

Spirit of Belonging

**1**

Before you begin, please read the introduction on the right to yourself.

We all need to belong to someone or something to feel connected and not alone. First and foremost, we all belong to God. This section of stories deals with the desire we all have to be part of God's family. The Catholic Church recognizes this desire, and receives new members through the Sacrament of Baptism.

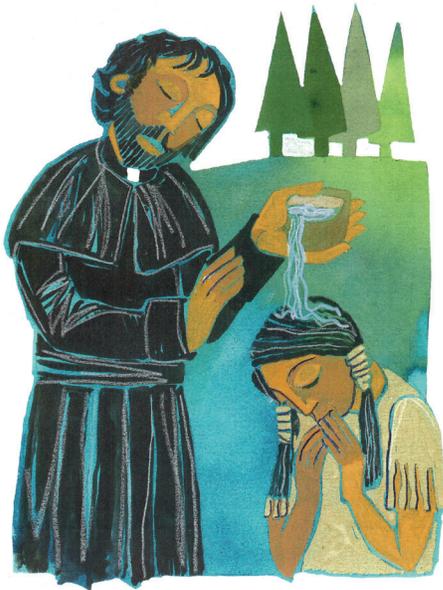
2

With the help of your child, prepare the meeting space. Pull out your Bible, light some candles, and add any other decoration you'd like to make the space beautiful.

Then begin with a prayer.

3

Getting started. Discuss together: When was the last time you felt truly accepted or appreciated? How did it feel?



1

Read the story below out loud. If your child is old enough, he or she can read it to you. Otherwise, read it to your child. Along the way, clarify anything your child might not understand.

It feels great to belong! It feels comfortable. It feels safe. It feels right. It is especially good to belong to our Church. It is like being a part of a great big family. We take care of each other. We help each other. We celebrate with each other.

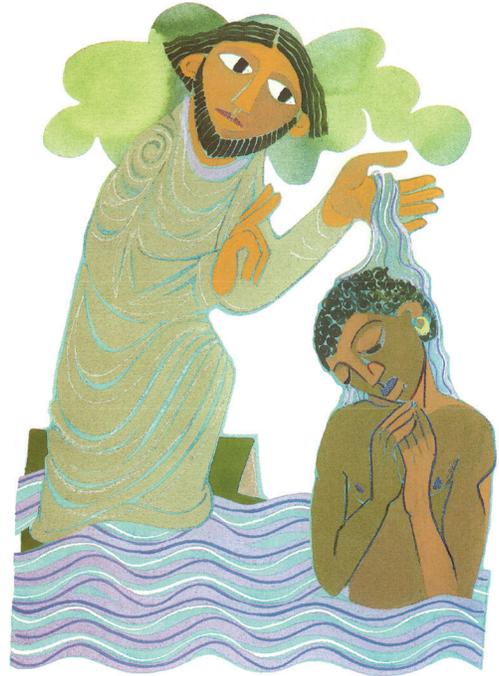
The people in our Church are all different, just as in regular families. We like different things. Some people like loud music. Some people like soft music. Sometimes we even speak different languages. But that is all right because our Church is still one big family.

Our Church is one family because we all have the same Creator, God, and the same Brother, Jesus. We also share the same great and Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit that makes us one.

Jesus promised his friends before he died that God would send the Spirit. Jesus promised that the Spirit would be with us. Jesus promised that the Spirit would be in us. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, great things can happen. Together, through the Holy Spirit, we can begin to make the Plan of God happen.

The way we become members of our Church family is through the Sacrament of Baptism. That is why we call Baptism the sacrament of belonging. In the Sacrament of Baptism we receive the great and Holy Spirit.

In the stories found in the upcoming sessions, you will hear about two people who wanted to become members of our Church family. One person heard about Jesus and believed. He was baptized right away. The other person believed in Jesus, but had to wait a long time before being baptized. The important thing is, they both received the sacrament of belonging and great things happened.



2

Now discuss the story with your child. Use the following or other questions:

1. When are you most likely to feel lonely? Why?
2. When are you most likely to feel accepted and/or wanted? Why?
3. How can you show others in your life that you welcome them?

1

Get your child started on the activity on the next page, making sure they understand the instructions. (The answer is “...the Spirit of God descending like a dove coming upon him.” Then continue to read below.

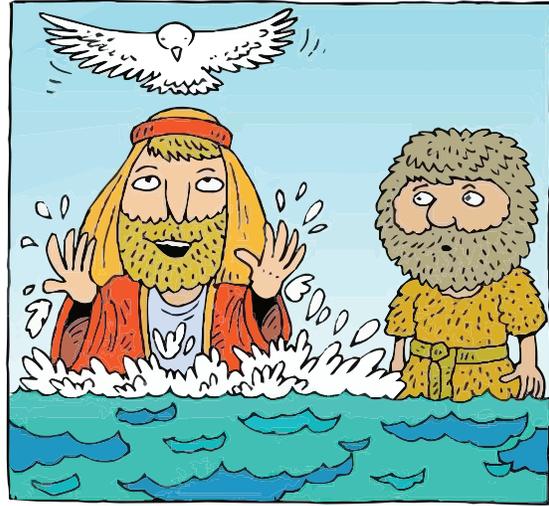
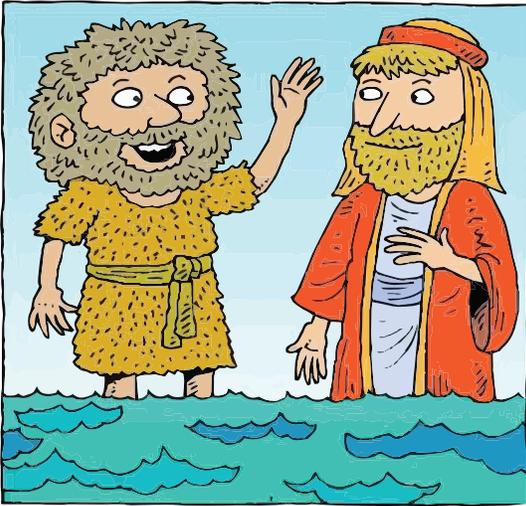
2

Just for you: The Sacrament of Baptism gives us new life and makes us members of our Church family, the Catholic community.

Once we feel welcome some place, we are free to be our true selves. Acceptance provides us with the strength to act in kindness and with justice. Belonging isn't simply a “warm feeling”; it is the foundation upon which we build our lives.

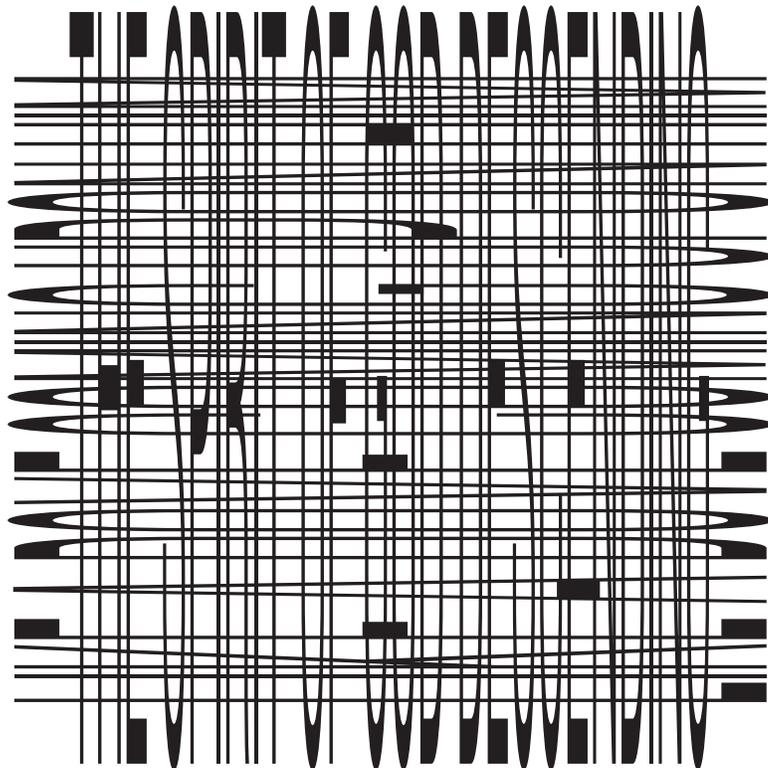
Baptism with the Holy Spirit

When a person is baptized today, it is done in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. When John the Baptist baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, all three were present: the voice of God the Father coming from the heavens, Jesus in the water, and the Spirit in a mysterious way.



Complete this Bible verse that describes what happened.

Tilt the page so it is almost at eye level to read the words. Then fill them in to the right.



After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw...

—Matthew 3:16

Within a Circle of Friends

1

Work on this activity together with your child. Begin by reading the questions below.

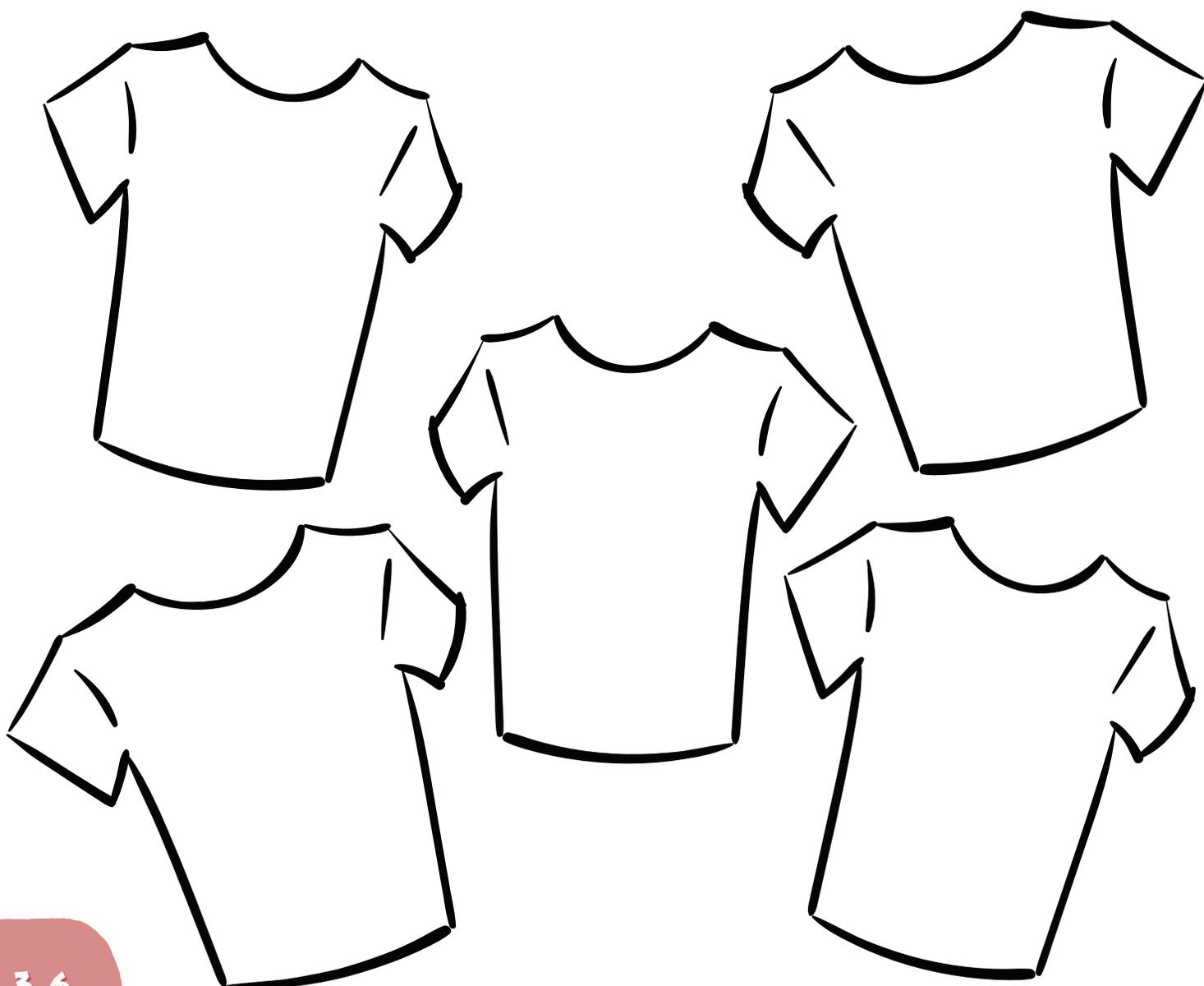
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Write your answers on the T-shirts below, and have your child write their answers on the shirts of the people on the next page.

3

When you are done, share what you wrote with each other and discuss why you chose those words.

What are some words that describe how you feel when you know you belong?
What are some ways you can help others feel like they belong?





The Baptism Ceremony

Fill in the missing words: "I baptize you in the name of the _____,
and of the _____, and of the _____.

A _____."

Groups

1

Tell your child about groups you have belonged to in the past or still belong to. Have your young person do the same. What have each of these groups done for you?

Watch television shows to see how groups form and how people relate to each other as family or friends.



Closing Ritual

2

Place a pitcher of water and an empty bowl on your table. Pour the water into the bowl, saying, “Spirit of God, wash me in love.” When the bowl is full, use the water to bless yourselves and each other with the Sign of the Cross.

Close with the doxology, on the right.

Through Jesus, with Jesus, and in Jesus,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, forever and ever.
Amen.

