



## Baptism Youth Learning Activity - Exploring Baptism Through the Multiple Intelligences

### Activity Objective

To explore the symbolism and meaning of Baptism through the multiple intelligences

### Supplies and Preparation

See each learning activity.

### Introduction

This Baptism Learning Activity is actually a collection of possibilities, with each activity offering one way to teach about baptism through a specific “intelligence,” as defined by Howard Gardner in his work on multiple intelligences. The activities can be used to create a variety of learning centers, or may be used as part of a whole group session to explore baptism from a variety of angles.

Each “intelligence” is explained at the beginning of its activity.

### Activity Option One: A Picture Tour of Baptism

Audience: Children, Youth, Adults

**Visual/spatial Intelligence** is the *ability to perceive the visual*. These learners tend to think in pictures and need to create vivid mental images to retain information. They enjoy looking at maps, charts, pictures, videos, and movies.

Their skills include: puzzle building, reading, writing, understanding charts and graphs, a good sense of direction, sketching, painting, creating visual metaphors and analogies (perhaps through the visual arts), manipulating images, constructing, fixing, designing practical objects, interpreting visual images.

1. Create a pictorial tour of baptism as it is celebrated in your parish and use it to create a power point presentation of the event to share with learners.
2. After sharing the pictures, ask participants to share with each other what they most remember from the pictures. (Some learners might say the facial

expressions, others might note the symbols that were used, others might see things that were missing.)

3. Invite the participants to identify what they think baptism means, and to create as a table group a list of 3-5 things that they think are important to remember.

## Activity Option Two: A Linguistic Tour of Baptism

Audience: Youth and Adults

Verbal/linguistic Intelligence is ability to use words and language. These learners have highly developed auditory skills and are generally elegant speakers. They think in words rather than pictures.

Their skills include listening, speaking, writing, story telling, explaining, teaching, using humor, understanding the syntax and meaning of words, remembering information, convincing someone of their point of view, analyzing language usage.

1. Provide participants with paper, pens, and a dictionary.
2. Ask participants to look up the definitions for each of the following words:
  - a. Baptism
  - b. Community
  - c. Resurrection
  - d. Sacrament
  - e. Intercessions
  - f. Anoint
  - g. Litany
  - h. Disciple
  - i. Death

Ask them to note key words that they find in each definition that might help someone understand baptism.

3. In groups, invite learners to craft a Catholic definition of Baptism, and to present it to the other learning groups.

## Activity Option 3: Prayers of the Baptismal Rite

Audience: Youth and Adults

**Logical/mathematical intelligence** is the ability to use reason, logic and numbers. These learners think conceptually in logical and numerical patterns making connections between pieces of information. Always curious about the world around them, these learners ask lots of questions and like to do experiments.

Their skills include problem solving, classifying and categorizing information, working with abstract concepts to figure out the relationship of each to the other, handling long chains of reason to make local progressions, doing controlled experiments, questioning and wondering about natural events, performing complex mathematical calculations, working with geometric shapes.

1. Give each group of learners a copy of the Rite of Baptism. (Either copy the Rite from your parish's presider copy of the Rite of Baptism or purchase copies in booklet form from Liturgical Press - 800-858-5450 - *The Rite of Baptism for One Child and for Several Children*, People's Edition. ISBN: 978-0-8146-2923-9).
2. Invite learners to see how many phrases are used more than once in the rites, and to count up how many times certain actions are undertaken. For example, how many times is "in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit said?"
3. Invite participants to draw some conclusions about the meaning of baptism from their "research."

## Activity Option 4: Baptism Body Sculpture

Audience: Youth, Children, Adults

**Bodily/kinesthetic intelligence** is the ability to control body movements and handle objects skillfully. These learners express themselves through movement. They have a good sense of balance and eye-hand co-ordination, e.g. ball play, balancing beams. Through interacting with the space around them, they are able to remember and process information.

Their skills include dancing, physical co-ordination, sports, hands on experimentation, using body language, crafts, acting, miming, using their hands to create or build, expressing emotions through the body.

1. Invite participants to read together the summary of the theology of baptism (see handout that follows the learning activities):

In Baptism, we are connected to a communion/community of saints – our community includes our living faith community and those who have walked faithfully before us.

In Baptism our name is proclaimed to the community, and our beauty as God’s children is celebrated.

In Baptism we are marked with the sign of the cross – we are claimed, loved, marked by God as God’s own – marked and claimed to love as God loves.

In Baptism, through the profession of faith we say no to sin and yes to life and faith in Jesus.

In Baptism, we are immersed into water as a sign of our dying with Christ, and then rising out of the water into new life with Christ. Christ becomes our source of living water, and we are called to become living water for a thirsty world. Through the waters of Baptism we are cleansed of our sins and receive the grace of the Holy Spirit.

In Baptism, oil is a sign of being anointed by the Holy Spirit, our spiritual source of strength, protection, and healing.

In Baptism, the candle lit from the Easter (Paschal) candle and given to the newly baptized symbolizes that Christ has enlightened the baptized person, and in Christ those who are baptized become the “light of the world”.

In Baptism, the newly baptized are given a white garment, which symbolizes that the person baptized has “put on Christ.” The garment is white, reflecting the purity of being cleansed of sin.

2. Invite participants in groups to create a body sculpture that “captures” the core meanings of baptism.
3. Depending on how many groups you have, invite the participants to either share their sculpture with 2 or 3 other groups or with the whole assembly.

## **Handout: A Theology of Baptism**

- In Baptism, we are connected to a communion/community of saints – our community includes our living faith community and those who have walked faithfully before us.
  
- In Baptism our name is proclaimed to the community, and our beauty as God’s children is celebrated.
  
- In Baptism we are marked with the sign of the cross – we are claimed, loved, marked by God as God’s own – marked and claimed to love as God loves.
  
- In Baptism, through the profession of faith we say no to sin and yes to life and faith in Jesus.
  
- In Baptism, we are immersed into water as a sign of our dying with Christ, and then rising out of the water into new life with Christ. Christ becomes our source of living water, and we are called to become living water for a thirsty world. Through the waters of Baptism we are cleansed of our sins and receive the grace of the Holy Spirit.
  
- In Baptism, oil is a sign of being anointed by the Holy Spirit, our spiritual source of strength, protection, and healing.
  
- In Baptism, the candle lit from the Easter (Paschal) candle and given to the newly baptized symbolizes that Christ has enlightened the baptized person, and in Christ those who are baptized become the “light of the world”.
  
- In Baptism, the newly baptized are given a white garment, which symbolizes that the person baptized has “put on Christ.” The garment is white, reflecting the purity of being cleansed of sin.

## Activity Option 5: Musical Tour of Baptism

**Musical/rhythmic intelligence** is the ability to produce and appreciate music. These musically inclined learners think in sounds, rhythms, and patterns. They immediately respond to music, either appreciating or criticizing what they hear.

Their skills include singing, whistling, playing musical instruments, recognizing tonal patterns, composing music, remembering melodies, understanding the structure and rhythm of music.

1. Using your parish hymnal, select three to five songs that could be sung during a rite of baptism. Either use the CD or invite music ministers to lead the group in singing the songs, one at a time. Give each participant a hymnal to sing or follow along with.
2. After each song is sung, invite learners to note what the song has to teach us about baptism. What words or images are used in the song to describe baptism?
3. Invite the learners to create “lyrics” (words) for a song on baptism that summarizes Catholic teachings about baptism.

## Activity Option 6: Interviews with Baptismal Candidates/Newly Baptized

Audience: Children, Youth, Adults

Interpersonal Intelligence is the ability to relate and understand others. These learners try to see things from other people's point of view in order to understand how they think and feel. They often have an uncanny ability to sense feelings, intentions and motivations. They are great organizers, although they sometimes resort to manipulation. Generally they try to maintain peace in group settings and encourage co-operation. They use both verbal (e.g. speaking) and non-verbal language (e.g. eye contact, body language) to open communication channels with others.

Their skills include seeing things from other perspectives (dual-perspective), listening, using empathy, understanding other people's moods and feelings, counseling, co-operating with groups, noticing people's moods, motivations and intentions, communicating both verbally and non-verbally, building trust, peaceful conflict resolution, establishing positive relations with other people.

1. Invite families who have recently celebrated baptism (infant or children/adult), to come as “guest speakers” and share their experience of baptism with the participants.

Recommendation: It might be easier to recruit “guest speakers” if they are able to share their stories with just one or two table groups instead of addressing the whole assembly, so recruit as many as are needed to do so.

2. Before the experiences are shared, invite the participants to generate questions about baptism that they would like to ask of those who have recently celebrated it.
3. Introduce the “guest speakers” to the group and invite them to share their stories. Once finished, invite participants to ask the questions they wrote earlier.

## Activity Option 7: Guided Meditation on Baptism

Audience: Youth and Adults

**Intrapersonal intelligence** is the ability to self-reflect and be aware of one's inner state of being. These learners try to understand their inner feelings, dreams, relationships with others, and strengths and weaknesses.

Their skills include recognizing their own strengths and weaknesses, reflecting and analyzing themselves, awareness of their inner feelings, desires and dreams, evaluating their thinking patterns, reasoning with themselves, understanding their role in relationship to others.

1. Place a large bowl of water in center of group.
2. As you lead participants through this activity, pause for adequate reflection at the end of each paragraph.
3. Before beginning, invite participants to assume a comfortable position, suitable for meditation.

4. [spoken text]

*Close your eyes, take deep breaths and relax. Let go of the world you left behind to be here. Let go of all the pressures, anxieties; put it all in God's hands.*

*Imagine water; clear, clean, sparkling water, flowing everywhere. Abundant water, filling your body and soul, quenching your thirst, soothing your fears, washing away all the pressures, cleansing you, reviving you within and without.*

*Imagine yourself surrounded by those who love you, splashing in the water together. Feel the cool drops on your face, on your head. You taste the water, so wonderful and refreshing. And you thank God for water, for life, for being renewed, refreshed and restored.*

*Reflect for a moment on water, as a symbol of life and hope. What images, stories, and memories come to mind as you think of water? Where do you come in contact with water everyday?*

*Now think of water as a sign, a living symbol for baptism. What does the water mean in baptism? Hear yourself explain to someone else about the significance of the water in baptism. How does the water help renew, refresh and restore you as God's creation and precious child? How is this water life-giving and connected to the power of God's love?*

*Ask yourself, what does my baptism mean to me today? Remember the times when you affirmed your baptism or felt your baptism being affirmed by God.*

*Ask yourself, how has my baptism shaped me, who I am, what I do, my relationships that I hold most dear? How has God called you through your baptism? How have you answered?*

*Thank God for the time in prayer you have just experienced, and when you are ready rejoin your table group.*

5. Invite participants to share their reflections with two or three other participants.