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Family Formation Sacramental Preparation

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Sacraments, the Bible,  
and Prayer

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First Reconciliation: Lesson 4

MEMORY PRAYER:

Be sure to practice the portion of the Act of Contrition that has been assigned.

FOCUS:

To show your child God's tools that help us to follow Him.

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

Bible; pictures of your child's Baptism; your child's Baptismal gown and/or candle, if available; pen or pencil; crayons

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

1. Parents: read through this lesson.
2. Light a candle to remind you that Jesus is there with you.
3. Pray, asking the Lord to bless your lesson time.

Saint Ignatius of Loyola

Ignatius was given the name Inigo at birth. He was the youngest child in a family of eight sons and three daughters. He lived a very wealthy life in Spain. He grew up to be a very skilled soldier, but he was a very prideful man. During a battle, Inigo's leg was very badly wounded. He had to lay in bed for many months to recover. During this time, he read a book about the lives of saints. He was so touched by the people who loved and served God that he decided to turn away from his pride and desire for wealth and to follow Christ.

He went to confession and promised to lead a life of penance and devotion to God. His name was changed to Ignatius, and he began to study and teach others about God. He was later ordained a priest and, with six other men, formed a religious order called the Society of Jesus.



# LESSON 4

## Sacraments, the Bible, and Prayer

### Sacraments

In Lesson 2, you learned about the Commandments, God's way of guiding us to holiness. Another way God gives us direction and grace in life is through the **sacraments** that we receive through the Catholic Church. Jesus began the sacraments when He was on Earth and asked us to continue them. The sacraments, which are outward signs and actions (things we can see, touch, taste, hear, and smell), give God's blessings and grace to us, His people. In the Bible, we can read that Jesus used things like water, oil, bread and wine, and simple prayers and rituals to convey His love for us. The Catholic Church recognizes the seven sacraments instituted by Jesus:

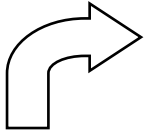


Baptism  
Reconciliation  
Eucharist  
Confirmation  
Matrimony (Marriage)  
Holy Orders  
Anointing of the Sick

Sacraments are gifts from God. They are special actions through which God's life is strengthened in us. The purposes of the sacraments are:

- ◆ to make people holy
- ◆ to build up the Body of Christ
- ◆ to give worship to God

The first sacrament, Baptism, has always been the first step in receiving God's life. You can read in Acts 2:38 how Peter called people to repent of their sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus. Most Catholics are baptized as infants, but no matter what their age, when someone is baptized, their original sin and all personal sin is washed away, they are accepted into the body of Christ (the Church), and are given the promise of heaven. The newly baptized person wears a white gown to show that he or she is a new creation in Christ.



Parents: Take the time now to show your children pictures of their Baptism. If possible, take out their candle and gown. Explain that these are all symbols of what happens in the sacrament of Baptism. Make sure you tell them that they became a child of God at Baptism!

This year, you will be preparing to receive two sacraments. The first is the sacrament of Reconciliation (sometimes called Penance or Confession). In the **sacrament of Reconciliation**, we experience God's great love for us through His mercy. We see that we have sinned, and now we ask God to forgive us. The second sacrament you will prepare to receive is the **Holy Eucharist**. The Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Jesus. We can also call this receiving **Communion**. We are only baptized once in our whole life time, but can celebrate the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist over and over again.



We prepare for Reconciliation first because we want to have a clean heart to receive Jesus in Holy Communion. Think about coming to your own table for a meal. You would not want to come to dinner with dirty hands, would you? Well, you certainly do not want to come to God's table with a *dirty heart!* Frequently receiving the sacrament of Reconciliation is a habit we want to establish so that our hearts are always ready to receive Jesus in the Eucharist.

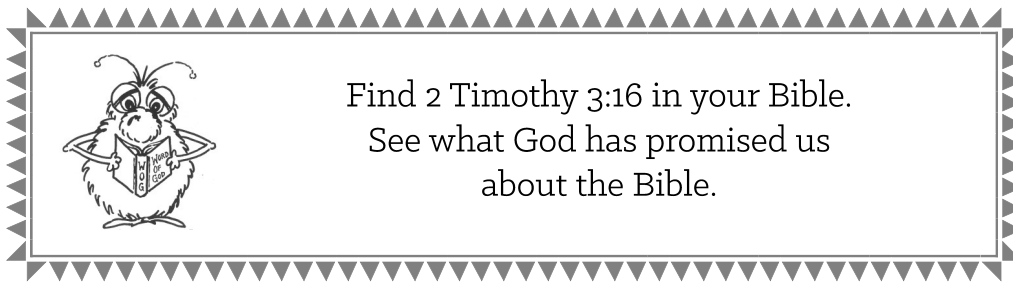
So far, we have learned about special ways and directions God has given us to stay close to Him:

1. the Ten Commandments
2. Jesus' new commandments
3. the sacraments

Can you think of one of the ways that we have learned about these?

## The Bible

The **Bible** is God's written message for us. Because it is God's Word, it is an awesome source of direction for our lives. God, the Holy Spirit, inspired people to write the Bible. By reading God's Word often, you get to know God much better. By knowing Him better, you will be better able to figure out how He wants you to live your life. The Bible is full of great wisdom that tells you God's will.

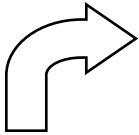


## Prayer

The Bible is also full of one more important ingredient for a strong Christian: **prayer**. When we pray to God, we are talking to Him. Whole books of the Bible are devoted to prayer, like the Psalms. Through prayer, we are sometimes better able to see God's will for us.



As children of God, we want to love God by obeying Him and pleasing Him with our thoughts, words, and actions. We know God's will for us through His Commandments. When we receive the sacraments, we receive God's grace, and when we read His Word and pray, we come to know Him better.



Parents: Look at the picture on the following page, and write the names of the seven sacraments on the stepping stones. Ask your child if they have ever stepped on rock chips or pebbles to get to a gate in a fence. It is often difficult and can hurt. But, if they use the smooth stones that lead directly to the gate, it does not hurt at all. Explain to them that God has given us smooth stepping stones, called the sacraments, to help us on our path to the gates of heaven. God loves us so much that He wants to help us. These sacraments are based on the firm foundation of the Catholic Church! Have your child color the sheet.

