

P R E F A C E

The material included in these pages, is meant to give you something as a basic help in your presentation of the SACRAMENTS talk. You are encouraged to follow the outline guide for DIRECTION OF CONTENT, but NOT AS THE CONTENT itself.

This is the third talk of the second day. It underscores the fact that Sacraments are something that God does for us, not what we do for God. The purpose of this talk is to bring new understanding and excitement to this expression of God's grace. As you prepare your talk, please be sure to read all of the supporting Scripture passages, then choose those passages which seem most appropriate for your rollo. When you give your rollo, please read the passages you choose as a part of your talk. The amount of time allotted for this talk is a maximum of 80 minutes.

There are a few additional materials listed that might be helpful to you. All material given to you is meant to guide your thinking while at the same time you have the freedom of your individual expression.

God's blessings be yours as you prepare for your presentation of the SACRAMENTS rollo.

SYNOPSIS

The SACRAMENTS talk, attempts to express how God affirms and strengthens His people by giving them signs and seals of His grace: it is His message spoken graphically, with physical symbols or visible aids using common elements.

#8 SACRAMENTS

Review: Habitual Grace - God's nature is Love -
 calls us to be Christian
Actual Grace - - Becomes real when we accept -
 is made personal

I. Introduction

Sacraments - Visual expression of Grace - John 3:16
Jesus Christ is the clearest declaration of God's Grace
John 1:1,14

II. Definition of Sacraments

- A. "A sign and seal of God's Covenant Love" -- signifies authenticity and authority. Acts 2:39, Luke 22:20, Matt.26:28
 - 1. Sign - Points to saving work of Christ - symbols of reality.
 - a. Water - washing away of our sins by Christ
 - b. Bread & Wine - broken body and shed blood of our Lord
 - 2. Seal - Assures God's Grace will be experienced - guarantees our acceptance by God.
- B. Physical symbols or visible aids using common elements
- C. Means of Grace - channel through which God brings His Grace to our lives
 - 1. Affirms our faith - nourishes, builds up, and gives strength for the journey of life
 - 2. Encounter with the Living Jesus and Loving Lord Col. 2:6-14, Mark 10:15,16
 - 3. It is God's "Palanca" to us John 1:1f
- D. A Mystery
We cannot explain the how, the when, in what way, and the why of the workings of the Holy Spirit in the Sacraments; but they are real and dynamic, and defy total explanation as we experience the presence of Christ and are strengthened through these visual aids. Hebrews 11:1

III. Qualities of a Sacrament

- A. Incomprehensible Love I John 4:9,10, Rom. 8:38,39
- B. Animates, enlivens our senses Isaiah 55:1-3, John 8:47a, Psalm 16:9-11
- C. Elicits, requires, and encourages faith Matt. 26:26-28, 28:18-20
- D. Involves the whole Church
God's Grace makes us one with Christ and one with each other. John 17:20-23, Gal. 3:26-29, I Cor. 10:16, 17

#8 SACRAMENTS (con't.)

IV. Marks of a Sacrament

- A. A Holy Act
 - 1. Instituted by Christ by example and then commands 'Do it...' Mark 1:9-11, Luke 22:15-20, Matt. 28:19,20
 - 2. Empowered and applied by the Holy Spirit
 - Mark 1:9-11 Water - Son
 - Acts 2:38 Voice - Father
 - Dove - Holy Spirit
- B. Points to the saving work of Christ
- C. They work in life of Believer in heart, mind, will and body

V. Purpose of a Sacrament

- A. Show us we are loved - by God
- B. Calls us to love God Matt. 22:37
 - 1. With deeper faith - with heart - with piety
 - 2. With deeper understanding - with mind - with study
 - 3. With obedient discipleship - with strength - with action
- C. Calls us to love one another Matt. 22:39
- D. Calls us to respond Acts 2:37
 - 1. Time of confession - preparation - self-examination
 - 2. Faith - "I believe, Lord, help my unbelief." Mark 9:24
 - 3. Expectation - expect an encounter with the Living Lord
John 6:25-29
- E. Strengthens us to do God's will Rom. 8:6,9,37; II Tim. 1:7

VI. Place of Sacrament - In a setting of worship of the Body of Christ Acts 2:37-42, Luke 22:14-20

VII. Baptism: Entrance Into The Body of Believers

- A. The way we come into the Church
The way of Salvation--we are cleansed and then renewed.
Reflected in furnishings arrangement:
 - Baptismal out in front
 - Followed by the Table
 - Then the PulpitWe are cleansed - fed by the Sacrament
Encouraged and fed by the Word

B. What is Baptism?

1. Sacramental act (sign)
 - a. Symbolizes the washing away of our sins by God's grace through the working of the Holy Spirit in our life Rom. 6
 - b. Sign of God's grace
 - (1) Points to God's forgiving love
 - (2) Points to God's power to renew II Cor. 5:17
 - (3) Points to saving work of Christ Romans 6:3
2. Seal of God's grace - His forgiveness - His love; seal of a relationship with God; unites us with Christ; unites us with the Church
 - a. Comes by God's authority and God's power Isaiah 43:1
 - b. Affirmation of God's claim Gal. 3:27, Rom. 6:3
3. God's act - not ours
 - a. He claims us - promise is to us and to our children Acts 2:39, Genesis 12:2,3
 - b. Promise to our children in infant baptism
God will be at work leading, guiding, directing
 - c. Affirmation of what God has done and what He will do in the future Gal. 3:6-9, 16f
 - d. Identify
 - (1) Identify with Christian name - we are Christ's
 - (2) Name giving - Christening

C. Why do we baptize?

1. God has commanded it Acts 2:38-39
2. It is a testimony of His grace
3. We need it Romans 3:23, 6:23, John 3:5

D. What is baptism's testimony?

1. Forgiveness by God I John 1:9
2. Holy Spirit is given to us John 14:15-18
3. We pass from death to eternal life Romans 6:4,5
4. We pass to new life of victory over evil Romans 6:6-14
5. We are adopted as God's children Romans 8:12-17, John 1:12, Galatians 4:1-7
6. There is security in union with Christ John 14:15-21
7. We are united in community of believers - a community experience Ephesians 2:19
8. Testimony to the world II Cor. 1:12, II Tim. 1:8-10

E. What can our response be?

1. Faith
 - a. Confidence that God is and will be at work in the lives of His people
 - b. Points our children to Christ and lets them see baptism as a sign of their eternal inheritance
 - c. Encourage them to claim it with their lives
 - d. Stimulates us to consider ourselves: Romans 6:1-13
 - (1) dead to sin
 - (2) united in His resurrection
 - (3) alive to God in Christ

2. Gratitude - God's grace does not depend on the kind of person we are, but on the kind of God our Creator and Redeemer is.
 3. Claim our inheritance daily - see water? remember Baptism - God's grace is there; Lord's Supper - share His love freely.
The battle of life depends on God; believe Him and you will celebrate the victory II Chronicles 20. Claim the victory in lives of children before it is completed. I John 3:1-3
 4. Become Christ-like - Process that takes time...is not finished. Faith is not complete although begun; someday it will be complete. We will look to it now in the signs and seals of belonging to God's community where we must share God's grace with others and must share His love freely.
The ultimate expression of our baptism. I Peter 4:8-10
- F. Different views within the Christian community (touch lightly)
1. Adult baptism/Infant baptism
 2. Modes of baptism
 - a. Sprinkling
 - b. Dousing
 - c. Immersion

VIII. The Lord's Supper

- A. Celebration
1. Preparation - self-examination
 2. Participation
 - a. By invitation from Jesus
 - b. In confidence in Him - with joy
 3. Proclamation - a visible sermon
 - a. of His death until He comes
 - b. of His promise of what life can be
 - c. repeated - "do in memory of me"
- B. Not a magical act nor a rite that is performed out of custom or tradition
- C. Is a Feast of Thanksgiving - "Eucharist" (grace, gifts)
- D. A meal of remembrance "do this in remembrance of me."
I Cor.11:24b
It looks to the past.
 1. Bread - broken body of Jesus Christ
 2. Wine - shed blood of Jesus Christ
 3. Broken body, shed blood was necessary for forgiveness of our sins
- E. A meal of spiritual nourishment - the present reality
1. Communion with the Lord
 2. Communion with our brothers and sisters in Christ
 3. Strengthened to love Him with our whole being - heart, soul, mind, and strength
- F. Meal of hope - looks to the future
1. Return of the Lord Matt. 26:29
 2. Reconciliation with all people

G. Benefits

1. Closeness to God
2. Closeness to fellow believers
3. Seal of God's forgiveness
4. Our faith is strengthened
5. Our love is deepened - for God, others, self, world
6. Equipped for service - God provides the means. We are fed to feed others. Genesis 12:1-3

H. Our response

1. We come
2. Eat and drink deeply of Him
3. To share - give ourselves in service

Prepare... Come... Enjoy the celebration!

IX. Conclusion

The sacraments are signs of God's desire to know us, strengthen us, and love us. In other words, to be in relationship with us. God is not restricted to the sacraments as described here. In addition, He uses what might be called "sacramental moments", that is, events and happenings in our lives which make us very much aware of His presence and grace.

Such times might be:

- an ordination service to church office
- a wedding
- a time of confession in confidence to another believer when forgiveness is claimed
- a time of healing from illness
- a life after death experience
- a vision of heaven
- a walk in nature

God has so many beautiful gifts He wants to give us, with and in His grace. Knowing that let us receive with joy these gifts of grace from Him.