

Jacob's Creek 2019: Sacraments And Rites Curriculum for children's program

Introduction

Thank you for your willingness to help out with this year's children's program! Our theme is "Sacraments and Rites." The Lord teaches us that there are two sacraments: Baptism and the Holy Supper. These sacraments are said to be in the Christian church like two gems in the scepter of a king. Elsewhere we are taught that they are the holiest acts of worship. In the past the real use of these two sacraments has been lost. But as you will see from True Christian Religion 669, the Lord has promised to reveal anew the profound use of these sacraments for those who will be of His New Church.

We will also spend time at this year's retreat exploring some of the rites of our church. These include useful traditions such as confirmation, betrothal, home dedications, ordinations, memorial services and more.

The following notes have been provided as a general outline. Each day suggests a specific story and/or topic to teach along with various key points that you could focus on. Please feel free to tailor the message and focus your attention as you see fit. Please do not hesitate to contact our head Pastor (Rev. Matthew Genzlinger) if you have any doctrinal question about any of the topics: 978 – 337 – 8952; matthewgenzlinger@gmail.com.

Recitation

This year we will have one recitation for the entire duration of the camp. The recitation will be said during each worship service. You are welcome to help the children memorize it during the children's program.

“And these words, which I command you today, shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons, and shall speak of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk in the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall tie them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house, and on your gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:6-9)

Introducing These Ideas to Children

The New Church has two sacraments, **Baptism** and the **Holy Supper**. These two acts of worship are special. They are known as sacraments because they are rituals the Lord Himself started while He was living on earth. He said, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

Baptism

Jesus had John baptize Him in the waters of the Jordan River. When John said, "I have need of baptism by You," He responded that His baptism was important symbolically, as an example for others.

Holy Supper

On the last evening of Jesus's life on earth, He and His apostles ate the Passover feast. Jesus singled out the wine and the bread, blessing them and serving them to His followers with new significance. He made a point of serving them as a Holy Supper in which the wine corresponded to Divine Truth, and the bread to Divine Good, and asked us to take these into ourselves.

Rites

Rites are other worshipful observances, not specifically commanded but useful to the church. They include **Confirmation, Betrothal, Marriage, Ordination, and Memorial or Dedication services**. See more description on Wednesday, below.

Monday, July 22: Baptism Some suggested readings:

- Matthew 3:1-17, Mark 1:1-11, Luke 3:1-22, John 1:1-34.
- The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine paragraph number 202 – 209 (shorter chapter on Baptism).
- True Christian Religion 667 – 691 (longer chapter on Baptism).
- Some good passages with fun images about the use and importance of Baptism and the Holy Supper: True Christian Religion 669, 673, 730.

Possible areas of focus and projects:

- The story of John the Baptist baptizing the Lord.
- What does "repent" mean? How does this prepare us for the coming of the Lord?
- What actually happens at a baptism service?
- The special angels that come around little children who are baptized.
- Why water?
 - Represents the truths of faith that we need to learn and live according to in order to be regenerated and "born anew." (What are some of these truths of faith?)
 - Also represents temptations we must go through.
- Three uses of baptism:
 - Introduction into the Christian church, and at the same time insertion among Christians in the spiritual world.
 - That a Christian may know and acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ, the redeemer and savior, and follow Him.
 - That a person may be regenerated.
- Baptist itself does not impart faith or salvation, but testifies that those baptized will receive faith, and will be saved, IF they are regenerated.
- Replaces circumcision and all the ritualistic washings of the Old Testament.
- Who can be baptized? Children and adults.

Tuesday, July 23: Holy Supper Some suggested readings:

- Matthew 26:17-30, Mark 14:12-26, Luke 22:7-23.
- The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine paragraph number 210 – 222 (shorter chapter on the Holy Supper).
- True Christian Religion 698 – 730 (longer chapter on the Holy Supper).
- Some good passages with fun images about the use and importance of Baptism and the Holy Supper: True Christian Religion 669, 673, 730.

Possible areas of focus and projects:

- The story of the Lord celebrating the Holy Supper with His disciples.
- What actually happens at a Holy Supper service?
- Why unleavened bread and wine?
 - Unleavened Bread = Good of love.
 - Wine = Good of faith/wisdom/spiritual truth.
 - Eating = Taking these gifts from the Lord into ourselves.
- Use of Holy Supper:
 - Instituted by the Lord that through it there might be conjunction of the Church with heaven, and thus with the Lord (specifically with the Lord God Jesus Christ in His Divine Human).
 - Because of this it is the holiest act of worship.
 - Conjunction of the Lord through the Holy Supper ONLY takes place with those who are in the good of love to, and of faith in, the Lord from the Lord.
- The importance of correspondences: The angels with us perceive what the bread and wine correspond to.
- Why do we wait until we are an adult to take the Holy Supper?

Teacher idea: Having the children act out the parts of the Holy Supper can be very powerful, as long as they do it with reverence. Breaking and blessing pita bread or crackers and serving these to others brings a sphere of love to the Lord and towards the neighbor, as does pouring and offering grape juice. Begin by deciding on blessings to say for the bread, for the juice, and for the child taking part. Then choose a final blessing for everyone to say when the whole process is finished. Practice these, then split the group up in 3s or 4s. Let each child take turns being like the minister, with quiet voices. When all have had a turn, bring the group back together to say the final blessing in unison.

Children could even sing songs!

Wednesday, July 24: Rites of the New Church

What are some of the special worship events, or rites, of our church? These are times when people are directing their thoughts and feelings toward a particular use. Often these key people have important things to say in front of the Lord and all the group who are there. Perhaps they are making a promise to try to serve the Lord in their lives, to be good New Church people, to love each other forever, or to serve as a minister for the Lord. Has anyone in your family been part of any of these rites?

(These rites and the services that include them can all be found in our Liturgy. If you don't have access to one, email Julie and she'll send you copies.)

- Betrothal.
- Marriage.
- Blessing on a marriage.
- Inauguration and ordination.
- Home dedication.
- Confession of faith.
- Memorial service/Interment/Resurrection service.

Possible areas of focus and projects:

- One suggestion is to go quickly over each of these rites, but then pick one to focus on. It might be useful to focus on one of the rituals that may be less familiar:

What is a betrothal?

- What is a home dedication?
- What is a confession of faith?

- Why would someone want to take part in a rite? How does it feel?
- What promises would you hear if you were at one of these services? A writing project using beautiful paper could become a treasure for the future, preserving the child's vows of love and faithfulness.

Teacher idea: you could connect with the recitation's statement about the importance of keeping the Lord's Word front and center in the children's lives, by making a box or scroll or plaque with the two Great Commandments quote on or in it. This could be hung at the family's front door, for a reminder of what is important. A piece of jewelry with the word Love written on it, would carry a similar idea as it hangs near the child's heart.