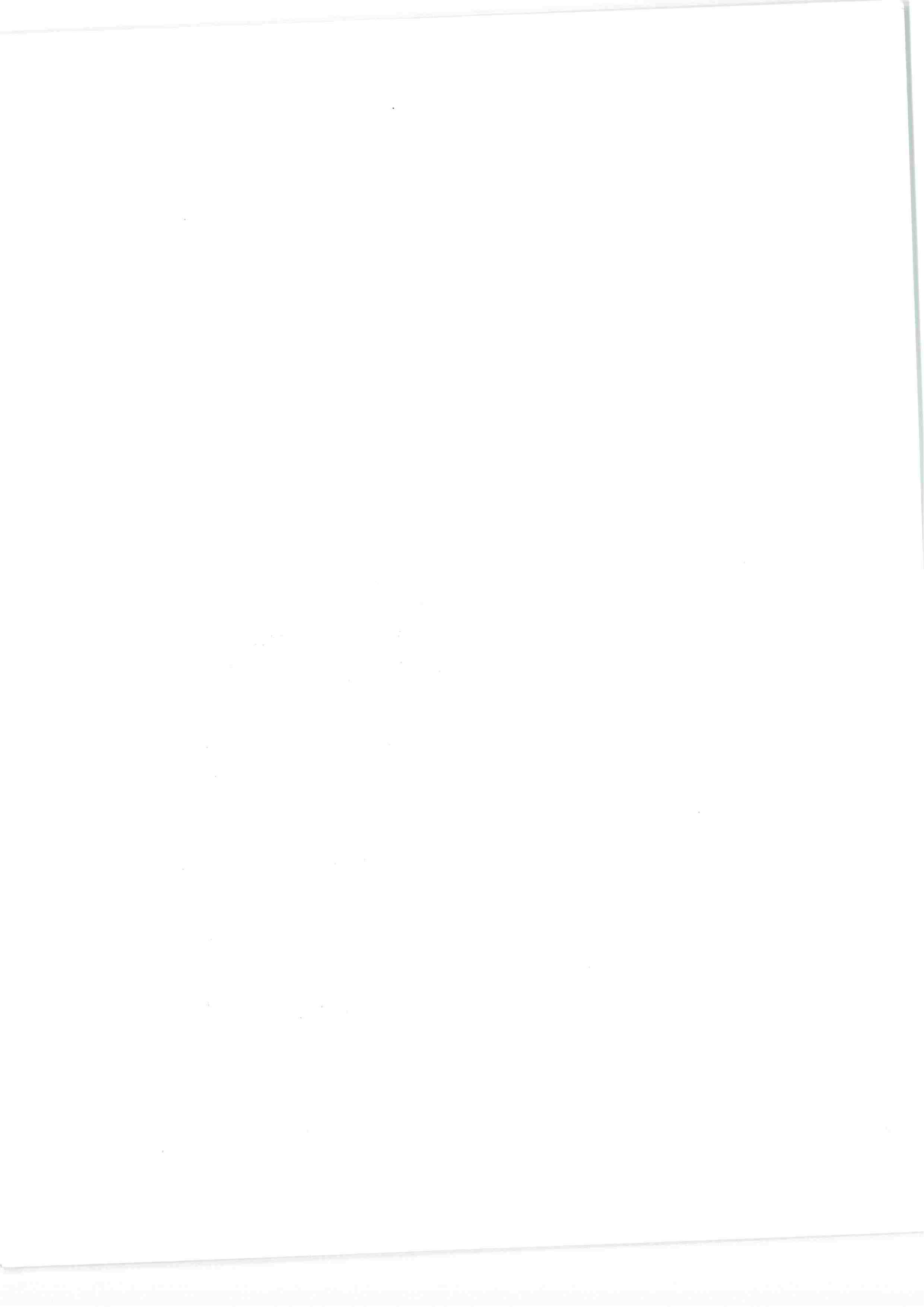






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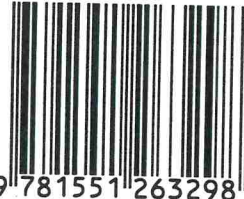
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Patricia Bays is a well-known writer and educator. She is author of *Meet the Family: Welcome to the Anglican Church of Canada*, *This Anglican Church of Ours*, and *The Great Adventure: Exploring Christian Faith with Young People*. She is a former editor of *The Whole People of God* education and worship resource. For seven years she was the Canadian lay member of the International Anglican Consultative Council.

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