

Lesson 4

The Holy Spirit Gives Faith Through Baptism

Bible Lesson: Matthew 28:19-20

Memory Verse: Baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. *1 Peter 3:21*

Enrichment Memory Verse: “Permit the children to come to Me; do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” *Mark 10:14b*

Catechism Memory Work: I believe in the Holy Spirit;...
What does this mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him; But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts,...

TEACHER PREPARATION

Prepare to Teach:

- ✦ Students will be able to define the concepts of grace, means of grace and sacrament
- ✦ Students will know that the Holy Spirit gives God's grace through the means of grace, the Word and sacraments.
- ✦ The believing student will thank God for faith given through baptism, and will respond by living in daily repentance and sanctification.
- ✦ Students outside of Christ, whether they have been baptized or not, will hear the Holy Spirit's call to confess sin and receive Jesus as Savior.

Prepare Materials:

Along with the regular materials needed for class, you will need the following items for this lesson:

- ◆ pictures of babies of various ages.

Prayer Preparation

1. Pray that the Holy Spirit will lead you to a deeper and clearer understanding of God's grace and of the Holy Spirit's work through the Word and the sacraments.
2. During the week pray for each of your student's by name, remembering each one's particular spiritual need.
3. As you look ahead to Sunday's class session, pray that the Holy Spirit will work through God's Word and enable you to teach clearly.

BIBLE BACKGROUND

A. Bible Study

Most of us enjoy receiving gifts. Many gifts we receive are meant to be used once and then they are gone. Other gifts have a more lasting nature, but they too will be worn out at some point. Often the gifts with the most value are those that do not wear out and stay with us through our whole lives. They have been produced with good materials and by skilled craftsman.

We see pictures of the value and importance of God's gift of baptism to us in the Scripture. In Acts 8 we see the Ethiopian eunuch who did not want to delay but upon seeing water asked to be baptized. We also have the story of the Philippian jailer. Paul and Silas were in prison and were praying and singing around the midnight hour. An earthquake shook where they were and the following events lead the jailer to the point of killing himself. Paul and Silas were able to share with him the Gospel of Jesus Christ and he believed. We see the importance of baptism to Paul, Silas, and this man in that at the same hour of the night (around midnight) he and his whole household were baptized (Acts 16).

Beyond this we see the value of God's great gifts to us in what are promised with them. In baptism we have the promise of salvation, eternal life, forgiveness of sins, and the Holy Spirit Himself (Acts 2, also see the Small

Catechism). So we need not think of baptism as something that is to be celebrated once and forgotten as if God's promises have only temporary value or that they wear out after a certain length of time. God's gifts and promises do not change.

So we who have been baptized can trust in the promises of God given to us in our baptisms. To see this great gift in another passage of Scripture we can turn to Romans 6. In those verses near the beginning of the chapter we see that having been baptized we are united with Christ in His death. But that is not the end. Having been united with Him in His death we are also promised the wonderful uniting together with Him also to new life (Romans 6:1-11).

So it is that this truly is a gift to us. We are enlightened with His gifts; through His means. For the Christian faith makes clear that we do not climb upward to God, but that God through the Holy Spirit comes down to us. He provides to us what we so desperately need; the forgiveness of sins.

We should not forget another reason a gift has value; because of the one it was that gave it to us. So the gift of baptism seems insignificant to many, just a short little part of a service with some water and a few words. But this gift is God's word of promise connected with the water; a sure promise from the Creator of the world who never lies.

B. Creed Study

The disciples of Jesus came to Him and asked Him, "who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" They had hearts that were selfish by nature - they were concerned about getting rewards and recognition. The heart and mind of Jesus was and is so different. He humbled Himself and sought only to give, not to receive.

In response to their question Jesus directed them to a little child. The disciples thought that one had to be an adult in order to really experience the working of God. But Jesus turned the whole picture around and showed them that they as adults needed to become like children.

This lesson deals with the subject of how God brings salvation to our hearts through *Baptism*. Jesus states that the "little ones who believe in Me" are capable of belief and thus proper recipients of baptism. R. H. Lenski writes: "To permit oneself to be called, led, loved, without pride and without doubt, in simple trust, that is childlikeness even as this is the nature of children who possess nothing but need everything; who are able to do nothing but receive everything..." (*Commentary on Matthew*, R.C.H. Lenski, p. 681). Children, even babies, become powerful examples of God working out His gift of salvation.

In Acts 2:38-39 we see a further development of this theme. Peter states that through the means of baptism one receives 1)the remission of sins and 2)the gift of the Holy Spirit. He goes on to write that the "promise is for you and for your children." Children are to be included in the sacrament of baptism. Notice also that Peter states that the promise of faith and salvation is for "all who are afar off." Little children are separated from the Lord but they also have the potential of knowing Christ in a personal way. The Lord desires to call all (young and old) unto Himself.

BEGINNING YOUR CLASS HOUR

Welcome

Use time available to hear memory work from early-arriving students.

Open with Prayer

Pray for the Holy Spirit's help in understanding today's lesson. Thank God for each student present; pray for students not present; ask that God may be in control as you learn and study, that He will keep teacher and students from resisting the Spirit's work.

Recite Memory Work

Listen to students recite their memory work:
From the Bible: John 6:63

And

From the Catechism: I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him; But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel,...

Review

Conduct a quick oral review of last week's lesson.
Questions to be added later.

Introduce Wall Words

Confirmation—
sacrament—
thrive—

Introduce the Lesson

ASK How many of you have had baby brothers or sisters? **SHOW** a picture of a newborn baby. **ASK** When a baby is this tiny, what can he do? Allow students to answer. Then **SAY** A tiny baby can cry and kick and do a few other things like looking at things, but he can't take care of himself at all. He lets people pick him up and feed him and bathe him, but he can't stop anyone from feeding him or taking care of him. He's pretty helpless, and he doesn't even know who he is, doesn't even know that he is somebody. **SHOW** pictures of older babies and toddlers. **SAY** As he gets older, the baby learns to do lots of things, but he's still not able to take care of himself. As he becomes older, a child becomes proud of all the things he can do. He might even think he's good enough and smart enough and strong enough to get along without any help from God. Some kids are like that. Or they might want to be Christians, but think they can be Christians without any help from God. Kids like that are proud. I guess all of us think that way sometimes. But the little baby isn't proud. **SHOW** a picture of a baby being baptized. When the pastor pours the water on his head and baptizes him, he doesn't say to God, "Let me alone, I can do it myself." No, he doesn't stop the Holy Spirit from giving him faith.

In today's lesson we'll learn how God gives us His grace and faith through baptism.

Teach the Lesson

SAY Open your books to Lesson 4. **CALL ON** a student to read the lesson title. **SAY** In our last two lessons we learned about two ways the Holy Spirit works to bring us to living faith. **ASK** Who remembers what they are? (*The Holy Spirit uses the Law to show us our sins, and He uses the Gospel to lead us to trust in Jesus.*) This lesson will teach us another way the Holy Spirit leads us to faith. What is it? (*The Holy Spirit gives faith through baptism.*) **ASK** How can little children, and even babies, believe in Jesus? (*The Holy Spirit gives them faith when they are baptized.*) The Holy Spirit uses the means of grace to give faith to people. God's Word is one of the means of grace. God gives His grace when people hear and accept what God says. But babies can't listen to God's Word and get God's grace that way. God has another way of giving His grace. He gives it through the sacraments. Baptism is a sacrament and God gives His grace to babies through baptism.

More to be added later...

APPLYING THE BIBLE LESSON

Memory Work

BIBLE VERSE—*1 Peter 3:21*

Baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

CATECHISM—READ

I believe in the Holy Spirit...

What does this mean?

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him; But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts,...

Activity Pages

Activity 1—How's Your Math?

ANSWERS

BABY

FAITH

HOLY SPIRIT

WATER

FORGIVES

GODS WORD

SACRAMENT

BABY, HOLY SPIRIT, BAPTISM, SACRAMENT,
WATER, GOD'S WORD, FORGIVES, FAITH

Activity 2—What Does That Mean?

ANSWERS

1. G
2. A
3. H
4. I
5. J
6. L
7. K
8. B
9. D
10. F
11. C
12. E

CLOSING THE LESSON**Closing Prayer**

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your grace and for the means of grace that give us faith in Jesus. Thank You that You gave us faith and eternal life through baptism. Thank You for working now in our hearts through the Word of God. Help us to pay attention to the Holy Spirit's work in our hearts that calls us to confess our sins every day. Help us to hate sin and to love You. We also pray for boys and girls who don't know You. We know that You want everyone to come to You. Help us to tell others about You. Thank You for your love and for the

Holy Spirit's work showing us our sin and calling us to come to You for forgiveness. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Assignment

1. Remind students to complete their lessons and learn the memory verse and catechism.
2. Challenge your students to read their Bibles everyday and tell others about Jesus.