

Lesson 43

Question

What are the sacraments or ordinances?

Answer

Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Memory Verse

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. Rom 6:4

And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." Luke 22:19-20

Main Idea

The sacraments were established by God, for His church, to be a spiritual help to believers.

Lesson Outline

Open in prayer

Introduction: Introduce question 43: "What are the sacraments or ordinances?" Explain to the children that these big words describe things that are done in the church, among the gathered people of God. Tell them that some churches use the word sacrament, some use the word ordinance, and explain which one your church uses.

The sacraments are baptism and the Lord's Supper. God has given these sacraments to his people to encourage and strengthen them. Explain to the children that the sacraments do not give anyone faith; they are outward signs that someone is a part of God's family.

Activity: This will be a dramatic reading. Choose one person to be John the Baptist, one person to be Jesus, one person to be the voice of God the Father, one person to be Matthew, and one person to be Luke.

Pass out Bibles to all the children. Ask them to turn first to Matthew 3:13-17. John should read John's line. Jesus should read what is attributed to Jesus. Tell the person who reading the voice of God to hide out of site, but not out of earshot. Matthew should read everything that isn't in quotes.

After this passage is finished, John may sit back down and the voice of God can come out of hiding. Ask Luke and Jesus to turn to Luke 22:14—20. Again, Luke will read everything that is not in quotes, and Jesus will read whatever Jesus speaks. If he is willing, Jesus should read his part lying down, propped on one arm, which was a common Middle Eastern way to eat.

When they finish, give a round of applause.

Lesson: Read Matthew 28:16—20 and Luke 22:14-23. Provide Bibles for the children to read along.

Explain that an "ordinance" is a rule or command. Tell the children that lots of organizations have ordinances. Illustrate this point by explaining that a Girl Scout observes the ordinances or rules of the Scouts when she joins by pledging her allegiance to God and her country. Ask the children if they can think of any other groups that have ordinances.

Ask the children: Who commanded the church to baptize and celebrate the Lord's Supper? In other words, who established the ordinances of the church? It was Jesus! He commanded his church to go and baptize, and he also commanded his people to celebrate the Lord's Supper in remembrance of him. Highlight for the children that the sacraments are not human creations, but were instituted by Jesus for the church.

Remind the children that the sacraments are intended to be for those who have faith; they will not give faith.

Ask the children why they think Jesus instituted the sacraments. Was it to keep Christians busy? Or to make sure they're clean?

Tell the children that God knew his people would sometimes struggle to continue to trust in his promises and remember all that he achieved in Christ. God in his kindness established regular ways by which Christians can have their faith in Jesus strengthened during gathered worship.

Explain to the children that the sacraments are not just about remembering. Because they are the Word of God in visible forms, the Holy Spirit works through them to cultivate faith and encourage glad obedience. 'The sacraments help people grow in their confidence and trust in God. Explain to the children that the sacraments are two of the ways God, through the Holy Spirit, sanctifies his people.

Ask the children to think about the different senses involved when experiencing baptism or the Lord's Supper. There are words spoken, there are visible signs, there's bread and wine to taste, and there is the washing of water to feel. Ask the children if they think it is significant that the sacraments involve so many senses. God understands that the meaning of the sacraments can more easily be understood when apprehended through various senses.

Tell the children that, as we will learn in future lessons, the sacraments are signs pointing to Christ's death and resurrection on our behalf. We must always look beyond the sign to the thing it is pointing to. If you got excited about baptism and the Lord's Supper but never realized that Christ died for your sins, the signs of the sacraments will have been of no use to you.

Recite: Finish by helping the children commit Question 43 and the answer to memory.