

For Noé, Malo,  
Jules, and Lucie

M.R.

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# The Sacrament of Baptism

## BECOMING PART OF GOD'S FAMILY


### IMPRIMATUR

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## What is Baptism?

Baptism is the sacrament that helps you become a Christian and enter into the family of Christians, called the **Church**.

For **Catholics**, Baptism is like a second birth. The water of Baptism is a sign of dying with Christ and then rising again with him into new life. It marks the start of a new life with God. All Christians, must be baptized.

Words in **bold** are key words and are defined on pages 60–61.

### What is a sacrament?

A sacrament is a sign of grace that allows Catholics to see and welcome the saving love of God. During the celebration of a sacrament, specific actions are performed and special words are spoken. Baptism is the first sacrament we receive..

# Jesus, the friend of God

Jesus was from Galilee. He was Jewish and lived in Nazareth with people who were waiting for the coming of the Messiah, the messenger of God.

As people listened to him and watched how he lived, they realized that this man was not like other men.

Jesus spoke of God as a friend, as a father, as his Father. He announced that the **Kingdom of God** is near.

He paid attention to little children, the weak, the sick. He gave courage to those who were hopeless. He welcomed those who were rejected.

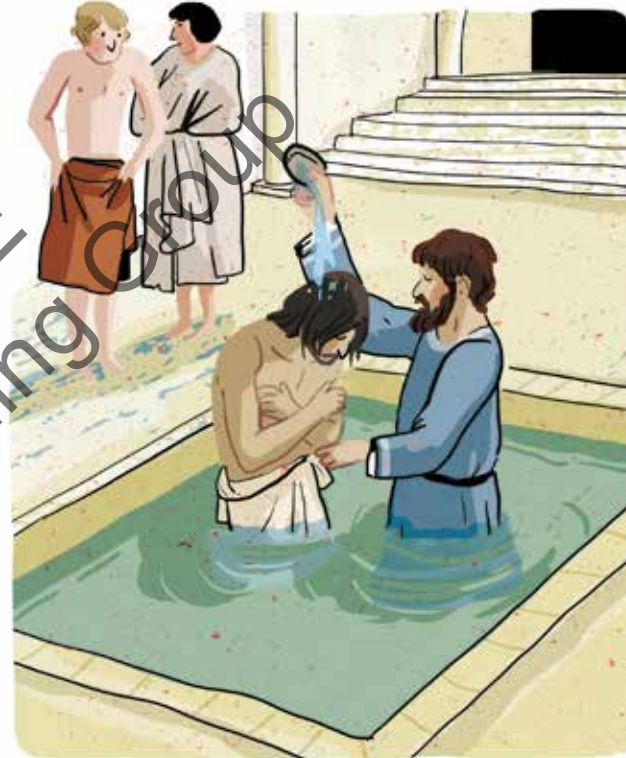
He shared the love of God with everyone around him!



# The first Christian Baptisms

After Jesus' **Resurrection**, his friends told others about his life, Death, and Resurrection.

They welcomed all who believed that Jesus died and rose again. They baptized with water "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." In other words, they baptized in the name of God: the Father who is the **Creator**; Jesus, who is both truly God and truly human; and the Holy Spirit, who is the breath of God's love.



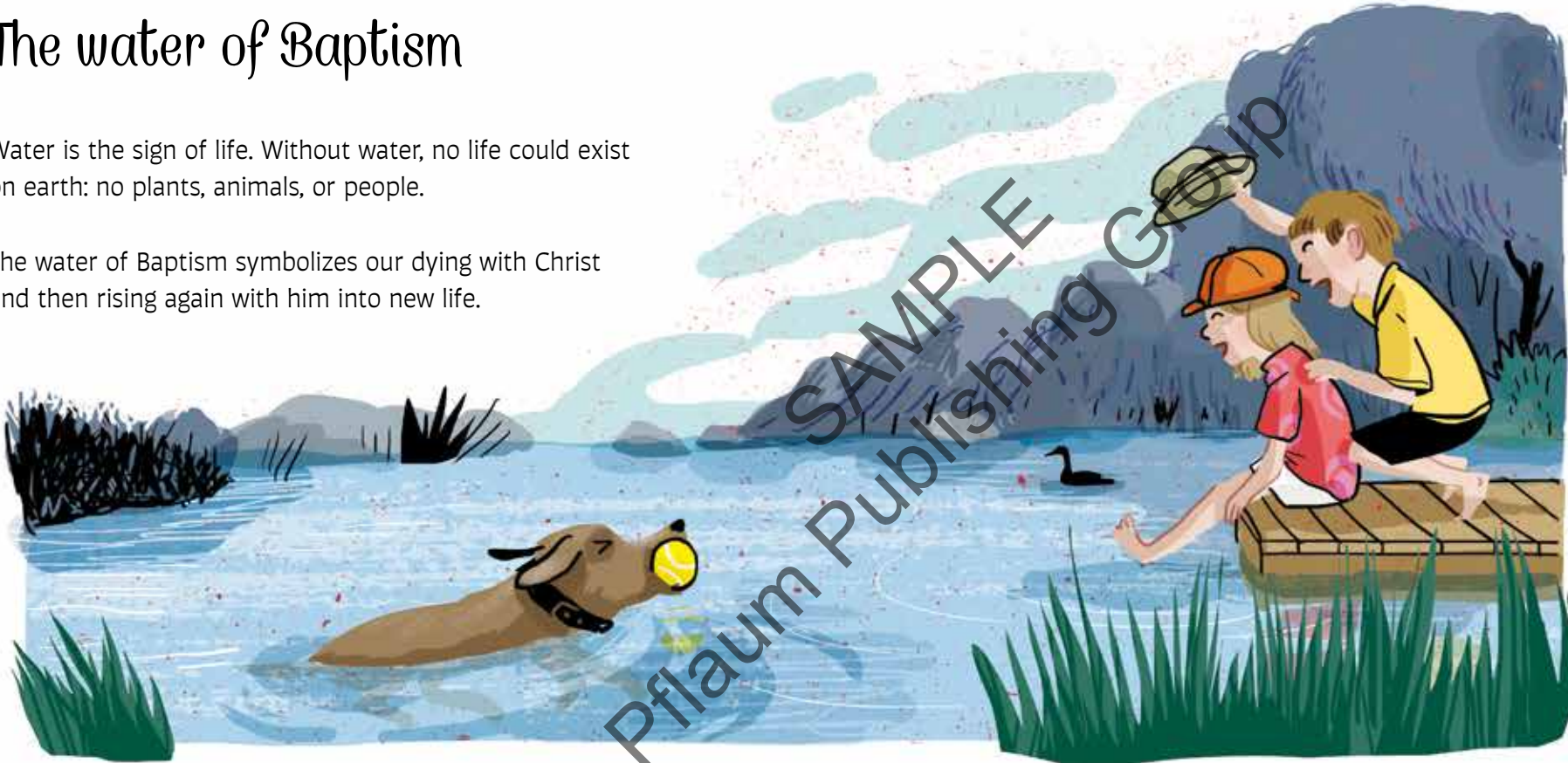
## A very old sign

In ancient religions, water was used as a sign of purification. Some **Jewish people** of Jesus' day also used water to show that they were turning to God. Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. For Christians, Baptism has a new meaning: it is the beginning of a new, eternal life with God.

# The water of Baptism

Water is the sign of life. Without water, no life could exist on earth: no plants, animals, or people.

The water of Baptism symbolizes our dying with Christ and then rising again with him into new life.



## What is a symbol?

*A symbol is like poetry. It's a way of making things understandable in an imaginative way. To explain what happens at the time of Baptism, Christians use three symbols: water, oil, and light.*

# Questions about Baptism



**What if someone has questions about God?  
Can they be baptized?**

We can never know everything about God, but we can choose to trust him. Faith doesn't exist without risk or moments of uncertainty, but we can count on God, who already loves us even with our doubts.

**Can anyone be baptized?**

Yes. Whether a person is rich or poor, young or old, lives in Africa or America, anyone can be baptized.



**Is Baptism magic?**

Not at all. God doesn't decide for us or take away our free will. We are not God's puppets. God wants us to be free, because only those who are free can truly love.

**Does God love those who aren't baptized?**

Of course! God's love does not stop at the borders of our families or our churches. God does not look at who is baptized before loving them. God's love is infinite, and it reaches everyone. But in Baptism, we answer "yes" to the love of God. This gives God great joy!



# Key Words

**Bible.** The book that tells the story of God's interaction with humanity.

**Catholic.** This word means "universal" in Greek. The **catholic church** (lowercased) is the family of all Christian believers. But the **Catholic Church** (capitalized) recognizes the Pope as its head, the bishops as successors of Jesus' Apostles, and all believers with them as members of the Body of Christ.

**Church.** The family of Christians. The same word also denotes the building where Christians gather to pray and worship.

**Communion of Saints.** The family of God's friends of yesterday and today. To believe in the Communion of Saints is to believe that the friends of God are still alive in Heaven, thanks to Jesus' Death on the Cross.

**covenant.** To make a covenant is to make a special agreement with someone, to be united in a special relationship with them.

**Creator.** God created the sky, the earth, and everything that lives in it. The Bible tells us that men and women are specially created "in God's image."

**disciples.** Friends of Jesus; those who follow him.

**eternal life.** The mysterious life after death; endless life, with God, in love.

**faith.** To have faith in God is to believe and trust in God in a special way.

**forgiveness for sins.** Sin is what separates us from God and other people. This stops love and prevents love. To ask for forgiveness for sin is to ask God to pardon us for the wrong we have done.

**Gospel.** The Good News of God's love announced by Jesus Christ. The Gospels are books that tell about this Good News. They are part of the Bible.

**Jewish people.** These are the people of the Bible with whom God has made a covenant. The religion of the Jewish people is Judaism. Jesus, his family, and his friends were Jewish.

**Kingdom of God.** The special phrase Jesus used to describe the kind of life that God wants for us, a world full of justice and love.

**Original Sin.** The sin of the first human beings and the loss of grace their sin caused.

**Orthodox Christians.** Christians who have been separated from the Catholic Church since the eleventh century. They share many of the same beliefs as Catholics.

**Priest.** An ordained man who serves a community of Catholics. His role includes celebrating Mass and the sacraments,

as well as explaining the Bible and living a good Christian life as an example to others.

**Protestants.** Christians who have been separated from the Catholic Church since the sixteenth century. They share some of the same beliefs as Catholics.

**resurrection of the body.** To believe that our body and soul are not finally destroyed by death but one day will be reunited with God forever in Heaven.

**Resurrection.** The passage of Jesus from death to life on the third day after his Crucifixion. The Resurrection is a central truth of our faith.

**sanctifying grace.** The grace that heals our sinful human nature by giving us a share in the divine life of the Trinity. Sanctifying grace was earned for us by the suffering and Death of Jesus Christ. It enables us to live as God's children.