

TO BE A CHILD OF GOD

(Sacraments, Administration Brothers)

Holy Baptism, Holy Sealing and Holy Communion are the three sacraments which, in accordance with the teachings of Jesus, are administered in the New Apostolic Church. Sacraments are Holy Acts whereby God makes a covenant with people. They are gifts of love from God towards people, through which they become and remain children of God. When we explain to the children (with the aid of pictures and stories) how these Sacraments are dispensed and administered, they should understand what special, festive moments these are. (The children will not yet fully comprehend the meaning of these functions of what 'sin' is or does). It is prudent to discuss the Holy Sacraments, one at a time, before or after such an event takes place in the congregation.

The Administration Brothers are messengers and servants of God. We respect them. They are the caretakers of the souls. They pray for us and carry us in great love. Priests and the Rectors of the congregation are the first Administration Brothers with whom a child becomes acquainted. If a child is met with love and understanding, a trusting relationship will develop. In time this relationship will also carry over to higher ministries. A child cannot yet fully grasp the order of the ministries. Nevertheless, the children can very well perceive what the servants of our Heavenly Father feel towards the Chief Apostle and the Apostles.

The children perceive how our Heavenly Father draws close to man during the Holy Baptism, the Holy Sealing and Holy Communion. Trust and love towards the Administration Brothers should be awakened and fostered in the children.

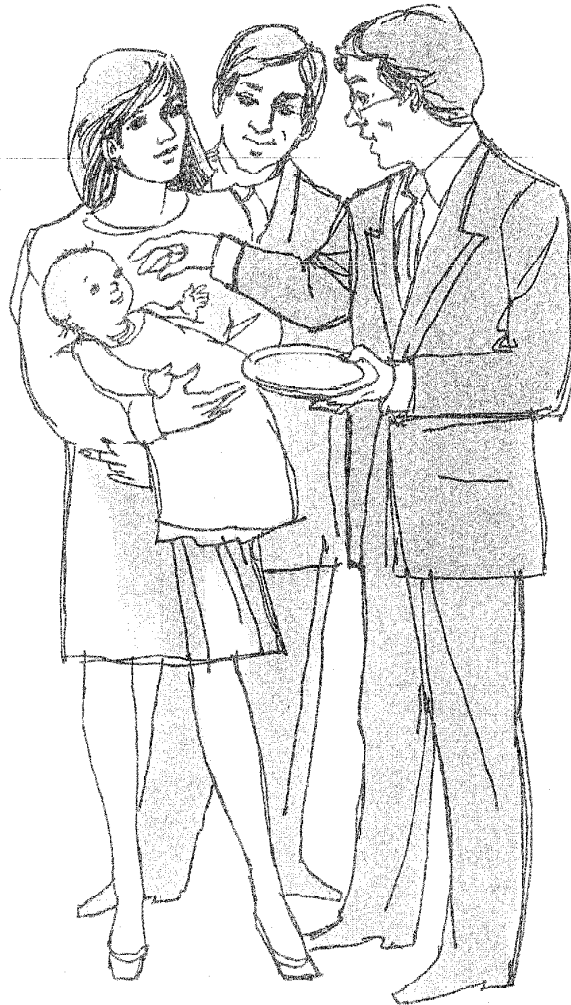
- ▶ **Holy Baptism**
- I. 6 ▶ Martina's brother, Sam, is to be baptized. Martina witnesses all the festive preparations. Her mother explains the meaning of Holy Baptism to her.

Let us examine three steps of the Holy Baptism:

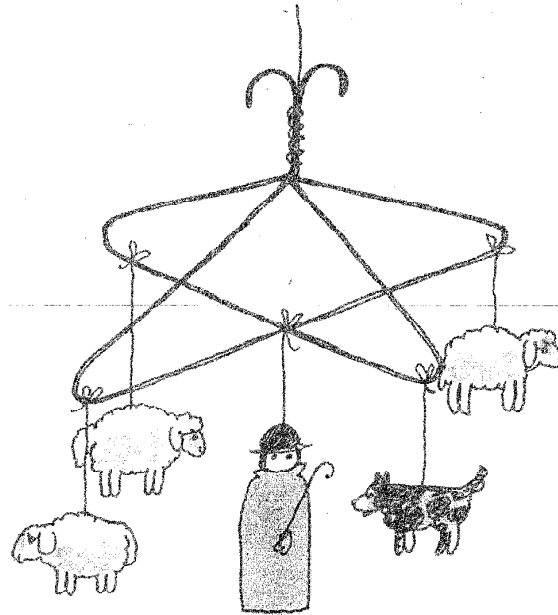
1. The parents stand in front of the altar with the infant and the officiant. The parents make a vow to our Heavenly Father to care for the child and to explain to the child all about our Heavenly Father.
2. The officiant holds a chalice in one hand. He blesses the water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. He then dips the index finger of the other hand into the chalice and makes the sign of the cross three times on the forehead of the child and says: "Sam, I baptize you in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost."
3. The officiant places his hand on the forehead of the infant and prays (Baptism blessing).

The children talk about baptisms that they have experienced. Perhaps photos of their own Holy Baptism can be displayed. Also the chronicles of the congregation could contain fitting photos.

In many regions, a special baptismal gown is worn for the occasion. A doll could be dressed up in festive garments and the children involve themselves in acting out a baptism. The children take the part of the parents and the instructor can act the part of the officiant, while saying the proper words. Explain to the children that this is only a demonstration, not an actual sacramental act.



- ▶ It would be prudent to speak about this subject when a baptism is due to be performed in the congregation. If possible, the children should sit in a spot from where they can observe the entire sacrament.
 - ▶ The children can make a little gift for the infant so that they feel involved in the Holy Baptism.
- II. 7 ▶ We can sing, "God is everywhere" or #422.



▶



Holy Sealing

I. 8



Sam will soon be Sealed with the Holy Spirit. Martina's mother explains to her what this means.

V. 43 &
V. 44



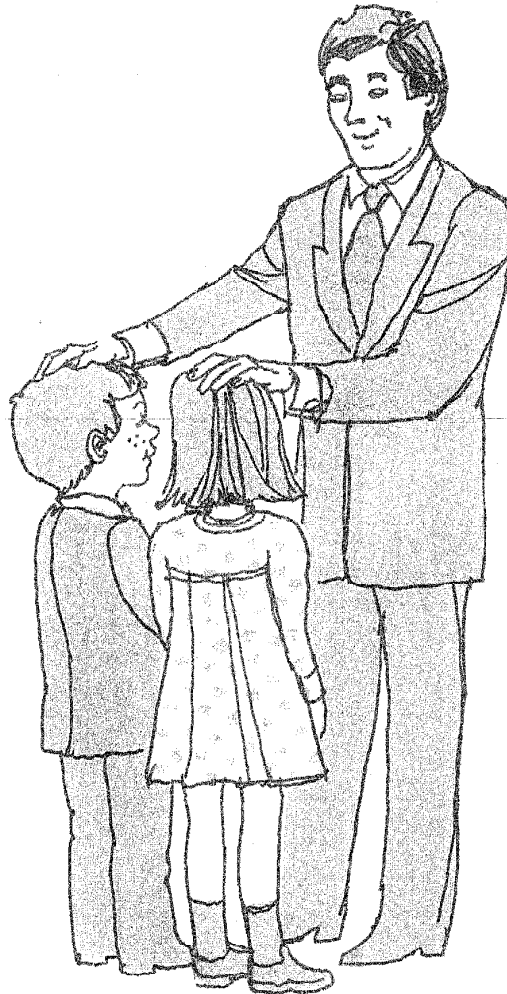
We look at a picture where an Apostle is praying and laying his hands on two children, thereby administers the Holy Spirit. Through this, something wonderful happens. Invisibly the life of (Holy Spirit) God moves into the soul of the Sealed one. The Sealed one has now become a Child of God.



The children should learn to know their Apostle. They should be shown photos of him. The instructor can tell the children of all the preparations in a congregation to receive their Apostle.



We can sing the song: "Let your hearts be ever joyful."
#501.



Holy Communion

The Lord Jesus establishes Holy Communion.

Jesus sits with His disciples at a large table. They are gathered for a feast. They are happy and feel that the Lord Jesus loves them. He serves them bread and wine. He says that soon He must suffer and die. Then He will again return to His Father in heaven. He admonishes the disciples to come together often and celebrate Holy Communion in remembrance of Him.

The story can be acted out with puppets or other play material.

Together we break bread and eat it.

V. 43 &
V. 44

We look at and talk about a picture in which a Priest dispenses Holy Communion. The teacher describes the celebration of Holy Communion. All together we pray the Lord's Prayer, the Priestly Ministry pronounces the Absolution, and the wafer is consecrated. During the celebration of Holy Communion, we remember Jesus and behave ourselves accordingly (following to be adapted to local circumstances). In an orderly fashion, with folded hands, and without pushing, we go one behind the other to the front. We look towards the front and are ready to receive Holy Communion. We lay our hands, one into the other. When we receive the wafer, we look into the Priest's eyes and say "Amen." Immediately, we eat the wafer and return quietly to our seat. There, we thank our Heavenly Father in a short prayer.



VI. 15

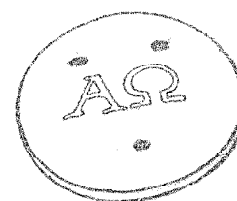
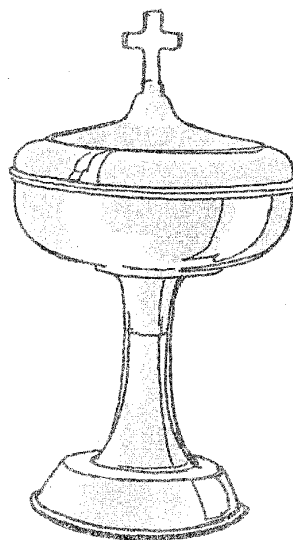


We look at and speak about a chalice filled with wafers in the Beginners' Sunday School. We explain that the wafer is the bread and the three dots represent the wine.



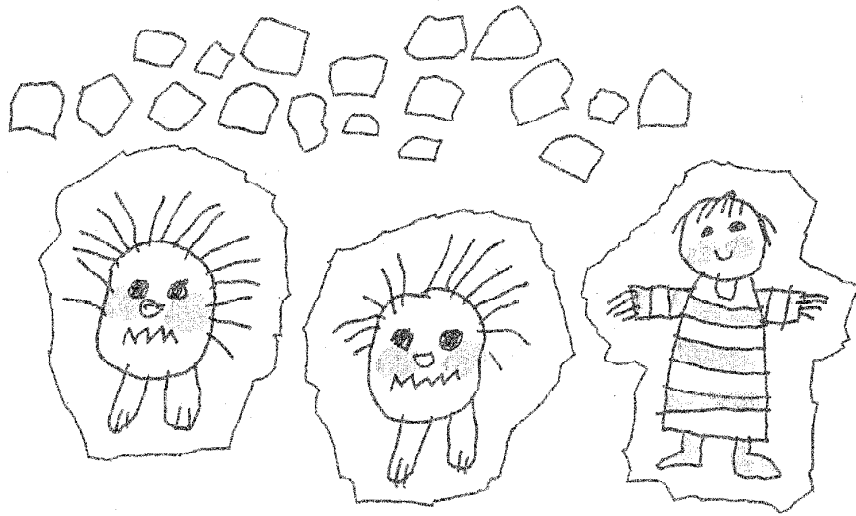
We construct some wafers out of paper with the children and act out how to receive the communion.





My Priest pays me a visit

Miriam is looking forward to the evening. She is allowed to stay up a little longer than usual. Her mother tells her that the Priest will pay them a visit this evening. Miriam knows the Priest well. She sees him every Sunday in church. He always wears a black suit. Miriam watches how her mother prepares everything for the visit. Suddenly, the girl disappears into her room. Beaming, she re-appears after a while with a drawing and a picture book. She lays both beside the Bible on the table. Finally, the long wait is over. The Priest has arrived. This time, he does not wear a black suit. Miriam feels a little shy. The Priest greets her so warmly that she becomes much braver. She gives him the drawing. He thanks her and smiles at her happily. Miriam explains to him what she has drawn, and then they chat about kindergarten while they look at the picture book. Much too soon, it is time to go to bed. Happily the girl wishes everyone a good night. They all kneel and pray together. Miriam can still hear the adults speaking and soon she falls asleep.



- ▶ The children explain how they experience a family visit.
- ▶ Each child makes a drawing for his/her Priest and presents it to him after the service.
- ▶ We talk further about other Administration Brothers in our church. For this purpose photos from the sacristy could be used. Maybe the Rector will be invited for the next Beginners' Sunday School lesson.
- ▶ In the Our Family monthly publication we look for pictures of our Chief Apostle. If we should have extra copies or old issues, we can even cut out the pictures, paste them onto construction paper and design a nice frame around it.