

LearningCycles

BAPTISM

Marked as God's
Own

Original Lesson Plan
by Laura Boyer

Edited by Tracey E. Herzer



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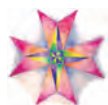
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Table of Contents: Holy Baptism

Introductory Materials

About LearningCycles

Recruiting Leaders – Job Descriptions for Volunteers

A General Schedule for Class Structure

Cycle Materials

Theological Overview of this Cycle

Letter to the Parents

Supplemental Material for Teachers

Story for this Cycle

Suggested Resources for this Cycle

Activities Overview – Grid

Cycle Lesson Plans

Art Workshop

Publishing Workshop

Drama Workshop

Movie Workshop

Story Workshop

Kitchen Workshop

Music Workshop



About LearningCycles

What is LearningCycles?

LearningCycles is an innovative approach to faith formation. It takes seriously the spiritual development of children while providing creative and exciting activities that engage children in a whole new level of learning and retention. The rotation-style model means that children work on the same story or concept for several weeks, using different learning approaches in each workshop room they visit.

Ideas for possible workshops:

Art
Storytelling
Music
Group Activities
Cooking

Science Experiments
Games
Drama or Puppets
Movies
Geography or Map Excursions

Easy to Adapt

You can use the activities in this resource for shorter learning center events, normal classroom use, intergenerational gatherings, and more. Adapt what you find here to best suit your faith formation situation.



Recruiting LearningCycles Leaders

LearningCycles make it VERY easy to increase your number of volunteers, by dividing jobs into manageable parts. Here are some ways that parishioners of ALL ages can be involved:

CYCLE LEADERS sign up as part of a team of 2 or 3 adults who will teach one 4-6 week cycle. Teachers remain in the same workshop room each week of the cycle and teach the same lesson plan to different classes each week. Workshop rooms may use skills in areas as music, dance, cooking, quilting, gardening or painting, but you don't have to have a special skill in order to help. Teachers can sign up to help read stories, turn on computers, make popcorn, hand out art supplies, etc.

SHEPHERDS commit for the entire school year, but they never have to prepare or teach a lesson! Shepherds work in teams and travel with their class through each of the different workshops. Shepherds are the essential relationship part of this program, learning the children's names, providing continuity of leadership and being a friendly, safe presence in the classroom each week.

CYCLE COORDINATORS are needed for each different cycle. These people manage the details of a cycle, contacting all the volunteer teachers for that cycle, distributing the lesson plans, making sure supplies are purchased, etc.

Some churches have also used:

DECORATING TEAM A resourceful group of people is needed to create and plan new and evolving learning spaces. These folks might be interior designers, or they may be people who are just addicted to home improvement shows or have a knack for decorating inexpensively! Churches who share space or don't have the budget for large-scale renovations will need a group of creative thinkers to come up with props or posters that can be used on Sunday, but safely stored away during the week.

RESOURCE TEAM This "big picture" group can be comprised of all your cycle coordinators, as well as interested parents. Together the group handles trouble-shooting, long-range plans and communication to the entire church. For churches that already have a catechist or formation team, that committee can provide the functions of a Resource Team.



General Class Structure

1. **OPENING ACTIVITY** (10-15 minutes, as children arrive)

Welcome students and make sure everyone has a nametag. Opening activities give early arrivers something to start on immediately and provide a warm, busy room for children to enter. The activity could be simply drawing or decorating your nametag. It could also be coloring sheets or simple games. Check the “Filler Activities” of your lesson plan for ideas or ask your Cycle Coordinator.

2. **INTRODUCTIONS** (approximately 10 minutes)

- Introduce yourself: Tell students about you – your family, how long you have been at this church, what kind of work you do, what your hobbies are, why you signed up to help teach, etc.
- Introduce the cycle story or theme: Ask children what they’ve been studying or have done in other rooms on other weeks. Talk about the basic theme or season (see the Overview p. 6 for some ideas). Read the story to children.
- Introduce your activity: Tell the children which part of the story your room is focusing on, and perhaps ask them to re-tell you that part of the story in their own words.

3. **WORKSHOP ACTIVITY AND REFLECTION** (approximately 25-30 minutes)

See attached lesson plans for specific instructions about the main activity. Supplies should be in your classroom, but if you need help, ask your cycle coordinator. If you run low on supplies, please tell your coordinator so they can plan accordingly.

If children finish early, you can use any of the “Filler Activities” provided in each lesson plan. In addition, you may use activity sheets (see “Suggested Resources for this Cycle”) as “quiet work” for the early finishers while they wait for everyone to complete the task.

Try to plan your time so that children finish the activity and still have a few minutes to process the class by journaling or drawing. Encourage them to take their work seriously, and try to foster a semi-quiet atmosphere that allows children to think about what they have heard, seen and experienced. Ask questions like “What did you learn today?” or “How did you feel while doing this activity?” Connect your activity back to the story. Studies show us that quiet reflection time is what helps move items from short-term memory into long-term memory so this piece is VERY important!

4. **CLEAN UP** (approximately 5 minutes)

Have children help clean up and make sure everyone has their papers, jackets, etc. If parents come to the classroom to pick up their children, this is a good time to praise children in front of their parents. This is also a good time to discuss any concerns or questions quietly with parents. Tell the children goodbye. Thank them for coming.



Theological Overview of this Cycle

Baptisms are happy and exciting times. The church is usually buzzing in preparation while family and friends of those to be baptized are eager and a little nervous in their joy. The whole congregation is looking forward to the time when we “welcome the newly baptized” and children often gather at the font to get a good view of the proceedings. Once, I saw a seven-year-old girl, after watching another child’s baptism, rush back to her grandparents asking if she could also be baptized. There is hardly a more meaningful time in the life of a Christian community... so developing a unit on this joy-filled sacrament seemed a natural teaching opportunity.

We took our material primarily from two resources: 1) The Catholic *Rite of Baptism for Children* and 2) *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The challenge was to look at the summary of the church’s teaching and the Rite of Baptism and transform that content into a cycle that would engage and excite our children about the sacrament of baptism. We want our children to develop an interest in the sacraments and rituals of our church, and we also want to offer them experiences that allow them to develop their own unique relationships with God.

Baptism is a central part of our faith. (“*One Lord, one faith, one baptism*” – *Ephesians 4:5*) Use this cycle to talk with the children in your church about what the church believes about baptism, why we believe this, and what it means for our lives.

The scripture reference used in this cycle is “*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit... And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*” This is a significant statement that Jesus makes at the very end of Matthew’s gospel. “Go therefore” seems to summarize all that has gone before – all the miracles and the stories and the sacrifice and the joy. It’s like Jesus is saying, “You’ve heard all that I have said and seen all that I have done. Now it’s time to go and tell the world about it.” This is exciting stuff!

Another thing you may consider focusing on in this unit (or encouraging children to commit to memory) is an adapted phrase from the *Rite of Baptism*. In the Catholic tradition, we chose “**Through Baptism, children are made God’s own... help these tender branches grow to be more like you**” – which is where the title of this unit came from. What a gift to offer our children!

We hope to provide workshops which will engage the children in the tradition of their church and in the Baptismal Rite, as well as offer experiences to deepen their spirituality. We hope that this program emphasizes, both for you and the children, the power and the joy of this special time and gives you plenty of reasons to celebrate!

Laura Boyer and Tracey Herzer



Letter to the Parents for this Cycle

(We suggest you mail this letter to all parents with a copy of the cycle story)

Dear Parents –

In this LearningCycle, we will be discussing baptism. If your child has been baptized, please try to find time to talk with your child about that special day - sharing pictures, stories or video and remembering together. Talk about who was present and what happened before and after the ceremony. If you have a Bible or a copy of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, you could help your child find passages that deal with the sacrament of baptism and point out or talk about some of the key phrases or ideas.

If your child has not been baptized, this unit may give you some opportunities to talk about what the church believes about baptism and how one prepares for the sacrament. You can also talk about baptisms your child may have observed and what her or his reactions were.

Baptism is one of the central symbols of our Christian faith. This unit will give your children the opportunity to learn more about the history and importance of baptism and explore the rich symbolism of water and the Trinity.

The memory verse for this cycle is *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit... And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”* This verse is often referred to as “The Great Commissioning,” as Jesus gives his last words to the disciples at the end of Matthew's Gospel. The phrase “Go therefore” seems to summarize all that has gone before – all the miracles and the stories and the sacrifice and the joy. It's like Jesus is saying, “You've heard all that I have said and seen all that I have done. Now it's time to go and tell the world about it.” This is exciting and moving material, and we are excited to share it with your children. However, remember that YOU are your children's primary teacher and we hope you will discuss some of these themes at home as well.

We also focus on a phrase adapted from the baptismal rite for children: ***“Through Baptism, children are made God's own... help these tender branches grow to be more like you.”*** What an amazing prayer and gift to offer our children! They have the assurance that no matter how far they may wander or what choices they make, they have been marked as God's own forever, and there is no path outside the realm of God's attention and concern. As our children grow and learn, we hope they will develop their own deep personal relationships with God and talking about baptism is hopefully just one step on that lifelong journey.

God's Peace to you all –
Tracey E. Herzer



Supplemental Material for Teachers

Below are the themes directly from The Catechism of the Catholic Church, ("The Sacrament of Baptism"), which also relies on material from Scripture & the Roman Missal. Goals & Objectives for the unit are also included.

Themes:

1. Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life. Through baptism, we are marked as daughters and sons of God, become members of Christ's body and share in Jesus' mission of building the Kingdom of God.
2. Water is used in baptism as a rich symbol of the grace that God pours out on the person who is baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. According to the Apostle Paul, it is through baptism that one enters into communion with Christ in Christ's death and resurrection. This is also a birth into Christ's body (the church), into the forgiveness of sins, and into new life in the Holy Spirit. Baptism produces life-giving effects.
4. At baptism, we are required to renounce the Evil Spirit and accept the Gospel and the conversion that the Gospel requires.
5. Infants are baptized so that they can be incorporated into the church and the priesthood of all believers. Infants are baptized, also, because faith needs the community of believers; it is within the faith of the the community that each of the faithful can believe. The faith required for Baptism is not a perfect and mature faith, but a beginning that is called to develop.
6. Promises are made for infants by their parents and sponsors, who guarantee that these children will be brought up within the faith and who also promise to be true nurtures of the life that God has entrusted to them.

Goal

1. The children will know that in baptism we are marked as children of God, given the free gift of God's grace, and deeply loved by God.

Objectives

1. The children will identify water with baptism.
2. The children will understand more fully a Catholic baptismal service.
3. The children will know when they were baptized.
4. The children will have a sense of what this baptism means.



Story for Cycle: Holy Baptism

The stories of baptism are varied and ongoing. You can use the "Rite of Baptism for Children," personal baptism stories of the teacher or the children, the baptism of Jesus, or your local church or parish's customs. All of this raw material is used in this cycle. Below is one suggestion, but feel free to use other story options if they work better for your church.

Marked as Christ's Own Forever

To be read before the workshops

Baptism is an important event. Some churches baptize infants as a way of showing that they are part of God's family, even before they can speak, so that the child may have support from the community in the development of her or his faith. Other churches wait until a later age, when a person can better understand or explain the reasons behind baptism. Some churches pour a little bit of water on the head of the person being baptized, while others help the person duck all the way under water in a special baptism pool inside their church and some, like Jesus, are baptized in a river. Christians believe that the Sacrament of Baptism, and how it marks us as God's own, is central to our faith.

When Jesus was ready to begin his ministry, he went to see John the Baptist at the Jordan River and asked John to baptize him. When Jesus came up from the water, the heavens opened and God's spirit descended like a dove and settled on Jesus. A voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Towards the end of his life, when Jesus was about to leave them, the last thing he told the disciples was "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit... And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

In the years of the early church, people studied for a long time (sometimes up to three years!) before they were allowed to be baptized during the Easter Vigil, on the Eve of Easter. So baptism has always been an important part of our Christian tradition.

There are many symbols associated with baptism, such as the dove, which symbolizes the Holy Spirit, or the shell that some churches use to pour the water. But the essential symbol of baptism is the water itself. The water symbolizes that God will cleanse us from sin and give us new life, and it symbolizes the grace that God pours out on the one receiving the sacrament. It reminds us of the waters of creation and the water of life, by which all things are nourished and made new.

Each of us has our own baptism story. It may be the story of the day you were baptized or the story of a special baptism you witnessed. It may be a story that happened when you were just a baby and too young to remember or a story that is in the future – on a special day when you will be baptized. Whoever you are, wherever you are... these stories about baptism are for all God's people. They are for YOU!

Story by Tracey E. Herzer



Suggested Resources for Cycle

VIDEOS and DVDs

Our first-choice for this cycle would be “**home-made**” **movies of baptisms** – videotape footage of the actual event. Put a notice in your newsletter or announcements and see if anyone has videos they would like to contribute. If you get several responses, you can probably show parts or all of several options. For the purposes of this cycle, we found that being able to watch a family respond and interact during a baptism was more touching and personal than any professional video we could locate.

We also have a number of excellent Catholic baptism DVDs available at The Pastoral Center, which can be found at the link on the next page.

However, if the above options don't work for your parish, another appropriate choice for your movie workshop plans is **John the Baptist** DVD available through NEST family video. If you have already done the LearningCycle on John the Baptist (or plan to do it in the future) you can easily use this video again. You can find out more about NEST Family products by visiting their website at <http://www.nestfamily.com>.

BOOKS, BOOKLETS, etc.

For this Cycle, we recommend *Jesus Speaks to Me About My Baptism*, which can be ordered by following the link on the next page.

Other possible resources are:

A Eucharistic Manual for Children, by Eileen Garrison and Gayle Albanese, Morehouse Barlow Wilton, c. 1984, ISBN 0-8192-1343-8

The Complete Godly Play Volume 3, c. 2002, Jerome Berryman, Living the Good News, Denver Colorado, Baptism presentation, pp. 70-76

God Speaks to Us in Water Stories, Mary Ann Getty-Sullivan, c. 1996, The Order of St. Benedict, Inc, Collegeville, Minnesota, The Liturgical Press, ISBN 0-8146-2364-6

Prayer Themes and Guided Meditation for Children, Barbara Ann Bretherton, c. 1988, Twenty-Third Publications, Mystic, CT. ISBN 0-89622-896-7

Today I Was Baptized by Diane Ahern, illustrated by Katherine Larson, c.2000, Aunt Dee's Attic Publisher, ISBN 0967943701

Water, Come Down! The Day You Were Baptized, by Walter Wangerin, illustrated by Gerardo Suzan, c. 1999, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, ISBN 0806637110



**PURCHASE RESOURCES FOR USE WITH THIS CYCLE
FROM THE PASTORAL CENTER AT:**

<https://pastoral.center/lc-baptism-resources>



Activities Overview for This Cycle

WORKSHOP	SUMMARY OF PLANS	FOCUS
ART	Baptismal Banners	Celebrating the symbols of baptism
PUBLISHING	Baptism newsletter	God knows our name & gathering stories of baptism
DRAMA	Role-playing the ritual of baptism and exploring preparations for baptism	The ritual of baptism; the drama of liturgy
MOVIE	Stories of baptism in the Bible; viewing the video <i>John the Baptist</i>	Relating Bible stories of baptism to a video of the same story
STORY	Stories are read, and personal stories of baptism are shared	Stories: Yours, Mine, and Ours
KITCHEN	Use drink mix, ice cubes and straws to learn about baptism and create unusual watercolor paintings	God's presence in water and wind
MUSIC	Focus on music, movement and prayer in relation to baptism	God knows each of us by name



Baptism: Movie Workshop

Bible Reference for the Cycle:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19, 20b NRSV)

Memory Work for the Cycle:

“Through Baptism, children are made God's own... help these tender branches grow to be more like you.”

(Note: This prayer is adapted from *The Rite of Baptism for Children*.)

Key Concepts and Life Application:

- Baptism is the sacrament by which we illustrate being children of God
- Baptism is a symbol of new life in Christ and forgiveness of sins

Summary of Class Plans:

Children will watch videotapes of a baptism or baptismal celebration and discuss how we prepare for special events or sacraments in the church. You may also choose to show clips from a video about John the Baptist to connect our baptism experience with the baptism of Jesus by John.

Materials Needed:

- A homemade video of baptisms in your church – run an announcement in your bulletin or newsletter to see if anyone has one. If you can't find a local video, then you can use one of the suggested DVDs (see pages 10-11).
- DVD Player / Video player / Computer, projector, & screen
- Popcorn
- Juice boxes (these have less spill-potential than cups of lemonade or soda!)
- Napkins
- A children's bible- we recommend the [Family Story Bible](#)
- A table covered in a white cloth
- A white candle (on a plate of some kind)
- Matches
- A pitcher of water – preferably glass or clear plastic so you can see the water
- Chrism (special oil used in baptism)
- Large Shell (usually a scallop shell – it can be real or plastic or metal)
- Dove
- A banner or sign that symbolizes the Trinity



Filler Activities Material:

- Story sentences on following pages – cut into strips.
- You will also need one copy of the story sentences to remain uncut, so that you have an “answer key” if someone gets stuck
- Envelopes – put each set of story strips into a separate envelope so that the stories don’t get mixed up. You may even want to run each story off on a different color.
- Scissors

Workshop Lesson Plans:

- **BEFORE CLASS** – You will probably need to arrive in your classroom a little early to make sure the video is set up and ready to play, as well as get the popcorn popped and in bags. Also make sure the juice boxes and napkins are out.
- **BEFORE CLASS** – If you are only using part of a video or DVD, make sure you have it cued to the part you need. If you use the John the Baptist video, cue the tape (or DVD) to the segment where Jesus is baptized by John. Also, be sure to check on the volume levels so they are not too loud or soft.
- **BEFORE CLASS** – You will need to set up a small table, covered by a white cloth. On the table, place a white candle (on a small plate), matches, a pitcher of water, chrism (oil), a large shell, a dove, and a banner or sign symbolizing the Trinity.
- **BEFORE CLASS** – Cut up the sentence strips for the filler activity. Place each story in a separate envelope for children to work with.
- You can refer to “A General Schedule for Class Structure” (included in the Introductory Materials) for ideas on how to introduce yourself and the story, as well as how to plan your class time appropriately.
- Welcome the children warmly as they enter your classroom and invite them to form a circle around the table you have prepared. Sitting on the floor or in chairs is fine; whatever seems most comfortable and works in your space.
- When everyone is present and everyone has found a place in the circle, light the candle and say a prayer. You can choose your own, but here is one suggestion:
 - Heavenly Father, we thank you that by the water of baptism and the Holy Spirit you forgive our sins and raise us to a new life of grace. Sustain us, O Lord, in your Holy Spirit. Give us a heart that longs to know you and an ongoing sense of wonder for all your works. Amen.



- Show the children a Bible, and tell them this is our special (holy) book where the stories of God and God's people are written down. Then read three short stories from a children's bible – or have volunteers read them:
 - Matthew 3:1-17 John the Baptist and the Baptism of Jesus
 - Matthew 28:16-20 The Disciples are given "the Great Commission"
 - Acts 8:26-40 Philip baptizes the Ethiopian eunuch
- After reading each story, invite the children to answer several questions:
 - Who are the characters in the story?
 - Where are they?
 - What are they doing?
 - What character do you like best and why?
 - How do you think (name someone in the story) felt?
 - Who would you want to be in this story?
 - What do you think happened next?
 - What title would you give this story?
- Show a few minutes of the video of baptisms or another video and allow children to munch popcorn while they watch.
- When you turn off the video, talk to the children about how this relates to the Bible stories they have just heard. Here are some questions to get you started:
 - What did you hear in the video that was the same in the story?
 - What did you hear that was different?
 - What did you see in the videos that reminded you of what you see in church?
 - What seems different?
- Remember to leave a few minutes at the end of class for children to write in their journals or quietly reflect on their activity and what they have learned today.

Filler Activities:

- Using the story sentences on the next page, have children take turns trying to put the baptism stories into the correct order. You can have them work in three teams, giving a different story to each team. After a team has solved their story, they can trade with another team to try a different story.
- Once the stories are in the right order, if you still have more time, children can draw illustrations for each story.



The Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:1-17)

John the Baptist lived in the wilderness of Judea, near the Jordan River.

Many people came to hear John say: “Repent for the Kingdom of God is near.”

John also said, “Someone greater than me is coming.”

One day Jesus came to hear John preaching to the crowds.

Jesus asked John to baptize him, but John tried to say he wasn’t worthy.

Jesus insisted and so John did baptize Jesus.

When Jesus came up out of the water, he heard a voice from heaven, saying...

“This is my Beloved, in whom I am well pleased”

Disciples are given the “Great Commission” (Matthew 28:16-20)

After Jesus died and rose again, he appeared to the disciples.

The disciples were afraid and not sure what to believe.

Jesus gave the disciples a special assignment by saying...

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...

... baptizing them in the name of the Father...

... and of the Son...

... and of the Holy Spirit.”

Then Jesus promised that he would always be with them.



Philip baptizes an Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-40)

Philip was one of Jesus' disciples and he was on the road to Jerusalem.

Philip saw a man sitting in a chariot reading the words of the prophet Isaiah.

Philip approached the man, who was the Queen's treasurer, and asked him if he understood what he was reading.

The man replied, "How can I, unless someone helps me?"

So, Philip got up in the chariot with the man and told him about Jesus.

As they went down the road, the man saw some water and said to Philip, "Here's some water! Can I be baptized right now??"

So Philip and the man stopped the chariot and went down to the water, where Philip baptized the man.

When the man came out of the water, Philip had disappeared, but the man was very happy he had been baptized.



Holy Baptism: Music Workshop

Bible Reference for the Cycle:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19, 20b NRSV)

Memory Work for the Cycle:

“Through Baptism, children are made God's own...help these tender branches grow to be more like you.”

(Note: This prayer is adapted from *The Rite of Baptism for Children*.)

Key Concepts and Life Application:

- Baptism is the sacrament by which we illustrate being children of God
- Baptism is a symbol of new life in Christ and forgiveness of sins

Summary of Class Plans:

In this workshop, children experience music, movement and prayer related to baptism. Music and prayer touch us in deep and special ways; ways that often cannot be articulated. Music and prayer can be profound experiences for children...handle these activities with care.

Materials Needed:

- Recording of some quiet music; we recommend Handel's Water Music
- Music player
- Hymnal(s)
- Small table
- White tablecloth for table
- Candle
- Matches
- Bible
- Cross
- Baptism shell
- Water
- Dove
- Chrism (oil used in baptism)

For Filler Activity:

- Paper
- Crayons or markers



Workshop Lesson Plans

- **BEFORE CLASS** – Gather the items that you need; you could get permission to borrow the items from the church or find them elsewhere.
- You can refer to “A General Schedule for Class Structure” (included in the Introductory Materials) for ideas on how to introduce yourself and the story, as well as how to plan your class time appropriately.
- If possible, have quiet music playing as children arrive. This helps create a calm, worshipful environment for the group and will help shape your time together. Classical music is often a good choice and for this unit on baptism, Handel’s “Water Music” would be especially appropriate.
- As children come into the room, welcome each child personally and invite them to get ready for music and prayer by forming a circle.
- In the center of the circle is a table. The teacher begins the class by inviting the children to help in setting up a “prayer table.” Children are invited to place a Bible, water, a dove, chrism (oil), shell, a cross, a candle and water on the table.
- The teacher lights the candle and prays for God’s presence and blessing. Feel free to say whatever prayer you would like, but here is one possibility:
 - Gracious God, you know each one of us by name and we are your children. Thank you for your presence at Baptism and at all other times in our lives. Help us to remember how much we are loved. Amen.
- Ask children to share what they know or have seen in baptisms. Give them a few minutes to respond and then read the cycle story on baptism.
- After the story, invite children to look at the things you have assembled on the table. Tell them these are some of the special things we use in our baptism service and then see if they know what each thing is for.
- Tell them that there is an old tradition in baptism that when the parents first hand the baby to the priest, the priest would say “Name this child” and the parents would say the child’s full name. Many priests still do this during the service of baptism. By doing this, the church knows the baby’s name and can welcome them into the church.
- Say the following in your own words: “Today, we are going to practice welcoming each other into the family of the church. You are no longer babies so you can tell us your own name. I will go around the circle and for each one of you, I will look at you and say “Name this child’. Then I want you to say your full name. After you have said your name, the rest of the group will respond by welcoming you.”



- **EXAMPLE:**
 - Teacher: Name this child (*said while looking at Kevin*)
 - Student: Kevin Allen Thomas
 - Class: Kevin Allen Thomas, we welcome you!
- After everyone has gone, ask some of the following questions or questions of your own creation:
 - What did you think of this exercise?
 - What does it feel like to hear your full name said by a group?
 - How do you feel about your name?
 - What is your favorite part of your name?
 - Do you know where your parents got your name?
 - Who else shares parts of your name? Who shares your last name? Does anyone share your first name? Middle name?
 - Do you know what your name means?
 - Do you have a nickname?
 - What is the difference between someone just saying “Welcome” and someone saying, “Kevin Allen Thomas, we welcome YOU!”
- Remind children that God knows each one of us by name. This is not a God who loves us casually or generally, but intensely and specifically! Over and over again scripture tells us that God cares for us individually:
 - Isaiah 43:1 – “I have called you by name and you are mine.”
 - Matthew 10:30 – “...Even the hairs on your head are counted.”
 - Psalm 56:8 – “You have put my tears in a bottle.”
 - ★ **Grades 2-5** – Older students can look up these references and read them aloud for the group
- Following the meditation one or two songs may be sung. Baptism hymns can usually be found via the index, but you can use any combination of songs you like. Here are some suggestions:
 - *Wade in the Water*
 - *Down by the Riverside* (traditional spiritual)
 - *Who Am I?*, Casting Crowns
 - *I have Decided to Follow Jesus*
 - OR other hymns from your church hymnals
- Here are some basic tips for teaching music to children:
 - **Be Enthusiastic!** Your mood really sets the tone of the class – if you are bored or intimidated or cautious, chances are the kids will be too!
 - **Be Confident!** Children really don’t care how well (or how badly) you sing – they just want to have fun!
 - **Be Creative!** Use simple instruments, teach them some sign language (available online or in books) or help them make up motions for some words



- **Be Repetitive!** Children – especially pre-readers – will need to sing something several times before it “sticks”. When teaching a new song, you might try singing one line to them and have them sing it back to you
- **Be Active!** It is hard for children to sit still for long so if you want them to really get into the music, encourage them to clap, sway, add motions, etc.
- After the singing, give students a few minutes to write or draw in their journals or quietly reflect on their activity and what they have learned today. You may want to turn on the quiet music you began with to help students relax and write or draw. Close with a prayer of thanks and a blessing for the children.

Filler Activities:

- Have children take a piece of paper and write their full name in the middle and decorate it. They can get creative and write their name in bubble letters or write their name over and over again. Someone might even try to fit the letters of their name into a link like a crossword puzzle. Remind children that whatever their names are, God knows them and loves them.
- More Music – In the music workshop, you can always fill up any extra time with more singing or more listening to music! 😊

