

JOURNEY TO BAPTISMAL LIVING

NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE CATECHUMENATE

Leader's Guide

Ecumenical Rites for the Adult Catechumenal Process

Rites of the Adult Catechumenate, revised and adapted from the published rites of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, The Episcopal Church, The United Methodist Church, The Anglican Church of Canada, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and the Rite of Christian Initiation of the Roman Catholic Church in the US. A group of scholars has reviewed and adapted these rites for use by Journey to Baptismal Living: NAAC in official training and offers them to congregations as a resource for their own use.

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Prologue

Within these pages you will find the result of several years of prayerful and deliberative conversation among members of a *Journey to Baptismal Living* working group. Together, we have sought to develop from the richness of materials available across several Christian traditions (Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Anglican Church in Canada, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and The United Methodist Church) a single resource at once fit to our shared understanding of the purposes of these rites, recognizable by our various traditions, and useful in the training sessions we offer.

All of our traditions already share mutual recognition of the sacrament of baptism as offered by each other. We hope in offering these rites to be of mutual help to one another across our traditions as many of us are more fully claiming or recovering the roles of the whole of the congregation, through prayer enacted and spoken in corporate worship on the Lord's Day, to support those making a journey toward baptism.

Together we understand the process of becoming part of the community of the baptized as a journey led by the Holy Spirit and so never entirely predictable and certainly never programmatic. At the same time, as others before us have done, we recognize several distinct stages or thresholds in this journey. The Spirit draws people from no relationship to the Church toward some initial interest in learning more about it with us. Then, as they learn with us, the Spirit draws some of them to seek baptism and the fullness of life in Christ among us through and after a more intense period of spiritual preparation.

Each of the rites offered here provides an opportunity for the congregation to offer its prayers for those who seek to cross these thresholds and take up the work of these stages among us. We receive as hearers (or catechumens) those who are responding to a call to "come and hear" to discern whether and how the Spirit may be moving them toward a life of discipleship to Jesus. At some point along the way, some hearers become ready to take the more intensive formation in the life and way of Jesus with us. We welcome these as baptismal candidates, most typically at the beginning of Lent. And throughout the time of more intensive formation, there are weekly occasions for examination, intercession, and healing in public worship, in some traditions referred to as "The Scrutinies." These are offered so these candidates may know and feel themselves surrounded by the love and delivering power of Jesus with the whole congregation as they finalize their journey toward baptism into the life of the Triune God and the living body of Jesus Christ.

As we have developed these rites, we sought to be attentive to several things at once. We looked across our traditions for words that best align with and point to the core of the actions most appropriate for the rites in question. For those rites that may happen on particular Sundays in the liturgical year (especially during the Sundays in Lent), we sought to draw on images and ideas from the scriptures to be read that day so the ministry of the word and rite for the day are mutually reinforcing. Generally, we found one or more of the existing texts across our traditions apt or adaptable for what we were seeking. Occasionally we found ourselves working together in our regular online meetings either to tweak existing language or write new language we believed may be more compelling or more to the point. Sometimes we brought in as consultants others who had been part of producing some of these rites to help us answer our questions about them and gain a deeper understanding of the logic and the history that informed them. Always, we engaged our work with a deep sense of reverence for one another, for the gifts our traditions had already brought forth, and for the differing ways our various traditions or individual congregations in them may use or perhaps further adapt our work to suit their contexts more fully.

Finally, we recognized the need to present these resources in multiple ways, depending on who would be involved in using them. In some contexts, there may be a sizable number of people preparing for baptism, and a catechumenal process developed just for them. In others, there may also be a separate process for those who have already been baptized. And in many smaller congregations, especially among Protestants, there may be a need to combine both the process and the rites for them into one. This is why we have divided this resource into three distinct parts: For Those Not Baptized, Adaptations for those Making Affirmation, and Combined Rites for Those Preparing for Baptism and Affirmation.

With shared love in our one Lord, Jesus Christ, and shared passion for the work of preparing and supporting those who seek to live his way with us, we offer our work and these rites.

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Terminology

For the rites themselves

Receiving Hearers/Catechumens

We chose the language of receiving because we found “welcome” to be too vague. It says both too little and too much. What specifically are they being welcomed into and welcomed to do? What role does the community play? The language of receiving clarifies the answers to these questions.

Calling to Baptism (and Enrollment)

Enrollment is too limited as a title for this rite since the core of the rite is not enrollment, but the community calling the seekers to a more intensive time of preparation and to express their desire to enter into it. We have composed this version so Enrollment may be omitted in traditions that do not have this practice.

Rite of Healing and Deliverance from Evil

Rite of Healing and Deliverance from Evil seems clear since everyone in the community, whether baptized or not, is in need of repentance. We prefer this over Scrutiny because in that term it is not clear who is being scrutinized by whom.

For the participants

Seekers: People entering the process

“Inquirers” is another good term, but “seekers” seemed to be more widely used today.

Hearers: People who have been received

“Catechumens” is the more traditional term, but the parallel with “seekers” seems valuable.

Baptismal Candidates: People who have been called to Baptism

We encourage you to use the full term “baptismal candidates” to avoid possible confusion.

For ministers in the rites

For the sake of consistency, we have used the terminology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to describe participants. Please adapt to fit your tradition.

Presiding minister (PM): Priest, pastor, minister

Assisting minister (AM): Deacon or lay assistant

If no such person is present then the PM assumes those words and functions as well.

Catechist: The person primarily in charge of catechesis of the participants.

If the pastor is the principle catechist, then an appropriate layperson assisting the pastor should carry out the catechist role in the rites.

Sponsor: A lay member of the congregation who will walk with the hearer through the process all the way to Baptism and possibly beyond, into mystagogy.

Part I: For Those Not Baptized

A Rite for Receiving Hearers

Video: <https://youtu.be/C7BPnarZRwQ>

green italics indicates discussion of symbols for that portion of the rite.

gold italics indicates source of the portion of the rite

red indicates performance directions/rubrics

Greeting – at the entrance

The primary symbol for the receiving hearers is the community itself. No matter how many times unbaptized persons have attended worship, it is only now that they enter into a formal relationship with Christ and the church. Beginning with a greeting at an appropriate entrance to the worship space marks the welcome of the community to those seeking to establish a formal relationship.

What requires sensitive discernment is where in the space the act of Greeting should occur, especially if the worship space is not the familiar rectangular shape. In that space the doors in the rear or the space at the back of the main aisle would be appropriate. In a more circular or fan-shaped space, wherever the seekers would experience themselves as standing at the threshold of the community at worship would be the appropriate space.

Before the service begins, the person(s) being welcomed, the sponsor(s), and a catechist gather somewhere near the threshold of the assembly but still outside. If the pastor is the catechist, a lay person involved in the catechumenal process should take this role in the rite.

The service opens as usual for the denomination with music and/or the presiding minister (PM) greeting the assembly.

An assisting minister (AM) indicates seekers have gathered at the threshold of the assembly and asks everyone to turn toward them. The unbaptized seekers may knock on the doors.

AM: (addressing the community)

The Holy Spirit has led these people here today seeking to hear the Word of God with us. Let us all turn toward *(them)* to welcome them here.

The PM moves to the appropriate threshold of the assembly—along with the assisting minister (AM) and maybe a few people from the last few seats whom s/he asks to open the doors if there are any.

PM: (addressing each seeker in turn) What is your name?

Seeker: (states name).

PM: What are you seeking?

Seeker: (responds in their own words, or words such as “to know Christ,” “new life in Jesus,” “to hear God’s word”)

When all have answered, the PM addresses them all.

PM: In the name of Christ this community receives you here today.

AM: Come, join us in God's household.

Instruction to the Hearers and Mutual Promises – in the front or center of the community

The primary symbol in this part of the rite is the community which calls the seekers to their first commitment and promises them mutual support.

The seekers are escorted with sponsors and catechist up to the front/center where they stand, facing the community with their sponsors behind them and the catechist to the side. A song or refrain of welcome/reception would be appropriate.

AM: (gestures for all to be seated)

PM: (standing in front, addressing the seekers)

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

You have been drawn to Christ's light,
and the way of the Gospel lies open before you.

Journey with us and learn to trust Christ. Grow to believe in him with all your heart.
Jesus will show you how to love God and to love your neighbor and will lead you to the fullness of life.

Adapted from Come to the Waters¹

And so, I ask each of you:

PM: (addressing each seeker in turn)

PM: NN, Do you turn to Jesus?

Seeker: I turn to Jesus.

PM: NN, Do you seek Jesus as your Teacher? Seeker: I seek Jesus.

PM: NN, will you follow Jesus, the Way, the Truth, and the Life?

Seeker: I will follow Jesus.

Adapted from the Church of England's Common Worship.²

PM: (addressing the catechist)

NN, their teacher, do you affirm that these seekers sincerely wish to follow Christ?

Catechist: I do.

PM: (addressing the sponsors)

Sponsors, will you be the faithful companions of these seekers as they seek to grow in faith?

Sponsors: Yes, I will

PM: (turning to address the congregation)

Sisters and brothers, if you are also willing to help these seekers learn to follow Jesus, please answer: Yes, I am ready! (Music) to these questions.

PM: With the Spirit's help and God's grace, are you ready to help N&N come to know and follow Jesus?

All: **Yes, I am ready!** (Music)

PM: Are you ready to care for them with your prayers and fellowship?

All: **Yes, I am ready!** (Music)

PM: Are you ready to support them with the witness of your Christian life?

All: **Yes, I am ready!** (Music)

Questioning of the community inspired by the RCIA³.

PM: **(addressing the seekers)**

God's grace and mercy have brought you here and given you the desire to follow Jesus!

Today your teachers, sponsors, and the whole community have promised their support.

We welcome you now to hear with us the Word of God! **(applause)**

AM: Now receive the sign of Christ's way of life.

Marking with the Sign of the Cross

The primary symbols here are marking the seekers with the cross and the words both of the PM and the community. Choose a refrain that addresses the hearers directly as a call to come to know Christ. Marking with the sign of the cross is to prepare these persons to hear the Word of God with the community.

AM: **(addressing the sponsors)**

Sponsors, please stand beside your hearer and turn to face them, in order to mark them with the sign of the cross of Jesus Christ.

PM: Receive the sign of the cross on your forehead, +

It is Jesus Christ himself who now strengthens you with this sign of his love. Learn to know and follow him.

All: Musical refrain

PM: Receive the + cross on your ears, that you may hear the gospel of Christ, the word of life.

All: Music

PM: Receive the + cross on your eyes, that you may see the light of Christ, illumination for your way.

All: Music

PM: Receive the + cross on your lips, that you may sing the praise of Christ, the joy of the church.

All: Music

PM: Receive the + cross on your heart, that Christ may dwell there by faith.

All: Music

PM: Receive the + cross on your shoulders, that you may bear the gentle yoke of Christ.

All: Music

PM: Receive the + cross on your hands, that Christ's mercy may be known in your work.

All: Music

PM: Receive the + cross on your feet, that you may walk in the way of Christ in your faith journey.

All: Music

Adapted from the ELCA.⁴

PM: Let us stand and pray.

Merciful and most high God, creator and life-giver of all that is,
you have called all people from darkness into light,
from error into truth, from death into life.

We ask you: grant grace to [Names] and bless *them*.

Raise *them* by your Spirit.

Revive *them* by your word.

Form *them* by your hand.

Bring our *hearers* to the water of life,
and to the bread and cup of blessing,
that with all your people *they* may bear witness to your grace
and praise you forever through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**

Presentation of the Bible

The primary symbols here are the Bible presented and act of hearing from it with the community.

This is most appropriate immediately before the Scriptures are read in worship.

A catechist presents a Bible to each hearer/catechumen.

AM: Receive this Bible.

Learn and tell its stories.

Discover its mysteries.

Honor its commandments.

Rejoice in its good news.

May God's life-giving word, sweeter than honey, inspire you and make you wise.

Now join us in hearing God's Word.

From ELCA⁴

OR

God's word is like bread to our hearts; we cannot live without it.

God's word is like rain that comes down upon the earth;
it brings forth fruit in our lives.

Come now and share with us in hearing the word of the Lord.

[From ACC]⁵

AM may direct hearers, sponsors, and catechist to go to their seats. The service continues with the readings.

Dismissal of Hearers/Catechumens with Blessing

The act of dismissal continues the ancient practice of hearers/catechumens being sent for further learning, either before or immediately after the sermon, rather than remaining to participate in the Eucharist. They receive a full Trinitarian blessing from both the pastor and the congregation, as they are now understood to be attached to the whole body, though not yet fully members incorporate of it.

AM or lay person: (invites the hearers forward to face the community. The Presentation of the Bible, above, may occur here instead).

Pastor:

Candidates and sponsors,
go forth with the blessing of our Triune God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

Congregation:

and with our blessing. Amen.

The hearers and sponsors may be dismissed to their formational group for reflection and prayer about what has happened today and the journey that now lies ahead.

REFERENCES

1. "First Acceptance of the Gospel" from the service "Welcoming a Hearer" is taken from the book *Come to the Waters: Baptism and Our Ministry of Welcoming Seekers and Making Disciples* (page 110), by Daniel T. Benedict Jr. Copyright (c) 1996 by Discipleship Resources, Nashville, Tennessee. All rights reserved. Used by permission. p. 109.
2. "The Decision," *Common Worship*, pg. 353.
3. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: LTP, 1988, questioning of congregation inspired by #53.
4. *Evangelical Lutheran Worship: Leaders Desk Edition*, Copyright 2006, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Published by Augsburg Fortress Publishers. "Welcome to Baptism," pp.593-5.
5. Calling to be a Hearer, "Welcoming Inquirers," *Making Disciples*, Anglican Church of Canada, pg. 9, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>

BACKGROUND TO THE RITES OF INTENSE PREPARATION, 1

In the preaching of John the Baptist, the prophet admits that his baptism brings only the forgiveness of sins while the One who comes after him will baptize in water and the Spirit. In Christian initiation the believer is reborn as a living member of Christ's Body, transformed in heart, mind, and life in the Savior.

This transformation begins with repentance. In the synoptic gospels, Jesus's first proclamation is: "Repent and believe!"—two interconnected spiritual components of the journey to rebirth in Baptism and an ongoing life of discipleship.

The Presentation of the Creed and The Rites of Healing and Deliverance and are meant to help the baptismal candidates to fulfill both of Jesus's commands by helping them to encounter him as Lord and Savior in the midst of the community and to trust in him more deeply—all under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, these rites are meant to renew the Christian community as they accompany the baptismal candidates on their journey to the font and the Table.

The catechumenal rites of the North American mainline churches as adapted in the late 20th Century tended to emphasize presentations (Bible, Creed, Lord's Prayer). These composite rites attempt to reclaim the element of repentance as well through The Rites of Healing and Deliverance.

Practical Considerations

1. Where to enact the rites? The primary actor in these rites is the gathered community, this particular, local expression of Christ's Body. It is they who surround the baptismal candidates with their presence and prayers; they who recite the words of the Creed to the baptismal candidates; they who model Christian living as they share in reflection and prayer along with the baptismal candidates. These rites therefore should unfold in a place in the worship space where the baptismal candidates will best experience the community's supportive presence.

The role played by the catechists, sponsors, and clergy is also crucial. As the early Fathers say, these are the midwives in the Church's process of giving birth in the Spirit.

2. Touch is a crucial part of these rites in imitation of Jesus's practice in his ministry. The sponsors should usually have a hand touching the shoulder of the baptismal candidates throughout. The presiding minister may lay hands on the head of the candidate at the appropriate time. Whenever one lays on hands, do so reverently and slowly. Let the words spoken be memorized if possible.

Be mindful that some may have difficulty with touch. If someone cannot be comfortable with hands *upon* their head, then perhaps on both of their *shoulders* would work. As a last resort, hands *over* their head could still be powerful.

3. If at some point there is to be an anointing of the baptismal candidates' hands (another of Jesus's healing gestures), then the container of oil may be glass so all can see its contents. Place it in a prominent place from the beginning. Provide a towel available for the person anointing. The

baptismal candidates may rub their hands together to work the oil in (Mark 6:7,13.)

Anointing was also often part of the final rite of healing and deliverance to end that process with a powerful gesture.

4. In the ancient world over time the presentations were of many things: the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Psalms, the Gospels, etc. The oldest and most central is that of the Creed. In this action, baptismal candidates were entrusted with the core tenets of the biblical faith into which they were soon to be baptized. (Cf. 1 Corinthians 15: 1-8). The most common Sunday for the presentation of the Creed had initially been the 6th Sunday in Lent before it came to be observed as Palm Sunday. Today, Passion/Palm Sunday does not need another rite added to it.

We recommend Lent 2. The Gospels and other readings of the Revised Common Lectionary for Lent 2 work well with presenting the Creed. For some churches, that Sunday may be the Feast of the Transfiguration. Its gospel selection also works well with the theme of enlightenment.

5. To accompany and reinforce the Presentation of the Creed, the *Ephphetha* is another gospel gesture available. The same concerns about touch need to be considered here as well. (Cf. Mark 7, 31-37.)

6. Other Presentations might be combined with but not supplant the centrality of the Rite of Healing and Deliverance for a given Sunday if that is the custom of that denomination. Or they might be offered before Lent begins.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND FOR THE RITES OF INTENSE PREPARATION

Throughout the Western Church in antiquity those involved in the final stages of preparation for Christian initiation participated not only in catechetical sessions but in rituals of healing and deliverance. These were known as scrutinies because the community wished to see how God was at work in these people. The earliest phrase to describe how catechumens were growing in faith was to see whether they were “capable of hearing the Word.” With those catechumens who presented themselves for final preparation, the question was whether they had shown authentic repentance by putting that Word into practice. Were their minds, hearts, and behavior already being transformed?

Jesus and his disciples were not post-Enlightenment, post-scientific revolution, “modern” people. Mark’s gospel, in particular, highlights Jesus’s ministry of exorcism as integral to his healing work. When Jesus sends out the apostles in pairs to proclaim repentance, he also gives them power over evil spirits. They then go forth as itinerant preachers, laying on hands, curing the sick, and casting out demons. For Jesus, proclaiming and embodying the kingdom of God drawn near involved an entire transformation and deliverance— emotional, moral, and even physical— in the midst of a world and a society where the powers of evil were seen as concretely at work.

The ancient rituals of healing and deliverance therefore sometimes involved a physical examination of the baptismal candidates and always involved exorcistic elements. These would include multiple hand-layings and anointings to cast out demons and seal against their return, tasting of the salt of wisdom to dispel false ideas and infuse truth, and breathing in the baptismal candidates’ faces while commanding all evil to depart. Meanwhile the baptismal candidates were asked to examine their own lives to show proof, not that they were *worthy* of initiation, but that they were *ready*, and to deepen their relationship with Jesus in the Spirit. Readiness was discerned in how much they yearned for the waters of the font where they would experience rebirth and new life in the Spirit, breaking the chains of evil which bound them.

The post-Vatican II reformers took this ritual treasure-house from antiquity and tried to adapt it to a more modern understanding—even though they knew that in parts of Africa and Asia especially the process would be used with people with non-Western, pre-modern worldviews. (An optional RCIA rite as part of becoming a catechumen is the Renunciation of Fetishes and Amulets.) The clearest indication of their adaptation is that the powers of evil are no longer commanded to depart in the second person imperative but rather prayed against in the third person subjunctive mode.

They also portrayed this time of intense preparation as different from the previous forms of catechesis, which had focused primarily on changes in behavior. Here, there is an increased focus on growing in self-awareness. Catechumens were to encounter the texts from John’s gospel on third, fourth and fifth Sundays in a personal way. Using one of the techniques of spiritual direction, catechumens are asked to become through their imaginations the Samaritan Woman, the Man Born Blind, Mary and Martha, and Lazarus. They are asked not only to see what within them needs to be healed or strengthened but also to discern how Jesus desires to transform them. The modern prayers of the scrutinies are filled with such scriptural imagery as the community intercedes for their transformation.

In most RCIA processes the catechetical sessions before the Sunday rituals focus on a careful reading and examination of the coming Sunday's selection, filling out a reaction sheet with several questions to help jumpstart their imaginations, and sharing reflections with the group. In some places this discussion is the basis for a litany over the participants at the Sunday service.

Intending to produce something American Protestants might be at ease with and find spiritually effective we have tried to put the Word front and center. In Protestant rites the reflective questions used in the catechetical sessions may form the actual litany so that the baptismal candidates encounter the Word in the context of Sunday worship, and then encounter a gesture of healing and deliverance related to what they have heard.

The hand-laying gesture used in the third scrutiny is scriptural. In the third scrutiny in the RCIA there is often also an anointing with the Oil of Catechumens. We are not certain how people in general may respond to the anointing, but in some traditions it might be effective. We have adapted texts from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the prayers from RCIA and the Anglican Church of Canada to frame this action.

These rites are written so that the entire community participates in the reflection and prays not only for the baptismal candidates but for themselves. Although Christian initiation is meant to be a definitive transformation of the whole person, even the ancient world knew the reality of post-baptismal sin. Thus they created a process similar to the catechumenate in which "penitents" were also given a renewed opportunity to claim Christ's victory over sin and death.

Such rites with penitents became part of the call to all who gather on Ash Wednesday to relive their call to repentance and to a deepening of their life in the Spirit as a first step toward reaffirmation of the Baptismal Covenant on Easter. (Some denominations still have the custom of Confession and Absolution before Easter.)

A Rite for Calling to Baptism (and Enrollment)

Video: <https://youtu.be/qJDUDB87zv0>

This rite is given two possible names to denote different ways it may be embodied in different traditions. Some traditions have a practice of those who have become candidates for baptism signing a candidate book. For these, this action may be ritually significant enough to include enrollment in its title. Others do not have such a practice or would find it strange or forced. For these, the term Calling to Baptism more adequately captures the intention of this rite. For either, the First Sunday in Lent or Advent would be the most appropriate time for such a rite.

The gospel reading for the First Sunday in Lent regularly focuses upon Jesus being driven into the wilderness during or just after which he was tempted by Satan.

While some existing rites of Calling/Enrollment do not include specific acts of renunciation, such acts are proposed as an integral part of this rite.

The Spirit's Calling through the Church and the Response of the Hearers

This rite properly takes place as a response to the sermon or homily.

Proposed candidates for baptism are called forward by name to stand before the congregation with their sponsors, facing the people.

If the congregation has a catechist who supervises the entire process of baptismal formation, the catechist presents the affirmers and their sponsors to the congregation. Otherwise, an AM or the PM does so, with these or similar words.

Catechist/AM: (addressing the baptismal candidates in the community)

Sisters and brothers,

by God's grace you have been drawn to this community,
and with your sponsors have been learning together what it means to turn to Christ,
to accept Christ as Teacher,
and to follow Christ as Way, Truth, and Life.

You have done this by attending worship together,
by reading and discussing the scriptures,
by engaging in acts of service with the vulnerable,
and by growing in the spiritual disciplines of prayer and fasting.

Language based on the Third General Rule of the early Methodist Societies, and grounded in the questions to sponsors in Apostolic Tradition.

PM: (to the community)

And so, people of God, on this First Sunday in (Lent/Advent), what is your call to these people now?

Congregation:

**In the name of Christ, and in the power of the Spirit,
we call you to the sacrament of baptism at Easter (Epiphany).
Turn from every evil way.
Prepare to die and rise with Christ,
that you may walk in newness of life.**

Based on Romans 6

PM (addressing baptismal candidates, one by one)
(First Name), how do you respond to this call?

Baptismal Candidates (responding one by one):
I receive the call, seek to turn from every evil way,
and desire to be baptized at Easter (Epiphany).

PM (to sponsors):
You have been walking with those you sponsor,
supporting and observing their progress.
Testify now to their growth in Christ in heart, mind, and actions.

Each sponsor introduces herself or himself and offers a brief testimony to the growth of the one each sponsors.

PM to Congregation:
You have heard the willingness of the baptismal candidates,
and the testimony of their sponsors.
Will you support them with your prayers,
your presence,
your service,
and your witness
as they learn to live more fully as disciples of Jesus
in the covenant of Holy Baptism?
{Language from the membership vows of The United Methodist Church}

Congregation: **Yes, we will!** (or musical response)

PM (to baptismal candidates):
You have heard the call of the church,
the testimony of your sponsors,
and the eagerness of this congregation
to receive you as candidates for the sacrament of baptism at Easter (Epiphany).

For your part, you have received and committed yourselves to this call.
During the coming weeks, prepare to entrust yourselves fully to Christ,
turning from evil and learning to stand in his light here in the company of his Church. (Applause or musical response)

[PART 2: ENROLLMENT]

Come now, each one of you,
and signify your commitment to this calling
by signing your name in the book of baptismal candidates.

The catechist or sponsor may announce the name of each candidate as each signs the book.
And the congregation responds, perhaps with music, “Lord Jesus, you call your own by
name and lead them to waters of life” (ELW), or “God who began a good work in you” (TFWS).

After all baptismal candidates have signed the book, the catechist, lay leader, deacon, or pastor
may close it. It may be taken out to be presented and placed upon the Lord’s Table or in another
appropriate place at the time of the offertory later in the service.)

Part 2 or 3: Prayer over the Baptismal Candidates and Sponsors

(AM invites all to raise hands in blessing over the new baptismal candidates)

PM (and people):

**Merciful and most high God, creator and life-giver of all that is,
you have called all people from darkness into light,
from error into truth, from death into life.**

We ask you: grant grace to [Names] and bless *them*.

Raise *them* by your Spirit. Revive *them* by your word.

Form *them* by your hand.

**Bring these candidates for baptism to the water of life
and to the bread and cup of blessing,
that with all your people *they* may bear witness to your grace
and praise you forever through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Amen (*sung*).

[From the ELCA]¹

Part 3 or 4: Dismissal with Blessing

The act of dismissal continues the ancient practice of catechumens and hearers being sent for further learning rather than staying to participate in the Eucharist. They receive a Trinitarian blessing from both the pastor and the congregation, as they are understood to be attached to the whole body, even if not yet fully members incorporate of it.

PM: Baptismal candidates, God bring you in peace and joy to the day of your baptism
and the fullness of life in Christ.

Now go forth with the blessing of our Triune God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

Congregation:

and with our blessing. Amen

The baptismal candidates and sponsors may be dismissed to their formational groups.

for reflection and prayer about what has happened today and the journey that now lies ahead.

REFERENCES

1. *Evangelical Lutheran Worship: Leaders Desk Edition*, Copyright 2006, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Published by Augsburg Fortress Publishers. "Welcome to Baptism," pp. 594

PRESENTATION OF THE CREED

LENT 2

green = explanations of symbols at work

gold = sources and explanations

red = rubrics, directions

Part 1: Invitation to the Profession – at the front or center of the space of the assembly

The primary symbol for the first part of this rite is the community itself. Having received these persons as hearers and called them as baptismal candidates, the community's responsibility is to entrust the baptismal candidates with the Profession of Faith, the heart of the Baptismal Covenant which the baptismal candidates will profess before entering the waters of Baptism. The core action here is the living profession of the Creed by the baptized in the hearing of the baptismal candidates.

(After the homily or sermon the catechist or the assisting minister (AM) goes to the lectern and addresses the assembly.)

Catechist/AM: Sisters and brothers,

(Last Sunday) this parish/congregation took on the responsibility of leading N&N/ these baptismal candidates to the waters of the font (at the Easter Vigil).

Together, we are involved in their preparation.

Individually, each of us is called to support them with our prayers, our fellowship, and the witness of our Christian lives.

Today we begin their final preparation for Baptism

by handing over to them within this community that Creed

which is the expression of our common faith and of our common life in God. *Inspired by the RCIA¹*

AM: Candidates, as I call your name, come forward with your sponsor.

When called, they come forward and line up in the front or center, facing the assembly, with their sponsors behind them keeping a hand on their shoulders.

Part 2: The Presentation

The presiding minister (PM) goes to stand in the center aisle or other place that is situated within the assembly and faces the baptismal candidates.

PM: You have begun your final preparation for baptism.

It is time for us to entrust to you our Church's Profession of Faith.

By professing this faith everyone here

has been brought to share in God's own life,

through Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The words of our Profession are few;
the mysteries they express are rich and broad and deep.

Listen to them, reflect on them, and pray over them
with a sincere and open heart.

Soon you will share more fully in God's own life
by professing them together with us
when we renew our covenant and the vows of our common baptism at Easter.

Inspired by the RCIA²

PM: (inviting the assembly to stand and join in the Apostles Creed)

We believe in God,...

Part 3: The Ephphetha

AM: Sponsors, please stand next to your candidate so that you may face each other.

PM: Sponsors, I invite you now to mark these baptismal candidates once again with the
sign of faith. And I invite this whole community to repeat these words after me.

(on the ears) Jesus opened the ears of the deaf.

In his name we say to you:

Ephphetha! Be opened! (+)

May you hear his call to faith!

(on the mouth) Jesus opened the mouth of the mute
and gave them speech.

In his name we say to you:

Ephphetha! Be opened!(+)

May you profess the faith the you have heard
to the glory and praise of God.

Inspired by the RCIA³

Part 4: Prayer for the Baptismal Candidates

PM: Let us pray.

Merciful and most high God, creator and life-giver of all that is,
you have called all people from darkness into light,
from error into truth, from death into life.

We ask you: grant grace to [Names] and bless *them*.

Raise *them* by your Spirit.

Revive *them* by your word.

Form *them* by your hand

Bring our hearers/catechumens to the water of life
and to the bread and cup of blessing,
that with all your people they may bear witness to your grace
not only with their words but with their lives
and come to praise you forever;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Part 5: Dismissal with Blessing

The act of dismissal after the sermon continues the ancient practice of catechumens and baptismal candidates being sent for further learning rather than staying to participate in the Eucharist. They receive a full Trinitarian blessing from both the pastor and the congregation, as they are part of the household of Christ on the way to becoming fully members incorporate of it.

PM: Hearers and sponsors,
go forth with the blessing of our Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

Congregation: **and with our blessing. Amen.**

The baptismal candidates and sponsors may be dismissed to their formational group for reflection and prayer about what has happened today and the journey that now lies ahead. Otherwise they return to their seats.

REFERENCES

1. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: LTP, 1988, outline for homily #159.
2. *RCIA*, address to elect #160.
3. *RCIA*, Ephphetha #199.
4. *Evangelical Lutheran Worship: Leaders Desk Edition*, Copyright 2006, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Published by Augsburg Fortress Publishers. "Welcome to Baptism," pp. 594-595.

RITE OF HEALING & DELIVERANCE

LENT III A

For Baptismal Candidates

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nn6tR-NluRk>

green = explanations of symbols at work.

red = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is presence and action of the community and the participants” evolving role in it

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the baptismal candidates and their sponsors forward by name.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, ,
as we lead these candidates toward Baptism
we are called to continue to support them with our fellowship and prayers.

AM: Would the baptismal candidates please come forward with their sponsors.

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that baptismal candidates and the community are doing the same reflection. Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners, and everyone is called anew to repentance in preparation for Easter. The community’s modeling of repentance and prayers are part of their role in the formation of the baptismal candidates.

After everyone is standing in the front or center, facing forward toward the PM.

AM: As the woman of Samaria confessed her faith in Jesus Christ,
the giver of the water of life,
so the church confesses our need for Christ and our trust in God’s mercy.

We invite you whom God has chosen for baptism
to join all the people of God in confessing
our common sinfulness and need for God’s mercy.
Let us all open ourselves to the Spirit’s work.

Adapted from ELCA¹

The people assume postures appropriate to prayer as they are able.

Reader/catechist:

a. In what ways do you find yourself in a desert? Alone, thirsty, dried out, wandering?

(90-second pause or whatever seems appropriate for this gathering)

Musicians & all: God of all goodness, fountain of life, give us to drink!

b. What are you afraid to tell other people about yourself, even Jesus? (pause & music)

c. What would you tell Jesus about your thirst and your hesitation? (pause & music)

d.. How have you already received living water from Jesus? How have you shared it with others? (pause & music)

PM (standing) God of power, you sent your Son to be the Savior of the World. Like the woman of Samaria, may these baptismal candidates thirst for living water and may we all find in Jesus the fountain we seek. Free us all from the sins and weaknesses that weigh us down; and make us holy by a fresh gift of your Spirit. Teach us how to worship and serve you in spirit and truth. We ask this through Christ Jesus, for he is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Inspired by the RCIA²

(or)

God of mercy, through your Son you revealed your faithful care for the woman of Samaria and offered salvation to all who are lonely and estranged. In your great love, show your mercy to these baptismal candidates, N and N who desire to be reborn as your children. As they draw near to the fountain of living water, heal them and heal us all from all bitterness and resentment, from all that holds us back from you. By the consolation of your gracious Spirit, awaken in us all a real thirst for a share in your eternal life. May our lives be a sign of your redeeming love for all among whom we live. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

Adapted from the ACC³

3. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

PM lays hands on the head of each baptismal candidate in turn. PM may say the following or an appropriate formula to each.

PM: Christ our Savior strengthen you with his power for he is Lord forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate: Amen

From the RCIA⁴

All: refrain

3. Option B: Anointing of the Hands

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal candidates, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., we anoint you with /N.N., receive this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior. May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate: Amen.

From the RCIA and the ELCA⁵

All: refrain

4. Dismissal

--AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. [Holy Baptism and Related Rites, Renewing Worship volume 3. \[RW3\] Prepared for provisional use. Copyright 2002. Administered by Augsburg Fortress, pg. 12.](#)
2. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: LTP, 1988, Cf. collects in #155.
3. "Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates" in *Making Disciples*, p. 29, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. *RCIA* #301b

RITE OF HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

LENT IV A

For Baptismal Candidates

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the baptismal candidates' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the baptismal candidates and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, ,
as we lead these candidates toward Baptism,
we continue to support them with our fellowship and prayers.

AM: Would the baptismal candidates please come forward with their sponsors.

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that baptismal candidates and the community are doing the same reflection.

Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners. Their modeling of repentance and prayers are part of their role in the formation of the baptismal candidates.

After everyone is standing in front, facing forward toward the PM:

AM: As the blind man turned away from the shadows and toward Christ, the light, so the church, empowered by the Spirit, renounces the power of evil in all its forms. Let us pray to God who fills the world and our hearts with light. Let us all open ourselves to the Spirit's work.

Adapted from the ELCA¹

The people kneel, bow heads, or assume other postures of prayer.

Reader/catechist:

In your life's journey what has kept you from seeing the truth?

(90-second pause or whatever seems appropriate for this gathering)

Musicians & all: Lord of all mercy, giver of light, restore our sight!

What truth have you failed to acknowledge about yourself? About others? *(pause & music)*

How has Christ's light already scattered the shadows in your life?

(pause & music)

Where are the shadows in society or in the Church that obscure the light of Christ?

(pause & music)

PM (standing) Lord God, source of unfailing life, by the death and resurrection of Christ you have cast out the shadows of hatred and lies and poured the light of truth and love upon the human family. Hear our prayers for our baptismal candidates. Enable them to pass into the fullness of your light and deliver them and deliver us all from the power of evil. May we all live as children of the light, faithful witnesses to the faith that lives in us. We ask this through Christ Jesus, for he is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Inspired by the RCIA²

(or)

Gracious God, you helped the man born blind to believe in Jesus as the Christ, and through that faith to receive the light of your kingdom. Free your chosen ones from the falsehoods that surround and blind them.. Strengthen their hearts with your loving Spirit that truth may be the foundation of their lives. May we all live in your light forever and fearlessly bear witness to what we have seen and heard. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

Adapted from the ACC³

3. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

PM lays hands on the head of each baptismal candidate in turn. PM may say the following or an appropriate formula to each.

PM: Christ our Savior strengthen you with his power for he is Lord forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate: Amen

From the RCIA⁴

All: refrain

3. Option B: Anointing of the Hands

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal candidates, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., we anoint you with /N.N., receive this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior. May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate: Amen.

From the RCIA and the ELCA⁵

All: refrain

4. Dismissal

--AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. *RW3*, pg. 12.
2. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: LTP, 1988, Cf. collects in #168.
3. "Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates" in *Making Disciples*, p. 30, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. *RCIA* #301b

RITE OF HEALING & DELIVERANCE

LENT V Year A

For Baptismal Candidates

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the participants' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the baptismal candidates and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, , as we lead these baptismal candidates toward the Affirmation of Baptism, we are called to continue to support them with our fellowship and prayers.

AM: Would the baptismal candidates (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

[AM: Would the affirmers (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.]

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that baptismal candidates and the community are doing the same reflection.

Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners.

After all those called are standing in front, facing forward toward the PM and the congregation..

AM: As Mary and Martha prayed for their brother Lazarus, so the church prays for you, for ourselves, and for all the world, confident in the life-giving presence and mercy of Christ. Aware of our common sinfulness and of God's mercy, let us all open ourselves to the Spirit's work.

The people kneel, bow heads, or assume other postures of prayer.

{Adapted from ELCA}¹

Reader/catechist:

a. What part of your life makes you feel as if you were living in a tomb? What old habits or ways of looking at life make you feel trapped and lifeless?

(90-second pause or whatever seems appropriate for this gathering)

Musicians & all: God of the living, not of the dead, raise us to life!

b. What part of society or the Church makes you feel the same way? **(pause & music)**\

c. When do you experience a call to come forth from your tomb? To find liberation?

(pause & music)

d. How has Jesus been restoring you to life? When do you feel his new life in you? **(pause & music)**

PM (standing) Father, source of all life, in giving life to the living you show the image of your glory; in raising the dead you reveal your unbounded power.

Free these baptismal candidates who await your life-giving sacraments from the grasp of death. Deliver them and deliver us all from the corruption of evil. Through your life-giving Spirit fill us all with faith, hope, and love, that we might live with you in the glory of the resurrection. We ask this through Christ Jesus, who is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Inspired by the RCIA²

(or)

Almighty God, fountain of life, you seek your glory in humanity fully alive; you make known your love in the resurrection of the dead. Rescue from the tyranny of death these chosen ones, N and N, who approach the waters of new birth and hunger for the banquet of life. By faith, they may share with all he baptized in the resurrection triumph of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

Adapted from the ACC³

3. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

[This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.]

PM lays hands on the head of each baptismal candidates [and/or affirmer] in turn. The sponsor stands behind with hands on shoulders or kneels beside with a hand on a shoulder. PM may say these words or an appropriate formula to each:

PM: Christ our Savior strengthen you with his power, for he is Lord forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate: Amen

From the RCIA⁴

All: refrain

3. Option B: Anointing of the Hands of the Baptismal Candidates

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal candidates and affirmers, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., *We anoint you with/Receive* this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior.. May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate: Amen.

All: refrain

Adapted from the RCIA⁵

4. Dismissal

(AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.)

REFERENCES

1. *RW3*, pg. 12.
2. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: LTP, 1988, Cf. collects in #175.
3. “Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates” in *Making Disciples*, p. 31,
<https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. *RCIA* #301b
5. *RCIA* #103 or *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 277

RITE OF HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

LENT III B

For Baptismal Candidates

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the baptismal candidates' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the baptismal candidates and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, as we lead these baptismal candidates toward the Affirmation of Baptism, we are called to support them with our fellowship and prayers.

AM: Would the baptismal candidates (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that baptismal candidates and the community are doing the same reflection.

Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners.

After everyone is standing in front, facing forward toward the congregation and the PM.

AM: Jesus came to the temple in Jerusalem and drove out the human obstacles between the people and God. The Church confesses our need for him to do this same delivering work in us. We invite you whom God has chosen for baptism [and you who have chosen to affirm the baptismal covenant] to join the people of God as we all kneel down/bow our heads and open ourselves to the Spirit's call.

[adapted from the ELCA]¹

[The people kneel, bow heads, or assume other postures appropriate to prayer.]

Reader/catechist:

a. Looking at our own lives, what should we ask Jesus to drive out from us? *(90-second pause)*

Musicians & all: Christ crucified, true power of God, now set us free.

b. How have we betrayed our relationship with Jesus by putting other "gods" into our lives? *(pause and then music)*

c. What stumbling blocks within us keep God's power from working through us?
(pause and then music)

d. What prevents us from hearing the voices of poor and vulnerable people? *(pause & music)*

PM *(standing)*:

God of all power, from living stones, your chosen people, you are building an eternal temple

to

your glory. Hear our prayers *N&N* whom you have called to baptism.

Cleanse them from sin; set them firmly on Christ, the cornerstone; make them holy by a fresh

gift of your Spirit. Give us all a deeper trust in the power and wisdom revealed in our crucified Lord. This we ask through Christ, who is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Adapted from the RC Sacramentary²

(or)

Loving God, you sent your Son to restore to us the joy of your presence that we might worship you in spirit and in truth. Deliver *N* and *N* whom you have called from every spiritual obstacle and deceit. Reveal in us all the splendor of your dwelling place, the glory of Christ's body created anew in the resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

From the ACC³

3. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

PM lays hands on the head of each baptismal candidates in turn. The sponsor stands behind with hands on shoulders or kneels beside with a hand on a shoulder. PM may say these words or an appropriate formula to each:

PM: Christ our Savior strengthen you with his power, for he is Lord forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate: Amen

From the RCIA⁴

All: refrain

3. Option B: Anointing of the Hands of the Baptismal Candidates

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal candidates, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., We anoint you with/Receive this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior. May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate: Amen.

All: refrain

Adapted from the RCIA⁵

4. Dismissal

AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. *Holy Baptism and Related Rites, Renewing Worship* volume 3. [RW3] Prepared for provisional use. Copyright 2002. Administered by Augsburg Fortress, pg. 15.
2. US Catholic 1973 *Sacramentary*, Cf. Opening Prayer for Common of the Dedication of a Church Outside the Dedicated Church.
3. “Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates” in *Making Disciples*, p. 30, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. RCIA #301b

RITE OF HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

LENT IV B

For Baptismal Candidates

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the baptismal candidates' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the baptismal candidates and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, as we lead these baptismal candidates toward baptism, we are called to support them with our fellowship and prayers.

AM: Would the baptismal candidates (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that baptismal candidates and the community are doing the same reflection.

Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners.

After everyone is standing in front, facing forward toward the congregation and the PM:

AM: Jesus calls us to turn away from self-centeredness and to live in God's great love. Empowered by the Spirit, we renounce the power of evil. Let us pray that God will expose the world's empty promises, and reveal in us the immeasurable riches of God's redeeming grace. Let us all kneel down/bow our heads and open ourselves to the Spirit's call.

Adapted from ELCA¹

The people kneel, bow heads, or assume other postures appropriate to prayer..

Reader/catechist:

a. How have you been surprised by God's grace at work within you?

(90-second pause)

Musicians & all: Love of the Father, life of the world, open our hearts!

b. How is Jesus freeing you from fleshly desires to be gracious toward others? *(pause & music)*

c. What are you still afraid to admit about yourself? Where are you still trapped in a false image you are trying to create for myself?

(pause & music)

d. Jesus was lifted on the cross to reveal and heal the harm of our destructive words and ways. What is Jesus revealing and healing in us?

(pause & music)

PM (standing) Lord God, source of unfailing life, by the death and resurrection of Christ you have cast out the shadows of hatred and lies and poured the light of truth and love upon the human family. Hear our prayers for our baptismal candidates: enable them to pass into the fullness of your light. Deliver them and deliver us all from the power of evil.

May we all live as children of the light, faithful witnesses to the faith that lives in us. We ask this through Christ Jesus, for he is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Inspired by the RCIA²

(or)

O God, rich in mercy, look upon your chosen ones (N and N) who wait in joyful hope for the day when they will pass through the waters of baptism and be lifted up to the New Life of Jesus Christ. Free us all from evil, and fill us all with your grace as we look upon Jesus lifted up and see in him your power to save the world, for he is Lord, now and forever.

All. Amen.

From the ACC³

3. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

PM lays hands on the head of each baptismal candidates [and/or affirmer] in turn. The sponsor stands behind with hands on shoulders or kneels beside with a hand on a shoulder.

PM may say these words or an appropriate formula to each:

PM: Christ our Savior strengthen you with his power, for he is Lord forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate: Amen

From the RCIA⁴

All: refrain.

4. Option B: Anointing of the Hands of the Baptismal Candidates

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal candidates and affirmers, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., We anoint you with/Receive this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior.. May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate: Amen.

All: refrain

Adapted from the RCIA⁵

4. Dismissal

--AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. RW3, pg. 15.
2. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: LTP, 1988, Cf. collects in #168.
3. "Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates" in *Making Disciples*, p. 31, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. RCIA #301b

RITE OF HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

LENT V B

For Baptismal Candidates

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the participants' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the baptismal candidates and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, , as we lead these baptismal candidates toward affirmation, we are called to continue to support them with our fellowship and prayers.

AM: Would the baptismal candidates please come forward with their sponsors.

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that baptismal candidates and the community are doing the same reflection. Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners.

After everyone is standing in front, facing forward toward the congregation and the PM.

AM: Jesus draws all people to him from the cross. The church, confident in the life-giving presence and mercy of Christ, now prays for you as Jesus draws you to the day of your (Baptism or) Affirmation. Aware of our common sinfulness and of God's mercy, let us all kneel down/bow our heads and open ourselves to the Spirit's call.

Adapted from ELCA¹

The people assume postures appropriate to prayer as they are able.

Reader/catechist:

a. When do I find it difficult to follow Jesus?

(90-second pause or whatever seems appropriate for this gathering) Musicians & all: Lord lifted high, obedient Son raise us to life!

b. What is it that keeps me from seeing Jesus? *(pause & music)*

c. What do I need to die to in my life so that I can receive new life in Jesus? *(pause & music)*

d. The crucified Jesus is our King. What part can I play in changing people's ideas and attitudes toward the poor and vulnerable members of our society? *(pause & music)*

PM *(standing)* Father, source of all life, in giving life to the living you show the image of your glory; in raising the dead you reveal your unbounded power. Free from the grasp of death these chosen

ones, N&N, who await your life-giving sacraments, and deliver them, and deliver us all, from the corruption of evil. Through your Spirit who gives life, fill us all with faith, hope, and love, that we might live always with you in the glory of the resurrection. We ask this through Christ Jesus, who is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Inspired by the RCIA²

(or)

Merciful God, as we come to the Passover of the Lord, the day of judgment of this world when the prince of this world is driven out, grant that our baptismal candidates, seeing Jesus lifted up on the cross, may be drawn into his eternal embrace. Give us all the freedom to turn from the life of this passing age and to welcome the life of the age to come; for by faith we all share in the resurrection triumph of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

Adapted from the ACC³

3. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

--PM lays hands on the head of each baptismal candidate in turn, with sponsor either standing behind with hands on shoulders or kneeling beside with a hand on a shoulder.

--PM may say these words or an appropriate formula to each:

PM: Christ our Savior strengthen you with his power for he is Lord forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate: Amen

[from the RCIA]⁴

All: refrain

3. Option B: Anointing of the Hands

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal candidates,, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., *We anoint you with/Receive* this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior. May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate: Amen.

*[from the RCIA or ELW]*⁵

All: refrain

4. Dismissal

AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. *RW3*, pg. 15.
2. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: LTP, 1988, Cf. collects in #175.
3. “Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates” in *Making Disciples*, p. 31, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. *RCIA* #301b
5. *RCIA* #103 or *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 277

RITE OF HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

For Baptismal Candidates

LENT III Year C

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the participants' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the baptismal candidates and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, as we lead these baptismal candidates toward affirmation, we are called to support them with our fellowship and prayers.

AM: Would the baptismal candidates please come forward with their sponsors.

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that baptismal candidates and the community are doing the same reflection.

Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners.

After everyone is standing in front, facing forward toward the PM:

AM: The barren fig tree requires the gardener's care in order to thrive and bear fruit, and so the church confesses our need for Christ and our trust in God's mercy. We invite you whom God has chosen for baptism to join the people of God in opening ourselves to the Spirit's work.

Adapted from the ELCA¹

The people kneel, bow heads, or assume other postures appropriate to prayer as they are able.

Reader/catechist:

a. How has God already guided and nurtured you toward a fruitful life? *(90-second pause)*

Musicians & all: God of all mercy, source of new life, help us bear fruit!

b. What needs to be "pruned" from your life so you may bear fruit?
(pause & music)

c. What nourishment helps you bear fruit?
(pause & music)

d. What nourishment does our world need from you to bear good fruit? *(pause & music)*

PM *(standing)*: God of love, you are the true vinedresser; you prune away our sinfulness that we

might bear good and abundant fruit. Hear our prayers for [these chosen ones/N&N]. Cleanse them from the sins that burden make them holy by the constant working of your Spirit

Help us all to hear your voice, calling us to repentance and a change of heart. This we ask through Christ, who is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Inspired by RCIA²

(or)

God of all the ages, in the fullness of time you sent your Anointed One to bring to fulfillment the promised day of salvation. Cultivate what you have planted in [your chosen ones/N&N]; and, in this time of your grace, turn their hearts to you. May their lives, and the lives of all of us, bear fruit in this life and in the life to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

From the ACC³

3. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

PM lays hands on the head of each baptismal candidates in turn, with sponsor either standing behind with hands on shoulders or kneeling beside with a hand on a shoulder.

PM may say these words or an appropriate formula to each:

PM: Christ our Savior strengthen you with his power, for he is Lord forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate: Amen

[from the RCIA]⁴

All: refrain

3. Option B: Anointing of the Hands

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal candidates,, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., *We anoint you with/Receive* this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior. May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate: Amen.

[from the RCIA or ELW]⁵

All: refrain

4. Dismissal

AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. *Holy Baptism and Related Rites, Renewing Worship* volume 3. [RW3] Prepared for provisional use. Copyright 2002. Administered by Augsburg Fortress, pg. 19.
2. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: LTP, 1988, Cf. collects in #155.
3. "Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates" in *Making Disciples*, p. 32, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. *RCIA* #301b

RITE OF HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

For Baptismal Candidates

LENT IV Year C

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the baptismal candidates' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the baptismal candidates and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, as we lead these baptismal candidates toward baptism, we are called to support them with our fellowship and prayers.

AM: Would the baptismal candidates please come forward with their sponsors.

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that baptismal candidates[,affirmers] and the community are doing the same reflection. Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners.

After everyone is standing in front, facing forward toward the congregation and the PM:

AM: The younger son abandoned his life of sin and returned to the joy of the father; the older son learned the need for compassion and mercy. And so, the church, empowered by the Spirit, is called to renounce any attachment to evil in ourselves and in the world. To receive the embrace of God's forgiveness and love, and enter into the joy of our Father in heaven, let us together open ourselves to the Spirit's work.

The people kneel, bow heads, or assume other postures of prayer as they are able..

Adapted from the ELCA¹

Reader/catechist:

- a. Whose story in this gospel passage resonates most with your own story? *(90-second pause)*

Musicians & all: God of compassion, mercy, and grace, welcome us home!

- b. Where in your story do you need to hear and receive God's compassion?

(pause & music)

- c. What will you do to become more like the father who is merciful to both his sons? *(pause & music)*

- d. What will you do to bring God's mercy, reconciliation, and joy to our world?

(pause & music)

PM *(standing)*: God of mercy, like the younger son, some of us cry: "I have sinned against you; I am

not worthy to be called your child.” Like the older son, hurt and angry, some of us stand outside the door. Open wide your arms in mercy to all who trust in your love, especially N&N&N, and deliver us all from any attachment to evil. Give us courage to proclaim to the whole world the mercy and joy that we have found in Christ Jesus, who is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Inspired by the Rite of Penance²

(or)

Father of mercy, when we come to ourselves and acknowledge the poverty of our alienation from one another and from you, your loving arms embrace us. Reveal your healing love to N and N whom you have called by name. When they come to the waters of new creation, may they know themselves welcome in the household of faith where we all find reconciliation and joy through the mercy of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.

[from the ACC]³

3. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

--PM lays hands on the head of each baptismal candidate in turn with sponsor either standing behind with hands on shoulders or kneeling beside with a hand on a shoulder.

--PM may say these words or an appropriate formula to each:

PM: Christ our Savior strengthen you with his power, for he is Lord forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate: Amen

[from the RCIA]⁴

All: refrain

3. Option B: Anointing of the Hands

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal candidates, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., we anoint you with /N.N., receive this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior.

May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate: Amen.

From the RCIA and the ELCA⁵

4. Dismissal --AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. RW3, pg.19.
2. Rite of Penance, New York: Pueblo, 1976, #88.
3. “Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates” in *Making Disciples*, p. 32, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. RCIA #301b

RITE OF HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

For Baptismal Candidates

LENT V Year C

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the participants' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the baptismal candidates and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, as we lead these baptismal candidates toward baptism, we are called to continue to support them with our fellowship and prayers

AM: Would the baptismal candidates please come forward with their sponsors.

2. Reflection

The core symbol is baptismal candidates and the community are doing the same reflection. Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners.

After everyone is standing in front, facing forward toward the congregation and the PM:

AM: Mary of Bethany in faith anointed Jesus in preparation for the crux of his ministry as the Messiah, God's Anointed Son. The church entrusts you to the life-giving presence and mercy of God as you draw nearer to the day of your affirmation. Aware of our common sinfulness and of God's mercy, let us all kneel down/bow our heads and open ourselves to the Spirit's work.

Adapted from ELCA¹

The people kneel, bow heads, or assume other postures of prayer as they are able.

Reader/catechist:

a. Judas was one of Jesus's closest companions, but he betrayed Jesus. What betrayals in your life, by you or others, remain as obstacles to following Jesus now? *(90-second pause or whatever seems appropriate for this gathering)*

Musicians & all: God of all mercy, giver of grace, work new wonders!

b. Judas claimed concern for people in need, but he was a hypocrite. What masks of your own selfishness are you afraid to take off?

(pause & music)

c. People in need are always with us. Where have our hearts grown tired and cold toward others?

(pause & music)

d. Jesus restored Lazarus to life. How do you already find Jesus restoring life in you?
(pause & music)

PM (standing) God of boundless compassion, you are slow to anger and rich in mercy. Grant us pardon and trust in you. Free these chosen ones from the grasp of death; deliver them from the corruption of evil and lead them to your life-giving sacraments. Through your life-giving Spirit, anoint us all with faith, hope, and love, that we may always walk with you in the way of the cross and the glory of the resurrection. We ask this through Christ Jesus, who is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Inspired by the RCIA²

(or)

Gracious God, in Jesus our Savior, you have made us your friends and shared in our very lives. Like Mary of Bethany, may N. and N., your chosen ones, and all your people find freedom and courage to pour out our very lives, a fragrant offering to the one who gave his very life for us all, your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Adapted from ACC³

3. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

PM lays hands on the head of each baptismal candidates in turn with sponsor either standing behind with hands on shoulders or kneeling beside with a hand on a shoulder.

PM may say these words or an appropriate formula to each:

PM: Christ our Savior strengthen you with his power, for he is Lord forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate: Amen

[from the RCIA]⁴

All: refrain

3. Option B: Anointing of the Hands

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal candidates, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., we anoint you with /N.N., receive this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior.

May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate: Amen.

From the RCIA and the ELCA⁵

All: refrain

4. Dismissal

AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. RW3, pg.19.
2. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: LTP, 1988, Cf. collects in #175.
3. “Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates” in *Making Disciples*, p. 32, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. RCIA #301b
5. RCIA #103/*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 277.

Mystagogy: The Fourth Phase of the Catechumenal Process

FOREWORD

The Spirit is not finished with the newly baptized. At Baptism they have not graduated but have just begun a new life of Christian discipleship within the community. How could a community best accompany these “newborns” on the first steps of this lifelong journey?

After several years of collaboration on JBL’s composite rites for the first three phases of the catechumenal process, our working group decided to embark upon the development of both catechetical and liturgical resources for the fourth phase, mystagogy. That was our challenge.

In the first project we could draw upon the richness of the material available across several North American Christian traditions: Roman Catholic, Episcopal, United Methodist, Anglican Church of Canada, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in our attempt to produce a single resource recognizable by our various traditions as well as useful for training session. (Cf. <https://journeytobaptism.org/resources/worship-resources/>)

When we looked this time at the different denominational resources, we found some suggestions about homilies or sermons addressed to the newly baptized, a possibility of their continued inclusion in the Prayers of the People as well as a call to sacramental reflection or a gifts assessment. Yet there was no integrated liturgical and catechetical process similar to the process of intense preparation. This time we would have to be creative.

In our efforts we found ourselves guided by the following insights.

1. We would continue to be guided by the Scriptures. Since this phase typically occurs during the season of Easter, we would attend the structure of the readings from Easter Day to Pentecost, especially the readings from the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles.
2. We would suggest that the newly baptized regularly be the focus of some portion of corporate worship so that they could experience the ongoing love, support, and prayers of the congregation as they had during intense preparation.
3. The sessions for the first few weeks would be reflective, focusing upon the work of the Spirit during the prior phases of the process and upon the newly baptized’s experience of the rich rites of Baptism.
4. The sessions during subsequent weeks would be more active, helping the newly baptized move forward in the integration into the Christian community and its mission of service. During our conversations about this component, we came to realize that the attempt to discern what particular gifts the Spirit had given the newly baptized had to happen within the context of a prior discernment about baptism, along with all the baptized, because all of the baptized are called to a life of shared discipleship within the Church and for the world.

As we said in the introduction to the composite rites, we engaged our work with a deep sense of reverence for each other, for the gifts our traditions had already brought forth, and for the differing ways our traditions or individual congregations may use or perhaps further adapt our work to suit their contexts.

With shared love in our one Lord, Jesus Christ, and shared passion for the work of preparing and

supporting those who seek to live his way with us, we offer our work.

Michael Marchal RC

Taylor W. Burton Edwards ELCA

David Gambrell PCUSA

John W. H. Hill ACC

Lisa Kimball TEC

Thomas Schattauer ELCA

With thanks to Susan Forshey (TEC) and Todd Townshend (ACC) who began this work with us but who had to leave because of professional responsibilities.

Introduction to Mystagogy

The 4th Period of the Catechumenal Process

Baptism is an event. Yet, as a sign of God's mercy and belonging, Baptism stands over the whole course of one's life. It is an event with a trajectory, not just a moment in time. The core metaphors used in the New Testament to describe the meaning of baptism tend to be images of radical, inward transformation: death to resurrection, rebirth in the Spirit, darkness to light. Other images portray a radical outward transformation within a community: from alien to member of God's own People, from slave to heir, from being cut off to becoming a full member of the Body of Christ.

A metaphor which does *not* work with Baptism is graduation. The graduation of a graduate marks the definitive end of a process and a separation from an institution or a community. Instead, the most common term used for the newly-baptized in the early centuries of the Christian Church was "neophytes," a Greek term meaning "those newly sprouting." (See I Corinthians 3:6 and I Timothy 3:6). Neophytes have become part of God's family and been welcomed with joy, but they still need the support of the community for continued growth as they take their first steps into baptismal living, into an ongoing, fruitful life of mutually accountable Christian discipleship.

And so, the catechumenal process does not end with Baptism but with a period of reflection both about what has just happened around the font *and* about what gifts the Spirit has given them for living out the diverse vocations to which God has called them as Christians. The classic term for this fourth and final period of the catechumenal process is "mystagogy," a Greek term which means to be "led through the mysteries." Various other names have been given to this phase: Integration, Baptismal Living, Post-baptismal Catechesis, but they all point to the need for both reflection on the past and discernment about their future in the Christian community.

This double focus on the experience of the sacraments and the empowerment and calling into ministry reflects the Gospels of the Sundays of Easter, the first four of which proclaim our relationship with the risen Lord, and the last four of which challenge us to recognize the personal and corporate consequences of the resurrection and sending of the Spirit.

The catechetical and liturgical resources given here are an integrated approach for a congregation to lead the newly-baptized through this fourth period. As in the third period of intense preparation, there are rituals enacted with the gathered community to mark the neophytes' ongoing growth. The initial phase of reflection on what the Risen Christ has been doing within the participants climaxes on Easter 3 with an Order for Bearing Witness. The phase of discernment of vocation and gifts is blessed on Easter 5 and leads up to the Reaffirmation of the Vocation to Christian Discipleship on Pentecost.

In other words, through continued modeling on how to listen to the Spirit speaking through shared worship, catechetical reflection, and service, the newly baptized along with all the baptized are called to a life of shared discipleship within the Church and for the world.

When Baptism is celebrated at Easter, mystagogy unfolds during Easter Season; if on the Baptism of the Lord, then during the Season after Epiphany.

A Suggested Timeline of Mystagogy

for the Newly Baptized

Introduction

The catechumenal process is marked throughout by reflective learning with the congregation, in which all baptismal identities are awakened. The traditional term for this is *mystagogical learning*.

The period of intense reflective learning after Baptism is also called *mystagogy*.

The following timeline attempts to chart the interconnection between the catechetical and liturgical components of that period.

Overall liturgical suggestions

1. The congregation may provide white robes (albs) for all the newly baptized.
2. During mystagogy, the newly baptized are consistently the focus of part of the sermon.
3. The newly baptized are mentioned in the Prayers of the People.
4. They newly baptized may lead and/or craft the Prayers of the People.

Overall catechetical suggestions

1. The total number of participants in any group should not exceed fifteen.
2. Sponsors should be included if at all possible.

TIMELINE

1st week: 1st catechetical session – reflection on the celebration of Baptism

2nd week: 2nd catechetical session – reflection on the Meal from the perspective of a member of the congregation

3^d Sunday: The Meal & the Order for Bearing Witness to the Work of the Risen Christ

- The newly-baptized wear white robes to make them visible and to declericalize the alb.
- The newly-baptized may be involved in planning worship. The pastor may want to engage them in sermon preparation.
- Competent readers among the newly-baptized may be lectors.
- Nonverbal forms of ministry the newly-baptized may offer include baking the bread for communion and processing with the gifts at the offertory. They may also be trained to assist at the distribution of communion.

3^d week: 3^d catechetical session – Vocations discernment begins.

4th week: 4th catechetical session – Vocations discernment continues.

5th Sunday: The Order Blessing for Spirit's guidance in discernment by the newly- baptized

5th week: 5th catechetical session – Vocations discernment continues.

6th week: 6th catechetical session – Vocations discernment continues.

7th week – 7th catechetical session – Vocations discernment concludes— unless needed to continue Pentecost: Affirmation of Vocation to Christian Discipleship

Guidance for Group Meetings during Mystagogy

Introduction

The catechumenate is both a *process* and an *event*. For the participants it is the slow journey of encountering Christ at work within them through their repeated encounters with the community of believers and the Scriptures.

As a *process*, it moves the participants through several stages of a more personal knowledge of Christ and a deeper commitment to him—until at last they encounter the waters of the font and are reborn in the Spirit. That *event* definitively makes them new members of his Body.

In the weeks between Easter and Pentecost, it is the task of the community now to lead them to a deeper appreciation of what has just happened to them, among them, and within them and to help them discern what gifts they have been given for the service not only of the Christian community but also of the world.

Mystagogical learning is reflective learning. It begins with reliving the memories of the events that have shaped us. Our memories are most powerfully triggered by concrete, physical encounter. The following outline is meant to help the participants get in touch with and process those memories.

Group Meeting 1: Reflecting on What Happened

Though this session focuses on the experience of the newly-baptized, their sponsors should also be invited and should share appropriately in the group's reflections as well. Some concern for the group becoming too large is needed. If the group is quite small, those who were baptized the previous year could also be invited. Otherwise they could be invited to the second session.

Step 1: Gathering

1. The usual meeting room might be the place to begin, especially if the weather means that people have to deal with winter coats or umbrellas, etc. Make them comfortable!
2. Introduce the session in the usual way, congratulate them on their recent sacramental celebration, and explain the purpose of this gathering.

Step 2: Walking Through It

1. Move into the worship space where the events of their Baptism occurred. (Beware of obstacles for people with challenges! A few chairs may be needed at certain points.)
2. If their Baptism was celebrated at Easter or at the Easter Vigil, relight the Easter Candle, and ask how they felt as the light of Christ spread through the room. What did that mean to them personally?

3. Move to the font if the group is not already there. When they were asked to renounce evil and to profess their faith in the Trinity and their commitment to Christ, what did they experience? Did any memories from the past surface at that moment? Any hopes for the future? What was happening within them as they made their profession?

4a. If they were immersed, how did they experience being in the water? What happened within them while they were in the water?

4b. If water was poured over their head, how did they experience that moment? What happened within them?

If the next rituals occurred at the font, stay there. If they happened elsewhere, move to that location. Also, if any of these additional rites was enacted, then prepare in advance the oil, a robe, and/or a candle at the location where they were used.

5. When a hand was laid upon them and the Spirit was invoked and a cross signed on them (possibly with oil), what part of that moment most touched them? What seemed to them to be happening within them?

6. If they were presented with a robe to wear in some fashion, how did being dressed differently make them feel? What did that change mean to them?

7. If they were given a candle, possibly lighted from the Easter Candle, what memories or insights did that gesture evoke within them? Did it bring forth any hopes for the future?

8. When they were presented to the congregation, what did they experience, other than the common dislike of being in front of a group of people?

9. Frequently those baptized are also the ones who present the bread and wine for the Table; if so, move to the Table and ask how did they experience that gesture? Especially in terms of a connection to the congregation and to Christ himself?

10. To wrap up this reflection, you might describe three great images of Baptism, among others, that occur in the New Testament: rebirth by water and the Spirit, dying and rising in Christ, and cleansing. Which of these comes closest to what they experienced?

Step 3: Gospel Reflection

1. In some manner, share with them the Doubting Thomas episode from John that is the gospel reading for the Second Sunday of Easter. Unlike Thomas they have not seen or touched the Savior, but they have come to know and believe in him through the sacraments entrusted to the church. What is their image of Jesus now? How do they feel connected to him?

2. Conclude with prayer in some way, but at this moment joining hands is a way of bonding for those who have been through a common experience and those who accompanied them. The Lord's Prayer is the classic prayer of the baptized.

Group meeting 2: Reflecting on the Eucharist (prior to Easter 3)

Sharing in the Eucharist is the ongoing support of our Christian journey. The newly-baptized are now sharing in it as full members of Christ's Body. The gospels for this Sunday in all three cycles describe a meal shared by the disciples with the risen Lord. Small group work this day might include a shared meal as the frame for reflection on encounters with Christ in the breaking of the bread.

Though this session is focused upon the experience of the newly-baptized, their sponsors should also be invited and should share appropriately in the group's reflections as well. If the group is quite small, those who were baptized the previous year could also be invited.

Step 1: Gathering

If there is to be no meal, then the usual pattern that the group is used to from intense preparation would be appropriate.

If there is to be a shared meal, try to make it as intimate and welcoming as possible. Some people might volunteer to prepare the meal, or it might be potluck.

Step 2: Informal *lectio divina*

1. Begin by providing a framework for next Sunday's Gospel about Jesus eating with his disciples.
2. Have someone read the text aloud.
3. Share in silence.
4. Ask them to share what word or phrase spoke to them.
5. Ask them to share the reaction this raised for them and why.
6. Reread the text.
7. Ask how this text challenges or comforts them.

Step 3: Instruction and Reflection upon the Eucharist

1. Explain how the Eucharist has two moments: the Prayer of Thanksgiving and the sharing of the elements in communion.
2. The Prayer of Thanksgiving has three components, and we are called through active listening to engage each one personally.
 - a. *Remembrance*: In Jewish tradition to recall God's deeds of love for us is to relive them, to be present again at each saving moment.

How do I claim those moments for myself?

- b. *Invocation of the Spirit*: Worship is not about magic words but about opening ourselves up to the transforming power of the Spirit. The presider asks the Father to pour out the Spirit upon the gifts and upon those who share them.

How do I open myself up to the Spirit's power?

- c. *Intercession*: How do I lift up not only myself but the world's needs and concerns for transformation?
- 3. What has sharing in communion come to mean to you?
 - a. How has it been an encounter with the risen Christ?
 - b. How has it connected you with others who share this Meal?
 - c. What implications has it had for living out your Baptism?

Step 4: Preparation for Witness

- 1. If possible, arrange for the newly-baptized to have roles in the Sunday service as readers, presenters of the bread and wine, servers or assistants. Mention them as well in the prayers of the people.
- 2. If the accompanying Order for Mystagogy on Easter 3 is to be used, then explain to them how it will happen, and invite them to prepare for that moment. Fuller directions are given in the text of that Order.
- 3. It would be appropriate to end this meeting with the Lord's Prayer and its request for the gift of daily bread.

Group meetings for Discernment of Vocation: Easter Week 3 through 7

Easter 4 marks an inflexion point in the readings for Easter Season and the work of mystagogy. We move from a reflection on the experience of the sacraments to a focus through the rest of the season on the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Group meetings during this time use a process of discernment of spiritual gifts and vocations that the newly-baptized will affirm on Pentecost.

We commend these resources as possible guides for these sessions.

- 1. *Go, Make Disciples: An Invitation to Baptismal Living*, pp. 134-6 .
This resource contains two simple exercises to reflect upon how the participants minister in their daily lives, plus suggestions for how to prepare for the Rite of Affirmation.
- 2. Collegeville Institute
This resource contains a program named "Called to Life" which would fit with mystagogy. For deepening Christian life in a congregation, there is another one named "Called to Work" that is focused on a profession.
<https://collegevilleinstitute.org/vocation-projects/resources-for-congregations/>
- 3. United Methodist Church: Discernment of spiritual gifts and ministry
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/diy-tools-for-spiritual-gifts-discernment-and-ministry-deployment> (Spiritual gifts and personality inventories may be discussed in a single session)

4. ELCA: Life of Faith Initiative:

The purpose of the Life of Faith initiative is to stir up a culture change that frees us to make *the service by the baptized in the arenas of daily life the central focus of the church's mission.*

<https://lifeoffaith.info>

And we commend this or a similar pattern for these meetings to maintain continuity in the practice of *lectio divina* throughout the second period of mystagogy.

Pattern for Typical Catechetical Sessions, Weeks 3-7 of Mystagogy

- A. Welcome everyone.
- B. Remind everyone of confidentiality.
- C. Check-in about how life is going.
- D. Informal Lectio Divina of the Gospel reading.
- E. Discernment of vocation and gifts assessment.
- F. Informal Lectio Divina of the Acts reading.

Begin by pointing out that this is a story of how a Spirit-filled community attempted to live out their encounter with the risen Christ.

- G. Share in a time of prayer together.
- H. Announcements and reminders

An Order for Mystagogy on Easter III

Giving Witness to the Work of the Risen Christ

Introduction: In all three cycles this Sunday's Gospel passage focuses on a meal shared between the risen Lord and his disciples. It would therefore be appropriate for the new members of the community to experience exercising the various ministries during Sunday Eucharist: readers, presenters of bread and wine, distributors of communion, servers or assistants, as well as being mentioned in the Prayers of the People.

The primary symbol is the community itself in the midst of whom now stand the newly baptized without their sponsors. This is because they have become full members of Christ and the church.

There are two possible placements of this order: after the sermon, just prior to the confession of faith, and at the beginning of the Sending rite. After the sermon, it functions as a witness to the word proclaimed and the living Word. At the beginning of the Sending rite, it functions as a witness also to the service and leadership roles of the newly baptized at the Eucharist and to remind the whole community that we are *all* sent from font and Table to offer witness to our encounter with Christ. In either case, persons are invited to participate in this rite as they choose. At the previous group session for the newly-baptized, they will have been reminded they have this opportunity to speak and should be encouraged to do so.

Witness and Confession of Faith or Sending

After the Sermon or after the Prayer after Communion, the AM addresses the newly baptized, who may be called forward by name.

AM: May our newly-baptized (N.&N.) come to the pulpit/lectern and face the congregation.

When the newly-baptized have arranged themselves by the lectern/pulpit, The PM stands before them and addresses them.

PM: You have been baptized with water and the Holy Spirit, and today you have assisted/will assist at our celebration of the breaking of the bread. In the name of the Church, I invite you to bear witness to the One you have come to know as you have shared in this sacrament with us.

The newly-baptized each may share a word or sentence or brief statement of their encounters with the Risen Christ in the Eucharist, in the Church, or in their daily living.

Then the PM addresses the newly-baptized:

PM: Thank you for the witness to the work of Jesus among us that you have given.

Now look around at these people, *(pause)*
and remember that you are part of God's family.

Look around at this place, *(pause)*
and remember you are at home.

Look at this table, *(pause)*
and be glad that all it holds is yours forever.

We look forward to sharing this life in Christ with you now and in the age to come.

The PM then invites the congregation to express gratitude for what they have shared, such as applause or another appropriate sign. A simple sung Alleluia or an appropriate refrain may be sung such as:

ELW # 209 & 210

Blessed be God, the source of all life, the word of salvation, the spirit of mercy.

Conclusion

Option 1: If this order is before the Creed, the Creed is then confessed. At the prayers of the people, a petition for the newly-baptized is included among the petitions for the day, such as the following:

In these newly-baptized we see signs of your new creation
through Jesus your Son.

Grant that all whom you have made holy and brought into this communion
may be daily renewed in the power of your Spirit. Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Option 2: before the sending

After applause or some other appropriate sign and the refrain, prayer is offered.

PM: Creator of all,
in these newly-baptized we see signs of your new creation
through Jesus your Son.

Grant that all whom you have made holy and brought into this communion
may be daily renewed in the power of your Spirit; through Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**

Before the rite of sending, the AM reminds the congregation the newly baptized will help to lead the processional into the world. They enter the processional immediately following the torches and gospel book.

An Order for Mystagogy on Easter V

Invitation to Discernment of Vocation

Introduction: The first three Sundays of Easter reflect upon the experience of the sacramental moments of Christian initiation. Starting in the fourth week the emphasis shifts to attempting to discern the Spirit's calling (vocation) on their lives in the Church and in the world.

The word "vocation" comes from the Latin for "calling." It suggests something one does in response to God's purpose in our lives. We discover our callings in life as we discern the promptings of the Holy Spirit within us and in our relationships with others. Much like faith, awareness of our callings shifts and transforms over time.

Every person has many vocations. These callings arise from the contexts of our lives, where our gifts interact with others. A person has a calling as member of a family, as friend and neighbor, and as citizen, as well as in one's work and other activities (volunteer, artistic, physical, religious).

Today's rite takes place at the beginning of the sending rite to reflect the focus on the Spirit's gifts for mission that the newly baptized are now exploring. It invokes the Spirit's blessing upon this process of discernment.

The primary symbol is the community itself with whom the newly baptized now stand, no longer accompanied by sponsors. The newly baptized have become full members of Christ and the church.

Prayers of the People

It is appropriate on this day also to include an intercession for the newly baptized in the Prayers of the People, such as the following:

Grant that all who are baptized into Christ, especially these newly baptized,
may faithfully reflect in the world
the love and joy and peace of your kingdom.
Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Invitation and Blessing

The AM addresses the newly baptized. The PM moves to a position among the people, facing the newly baptized.

AM: May our newly baptized (N.&N.) now come to face the congregation.
The newly baptized move into position.

PM to the newly baptized:

In baptism and communion,
you have experienced the presence of Jesus.

In our midst you have borne witness to the Risen Christ.

Now in your discernment we invite you to continue to claim your calling among us and in the world, in the name of Jesus
and the power of the Spirit.

All are invited to stand and extend hands in a gesture of blessing.

PM: Holy Spirit, come to us. All: **Holy Spirit, come to us.**

PM: Generous God, by your Spirit you call your people and fill them with diverse gifts.

Guide now these new members of your people as they discern your call in their lives.

Open their eyes to what you have given,
and move their hearts to follow your lead
that they may grow as members of Christ's body,
and as his witnesses with us in service to all.

We ask this in Jesus' name, trusting in the Spirit's power now and forever.

All: **Amen.**

(Refrain: *ELW #217*: May the God of all grace who has called you to glory support you and make you strong.)

Dismissal

A processional hymn or other acts of sending may follow. The newly baptized remain in place until the processional, leading the congregation (following the cross and torches) into the world.

About the Affirmation of Vocation

This rite of affirmation provides an occasion to acknowledge the gifts of the newly baptized by naming and affirming their particular vocations as part of the Christian community.

The word “vocation” comes from the Latin for “calling.” It suggests something one does in response to God’s purpose in our lives. We discover our callings in life as we discern the promptings of the Holy Spirit within us and in our relationships with others. Much like faith, awareness of our callings shifts and transforms over time.

Every person has many vocations. These callings arise from the contexts of our lives, where our gifts interact with others. A person has a calling as member of a family, as friend and neighbor, and as citizen, as well as in one’s work and other activities (volunteer, artistic, physical, religious).

In the journey of baptismal living, Christians engage these arenas of life as disciples of Christ. We are sustained in our callings by the promise of God’s love and mercy within a community of faith. Through our callings, the Holy Spirit directs our lives in loving service to others and toward God’s purpose of abundant life for all.

This rite provides an occasion to acknowledge the gifts of the newly baptized by naming and affirming their particular vocations.

Affirmation of Vocation to Discipleship at Pentecost

This rite marks the conclusion of the first phase of mystagogical reflection and personal assessment of the Spirit's gifts. Reflection, assessment, and ministry empowered by the gifts of the Spirit continues through lives of discipleship.

In the journey of baptismal living, the newly baptized and all Christians engage all arenas of life as disciples of Christ. We are sustained in our callings by the promise of God's love and mercy within a community of faith. Through our callings, the Holy Spirit directs our lives in loving service to others and toward God's purpose of abundant life for all.

Because in baptism the Spirit empowers us to go forth as disciples, this rite fittingly occurs as part of the sending rite, though it may be located elsewhere within the service.

Those affirming vocation to discipleship gather with the ministers at the baptismal font in full view of the congregation. To reinforce the baptismal roots of this rite, the affirmers carry their baptismal candles which they light from the paschal candle with the assistance of an assisting minister if necessary.

AM: We invite the newly-baptized to come to the font with your baptismal candles and face the congregation.

The PM faces and addresses the newly baptized.

PM: At Easter, by water and the Spirit, you were joined with Christ in his death and resurrection and given new birth as God's own children. You committed yourself then to living the covenant of baptism in your daily life and service.

For these last weeks you have been reflecting on your new life in Christ and the gifts the Spirit has given you to live out your calling.

Now, on the Day of Pentecost, I ask you: How will you endeavor to follow Jesus Christ in active discipleship? [1]

One by one the newly baptized speak about the call to discipleship that each has discerned and also about what gifts of the Spirit have been received to live out that calling.

After each speaks, the congregation sings a refrain.

ELW #217: *May the God of all grace, who has called you to glory support you and make you strong.*

If other members of the congregation have also been engaged in mystagogical reflection the AM may invite them forward at this time to give witness.

The PM addresses the newly baptized.

PM: N.&N., both your work and your rest are in God. With the Spirit's help, endeavor to pattern your life on the Lord Jesus Christ: in gratitude to God and in service to others, at morning and evening, at work and at play, all the days of your life. [2]

AM: Let us pray for these newly-baptized and for ourselves in our vocations.

PM: Father of love, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you have knit these your servants into the one Body of your Son, Jesus Christ and called them to live daily as witnesses to your life-giving grace.

Give them courage, patience and vision, and strengthen us all in our baptismal vocation of witness in the world and of service to others. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen [3]

The sending rite continues.

REFERENCES

1. *Come to the Waters*, 143.
2. From "Recognition of Ministries in the Congregation," *Sundays and Seasons* (online subscription resource), Augsburg Fortress, 2007.
3. From "ELW Prayer 335b," *Sundays and Seasons* (online subscription resource), Augsburg Fortress, 2007.

PART 2: ADAPTATIONS FOR THOSE MAKING AFFIRMATION

INTRODUCTION TO ECUMENICAL RITES FOR THE ALREADY BAPTIZED

God's covenant made in Baptism is irrevocable, but it takes a lifetime to live into it fully. Some have been baptized in infancy but received little or no catechetical formation and now wish to explore life as a Christian. Others have been formed in a Christian tradition but now wish to explore discipleship in another denomination. Others feel called to explore their commitment to their own tradition more deeply. How can the catechumenal process, which began to aid in the conversion of the unbaptized, assist in the spiritual growth of those already baptized who are seeking in some way to grow in that covenant?

After several years of collaboration, first on the ecumenical rites for the unbaptized adult seekers and then on a catechetical and liturgical program for mystagogy, the fourth, reflective, postbaptismal phase of the process, our JBL working group embarked upon adapting all of this that material for those seeking affirmation. The catechetical process for those seeking affirmation is very similar to that for those seeking Baptism and can be found in the *An Ecumenical Guide for Accompanying Spiritual Seekers* under Catechetical Resources on this website. Yet liturgically the threshold rites between the phases need to be quite different.

Some of the words and gestures with which the worshiping community accompanies those seeking Baptism are not appropriate for those already claimed by God. Our various denominations have recognized this fact and created additional rituals for already baptized seekers. It is from these resources that we have developed the following adaptations.

The threshold rite from phase one (inquiry), to phase two (exploration), for the unbaptized is entitled Receiving Hearers/Catechumens. In that rite, sponsors mark all of the seekers' senses with the sign of the cross to claim them for Christ. In the equivalent threshold rite for those seeking affirmation, entitled Welcoming the Already Baptized to a Journey of Affirmation, affirmers are asked to sign *themselves* with the cross as a sign they claim their own Baptism.

The rites that are part of the period of immediate preparation did not need such significant adaptation. The call to repentance is constant in the lives of both baptized and unbaptized. Similarly, the work of mystagogical reflection is much the same, as at that point all participants are already baptized.

We recognize that some churches will have the capacity to lead entirely separate processes for those preparing for baptism and those who are already baptized. Meanwhile, in many, there may be no baptismal candidates, yet several who choose a journey of affirmation as a means to deepen their faith. Part 2 of this guide adapts our resources from Part 1 for these situations.

As we said in the introduction to Part 1, we have engaged in our work with a deep reverence for each other, for the gifts that our traditions had already brought forth, and for the differing ways our traditions or individual congregations might use or perhaps further adapt our work.

With shared love of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and shared passion for the work of preparing and supporting those who seek to live his way, we offer our work.

Michael Marchal (Catholic Church)

Taylor W. Burton Edwards (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)

David Gambrell (Presbyterian Church, USA)

John W. B Hill (The Anglican Church of Canada)

Lisa Kimball (The Episcopal Church, Virginia Theological Seminary)

Thomas Schattauer (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Wartburg Theological Seminary)

Terminology

For the rites themselves

Welcoming the Already Baptized to a Journey of Affirmation

The catechumenal process for the baptized who seek to affirm their faith is fundamentally different. This is why we created a different rite to mark a time to welcome the baptized into the process from the rite we use to mark the reception of hearers.

Calling to Continuing Conversion

This rite, also distinct from Calling to Baptism and Enrollment, addresses the heart of the call which leads those on a journey of affirmation to enter the phase of intensive preparation.

Rite of Healing and Deliverance from Evil

Rite of Healing and Deliverance from Evil, while somewhat revised to address affirmers in particular, retains the same shape as the rites for those preparing for baptism. All of us,, whether baptized or not, are in need of repentance.

For the participants

Affirmers

We chose this term to designate what the already baptized are seeking to do by entering a catechumenal process. Whether for the first time in a public way (as in confirmation or reception into a church of another denomination), or after having been part of a church or perhaps away from the community for some time, all are seeking to affirm the faith, not simply with their lips, but in their lives.

For ministers in the rites

For the sake of consistency, we have used the terminology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to describe participants. Please adapt to fit your tradition.

Presiding minister (PM): Priest, pastor, minister

Assisting minister (AM): Deacon or lay assistant

If no such person is present then the PM assumes those words and functions as well.

Catechist: The person primarily in charge of catechesis of the participants.

If the pastor is the principle catechist, then an appropriate layperson assisting the pastor should carry out the catechist role in the rites.

Sponsor: A lay member of the congregation who will walk with the hearer through the process all the way to Baptism and possibly beyond, into mystagogy.

A RITE FOR WELCOMING THE ALREADY BAPTIZED TO A JOURNEY OF AFFIRMATION

Video: <https://youtu.be/CBY1gkgH-KY>

green = explanations of symbols at work.

red = rubrics, directions

old = sources and explanations

This rite is intended for use with three types of already baptized individuals who desire to renew their baptismal covenant: those being received, those returning to participation, and those seeking renewal.

It may be adjusted to fit a given set of circumstances.

This rite is for those who have already received the gift of baptism, a gift that is irrevocable. It should never be combined with the rite of Receiving Hearers.

The chief symbol in this rite is the assembly gathered for worship. All other liturgical decisions flow from that symbol.

Catechetical Preliminaries:

Since those being welcomed will have to speak for themselves during this service, catechists and sponsors should help the participants to shape their response to the questions at a session together before this celebration. The responses should be personal, about the affirmers' own journeys of faith, and should make clear which of the three types they are. Help them to be brief!

Those who are nervous about public speaking may write what they wish to say beforehand. Sponsors, assure them of your presence and support.

Their first response when their name is called will be: "Here, I am!"

*Their second will depend upon what they have decided to say but should conclude with:
"Now I ask for your prayers and fellowship on my journey of faith."*

The choreography of this rite should be practiced before the service by the PM, AM, and sponsors.

Before the service

The already baptized sit with their sponsors (and families) in the front of the congregation. It is inappropriate to meet them at the door since by Baptism they already belong. It is important that the whole congregation can see both the font and the participants.

Entrance

The opening music and procession and the greeting occur as usual.

The Address to the Community

The PM explains that there are some people to be welcomed at the service. Some are seeking to be received into this community; some are returning to participation in our common life of prayer, worship, and service; some are seeking to renew and deepen their baptismal covenant. The PM then greets the participants in a friendly way and expresses gratitude for their willingness to explore God's call.

The PM moves to the head of the main aisle or to whatever position will enable him/her to be the link between the congregation and the affirmers. PM faces where they will be standing.

The Calling Forward

The AM stands at the center of the space where the affirmers will be standing

AM: Affirmers, please stand and answer when I call your name.

As each name is called, the response is:

Affirmer: Here I am!

When all have been called, the AM addresses them.

AM: Would you please come forward with your sponsors?

The AM helps them to line up in a row across the central point, with the sponsors standing behind them. The AM then goes to stand with the PM.

The Declaration of Intent

PM: The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin
and given you new birth in baptism by water and the Holy Spirit.

In the font you shared in Christ's death and resurrection
and became a member of his household of faith.

As you prepare to reflect more deeply upon the mystery of your baptism,
please declare before this community
why you desire to enter more fully into the life of this church.
{RCIA- USA}

Affirmer: *The response that they have prepared, ending with:*
Now I ask for your prayers and fellowship on my journey of faith.

After each has spoken, the community sings a refrain together.

All: We stand with you; we pray for you, O holy child of God!

PM: *(to all the sponsors)*

Sponsors you are called to be their close companions on this journey
and to be open to your own faith being touched on the way.

Do you commit yourselves to support them with your love, prayer, and presence?

(individually)

N.N., do you?

Sponsors **(individually)**: I do! *RCIA Australia*

PM: Father of mercies, we thank you for these your children/servants
whom you have made your very own in baptism.

Now you have called them to reaffirm their faith,
and they have answered in the presence of your people.

As we walk the pilgrim way together, help us to serve them faithfully
with the same kindness that you have shown to us
and to accept with joy all the gifts of grace that they bring.

May we all be a sign and support for each other of your unending faithfulness.
To you be the glory and the praise through Christ our Lord!

ELC in Canada & RCIA Australia & ACC

All: (musical refrain of praise)

The Signing with the Cross

AM or an appropriate representative of the congregation: (addressing the affirmers)

At your baptism you were claimed for Christ
as the church marked you with the sign of the cross.
Since you now wish to let his death and resurrection touch every part of your life,
claim the promise given you in baptism
by marking yourself with the sign of the cross. {RCIA Australia}

Each affirmer marks themselves with the sign of the cross.

After all have done so, applause or some other sign of welcome would be appropriate.

AM escorts the affirmers and sponsors back to their seats.

PM: Let us pray.

Prayer for the Day/Collect

All: Amen.

AM: (addressing the affirmers and everyone)

Now we are all called to hear God's Word together.

Let us learn and tell its stories, discover its mysteries,
honor its commandments, and rejoice in its good news.
May this life-giving Word, sweeter than honey,

inspire us and make us wise. {ELCA}

or

God's Word is like bread to our hearts; we cannot live without it.
God's Word is like rain that comes down upon the earth; it brings forth fruit in our lives.
Let us share now in hearing the Word of the Lord
and prepare our hearts to hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church. {ACC}

REFERENCES

1. Anglican Church of Canada, exhortation from 'Making Disciples,' "Welcoming Those Turning Again to Christ," <https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/RitesofTurningAgainToChrist.pdf>
2. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. *Holy Baptism and Related Rites*. Renewing Worship, 3. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2002.
3. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Publications Service, 1987.
4. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1988.

CALLING THE ALREADY BAPTIZED TO CONTINUING CONVERSION

Video: <https://youtu.be/9SqbB2l0oNU>

Introduction:

The chief symbol in this rite is the assembly gathered for worship. All other liturgical decisions flow from that symbol.

This rite is intended for use with three types of already baptized individuals who desire to renew their baptismal covenant: those being received, those returning to participation, and those seeking renewal. It may be adjusted to fit a given set of circumstances.

This rite calls for a considerable presence of the community. Ash Wednesday, Lent 1, or Lent 2 may be an appropriate time for your community. If on Lent 1 or Lent 2, this may occur at the beginning of the service. If on Lent 1, place the Calling to Baptism later in the service as a response to the Word.

Because God's call in Baptism is irrevocable, merging this rite with the rite of Calling to Baptism [and Enrollment] would cause confusion and is not recommended.

Catechetical preliminaries: Since their sponsors will speak about those being called during the rite, catechists, affirmers, and sponsors will want to help sponsors to shape their expression about how they have seen the Spirit at work in their affirmers. The responses need to be personal, touching on about each individual's journey of faith.

The catechists should encourage them to be brief.

The sponsors, among other things, should discuss with their companion:

- how to introduce themselves and their companion,*
- how have they come in the last months to know Christ*
- what has led them now to seek a renewed life in Christ*
- how they have experienced growth in their life in Christ*

Each witness by a sponsor will conclude with:

"Now I ask for your continued prayers and support for N.N. on his/her/their journey of faith."

The choreography of this rite should be practiced before the service by the PM, AM, and sponsors.

Before the service

Affirmers sit with their sponsors and families in the front of the congregation.

Entrance

The entrance into worship and the greeting occur as usual.

The Address to the Community (after the entrance, before the reading of the Word)

PM: Facing the congregation at the focal point of the church

Dear People of God, for several months some baptized people have been walking
a journey toward affirming the baptismal covenant at Easter.
They have shared here in the fellowship of this community
and joined us in prayer and service.
They have come to know and treasure more deeply

the presence of Christ in their lives
and have endeavored to follow him more closely.
Today they ask our support
as we walk together in continuing conversion to the way of Christ,

and prepare to celebrate his risen life
and renew our baptismal vows at Easter. *{RCIA USA & Canada}*

The Calling Forward

AM stands at the center of the space where the affirmers will be standing.

Please come forward with your sponsor when I call your name.

The AM helps them to line up in a row across the central point, with the sponsors standing beside them. The AM then goes to stand with the PM.

Witness by Sponsors

PM: Sponsors, I invite you to bear witness about how you have seen the Spirit at work in your companions during the last months.

Sponsor: *The response that they have prepared, ending with:*

Now I ask for your continued prayers and support for *N.N.* on *his/her/their* journey of faith.

After each has spoken, the community sings the refrain together.

All: We stand with you; we pray for you, O holy child of God!

PM: **(to sponsors)**

Thank you for your words of witness.

May your companions see in you
faith in Christ and sincere love for every neighbor.

Walk together through this Lent to the joy of Easter. *{RCIA USA}*

Call to Affirmers

PM: *(to the affirmers)*

N&N, for each of you we have affirmed your desire
to participate more deeply in the life of the Church.

Join with us this Lent in a spirit of mutual repentance and reconciliation.

Hear Christ's call to conversion.

United with him in prayer, fasting, and works of love,
may we all come to know the power of his resurrection. *{RCIA USA & Canada}*

Prayer

PM: Let us pray.

If this rite is celebrated at the beginning of the service,

Prayer of the Day

If this rite is celebrated after the homily, when there are no baptismal candidates.

Prayers of the People

ending with these or similar words:

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, you have called us
to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with you.
Bless these affirming and their sponsors and all your holy people

as we journey in faith this Lent.
Guide us to true repentance and renewal;
following the way of the cross,
may we know again the power of Christ's resurrection.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
All: Amen. *{ELCA provisional}*

The AM escorts the affirmers and sponsors to their seats.

REFERENCES

1. Anglican Church of Canada, exhortation from 'Making Disciples,' "Welcoming Those Who Are Turning Again to Christ," <https://www.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/RitesofTurningAgaintoChrist.pdf>
2. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. *Holy Baptism and Related Rites. Renewing Worship*, 3. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2002.
3. Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, Gordon Lathrop, *Living Witnesses, The Adult Catechumenate: Congregational Prayers to Accompany the Catechumenal Process*, 1992.
4. *The Parish Companion to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, Terry Wade, ed., Melbourne: James Gould House Publishing, 2nd ed. 2005
5. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Publications Service, 1987.
6. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1988

Background to the Rites of Intense Preparation, 2 For Affirmers

The period of intense preparation for affirmers will have a different character than for those preparing for baptism. Affirmers have received the sacrament and are already fully members of the body of Christ, the church. The sacrament and incorporation into the church are not at the immediate end of this process.

Instead, affirmers may be seeking a life of greater faithfulness to Christ, greater closeness to God, more responsiveness to the Holy Spirit, a new or renewed relationship with the church, or a deeper awareness of and action on God's callings in their lives.

In the pages that follow, guided by this awareness, we have adapted the rites of intense preparation we developed for those preparing for baptism. While there remains some overlap (the questions for reflection remain the same), some of the prayers, or some parts of some of the prayers, are unsuitable for use with only affirmers. Others are more optimally suited for affirmers. Our adaptations include the elimination of some prayers and subtle or more substantial rewriting of others.

RITE OF HEALING & DELIVERANCE

LENT III A

For Affirmers

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nn6tR-NluRk>

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is presence and action of the community and the participants' evolving role in it

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the affirmers and their sponsors forward by name.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ,
as we lead these candidates toward the Affirmation of Baptism,
we are called to continue to support them with our fellowship and prayers.

AM: Would the affirmers (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that affirmers and the community are doing the same reflection. Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners, and everyone is called anew to repentance in preparation for Easter. The community's modeling of repentance and prayers are part of their role in the formation of the baptismal candidates.

After everyone is standing in the front or center, facing forward toward the PM.

AM: As the woman of Samaria confessed her faith in Jesus Christ,
the giver of the water of life,
so the church confesses our need for Christ and our trust in God's mercy.

We invite you who are affirming your life among the baptized
to join all the people of God in confessing
our common sinfulness and need for God's mercy.
Let us all open ourselves to the Spirit's work.

Adapted from ELCA¹

The people assume postures appropriate to prayer as they are able.

Reader/catechist:

a. In what ways do you find yourself in a desert? Alone, thirsty, dried out, wandering?

(90-second pause or whatever seems appropriate for this gathering)

Musicians & all: God of all goodness, fountain of life, give us to drink!

b. What are you afraid to tell other people about yourself, even Jesus? *(pause & music)*

What would you tell Jesus about your thirst and your hesitation? *(pause & music)*

c. How have you already received living water from Jesus? How have you shared it with others?
(pause & music)

PM (standing) God of power, you sent your Son to be the Savior of the World. May we all find in Jesus the fountain we seek. Free us all from the sins and weaknesses that weigh us down; and make us holy by a fresh gift of your Spirit. Teach us how to worship and serve you in spirit and truth. We ask this through Christ Jesus, for he is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Inspired by the RCIA²

(or)

God of mercy, through your Son you revealed your faithful care for the woman of Samaria and offered salvation to all who are lonely and estranged. By the consolation of your gracious Spirit, awaken in us all a real thirst for a share in your eternal life. May our lives be a sign of your redeeming love for all among whom we live. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

Adapted from the ACC³

3. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

PM lays hands on the head of each affirmer in turn, with sponsor either standing behind with hands on shoulders kneeling beside with a hand on a shoulder.

PM says this or another appropriate formula to each.

PM: N., God who has begun this good work in you bring it to completion in Christ Jesus, who is Lord forever and ever.

From Philippians

Affirmer: Amen.

All: refrain

3. Option B: Anointing of the Hands of the Affirmers

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal affirmers, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., We anoint you with/Receive this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior. May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Affirmer: Amen.

All: refrain

Adapted from the RCIA⁵

4. **Dismissal**

--AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. *Holy Baptism and Related Rites, Renewing Worship* volume 3. [RW3] Prepared for provisional use. Copyright 2002. Administered by Augsburg Fortress, pg. 12.
2. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: LTP, 1988, Cf. collects in #155.
3. "Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates" in *Making Disciples*, p. 29, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. *RCIA* #301b

RITE OF HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

LENT IV A

For Affirmers

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the affirmers' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the affirmers and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ,
as we lead these persons toward the Affirmation of Baptism,
we continue to support them with our fellowship and prayers.

AM: Would the affirmers (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that affirmers and the community are doing the same reflection. Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners. Their modeling of repentance and prayers are part of their role in the formation of the baptismal candidates.

After everyone is standing in front, facing forward toward the PM:

AM: As the blind man turned away from the shadows and toward Christ, the light, so the church, empowered by the Spirit, renounces the power of evil in all its forms. Let us pray to God who fills the world and our hearts with light. Let us all open ourselves to the Spirit's work.

Adapted from the ELCA¹

The people kneel, bow heads, or assume other postures of prayer.

Reader/catechist:

In your life's journey what has kept you from seeing the truth?

(90-second pause or whatever seems appropriate for this gathering)

Musicians & all: Lord of all mercy, giver of light, restore our sight!

What truth have you failed to acknowledge about yourself? About others? *(pause & music)*

How has Christ's light already scattered the shadows in your life?

(pause & music)

Where are the shadows in society or in the Church that obscure the light of Christ?

(pause & music)

PM (standing) Lord God, source of unfailing life, by the death and resurrection of Christ you have

cast out the shadows of hatred and lies and poured the light of truth and love upon the human family. Hear our prayers for our affirmers. Deliver them and deliver us all from the power of evil. May we all live as children of the light, faithful witnesses to the faith that lives in us. We ask this through Christ Jesus, for he is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Inspired by the RCIA²

(or)

Gracious God, you helped the man born blind to believe in Jesus as the Christ, and through that faith to receive the light of your kingdom. Free your chosen ones from the falsehoods that surround and blind them. Strengthen their hearts with your loving Spirit that truth may be the foundation of their lives. May we all live in your light forever and fearlessly bear witness to what we have seen and heard. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

Adapted from the ACC³

3. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.]

PM lays hands on the head of each affirmer in turn. A sponsor stands behind each affirmer with hands on shoulders, or kneeling beside with a hand on a shoulder. PM may say the following or an appropriate formula to each.

PM: God who has begun this good work in you bring it to completion in Christ Jesus, who is Lord forever and ever.

Affirmer: Amen.

[from Philippians]

All: refrain

Option B: Anointing of the Hands of the Affirmers

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the affirmers, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., *We anoint you with/Receive* this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior. May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Affirmer: Amen.

All: refrain

*Adapted from the RCIA*⁵

4. Dismissal

AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. *RW3*, pg. 12.
2. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: LTP, 1988, Cf. collects in #168.
3. "Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates" in *Making Disciples*, p. 30, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. *RCIA* #301b

RITE OF HEALING & DELIVERANCE

LENT V Year A

For Affirmers

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the participants' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the affirmers and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, as we lead these persons toward the Affirmation of Baptism, we are called to continue to support them with our fellowship and prayers. AM: Would the affirmers (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that affirmers and the community are doing the same reflection. Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners.

After all those called are standing in front, facing forward toward the PM and the congregation..

AM: As Mary and Martha prayed for their brother Lazarus, so the church prays for you, for ourselves, and for all the world, confident in the life-giving presence and mercy of Christ. Aware of our common sinfulness and of God's mercy, let us all open ourselves to the Spirit's work.

The people kneel, bow heads, or assume other postures of prayer.

{Adapted from ELCA}¹

Reader/catechist:

a. What part of your life makes you feel as if you were living in a tomb? What old habits or ways of looking at life make you feel trapped and lifeless?

(90-second pause or whatever seems appropriate for this gathering)

Musicians & all: God of the living, not of the dead, raise us to life!

b. What part of society or the Church makes you feel the same way? *(pause & music)*

c. When do you experience a call to come forth from your tomb? To find liberation? *(pause & music)*

d. How has Jesus been restoring you to life? When do you feel his new life in you? *(pause & music)*

PM (standing) Father, source of all life, in giving life to the living you show the image of your glory; in raising the dead you reveal your unbounded power.

Deliver these affirmers and deliver us all from the corruption of evil. Through your life-giving Spirit fill us all with faith, hope, and love, that we might live with you in the glory of the resurrection. We ask this through Christ Jesus, who is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Inspired by the RCIA²

3. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

PM lays hands on the head of each affirmer in turn. The sponsor stands behind with hands on shoulders or kneels beside with a hand on a shoulder. PM may say these words or an appropriate formula to each:

PM: God who has begun this good work in you bring it to completion in Christ Jesus, who is Lord forever and ever. *[from Philippians]*

Affirmer: Amen.

All: refrain

3. Option B: Anointing of the Hands of the Affirmers

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal candidates and affirmers, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., *We anoint you with/Receive* this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior. May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Affirmer: Amen.

All: refrain

Adapted from the RCIA⁵

4. Dismissal

AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. RW3, pg. 12.
2. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: LTP, 1988, Cf. collects in #175.
3. "Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates" in *Making Disciples*, p. 31, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. RCIA #301b
5. RCIA #103 or *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 277

RITE OF HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

LENT III B

For Affirmers

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the baptismal candidates and affirmers' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the affirmers and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, as we lead these persons toward the Affirmation of Baptism, we are called to support them with our fellowship and prayers.

[AM: Would the affirmers (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.]

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that affirmers and the community are doing the same reflection. Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners.

After everyone is standing in front, facing forward toward the congregation and the PM.

AM: Jesus came to the temple in Jerusalem and drove out the human obstacles between the people and God. The Church confesses our need for him to do this same delivering work in us. We invite you whom God has chosen for baptism [and you who have chosen to affirm the baptismal covenant] to join the people of God as we all kneel down/bow our heads and open ourselves to the Spirit's call.

[adapted from the ELCA]¹

[The people kneel, bow heads, or assume other postures appropriate to prayer.

Reader/catechist:

a. Looking at our own lives, what should we ask Jesus to drive out from us? *(90-second pause)*

Musicians & all: Christ crucified, true power of God, now set us free.

b. How have we betrayed our relationship with Jesus by putting other "gods" into our lives? *(pause and then music)*

c. What stumbling blocks within us keep God's power from working through us?
(pause and then music)

d. What prevents us from hearing the voices of poor and vulnerable people? *(pause & music)*

PM *(standing)*:

God of all power, from living stones, your chosen people, you are building an eternal temple to your glory. Hear our prayers N&N whom you have called to affirmation.

Cleanse them from sin; set them firmly on Christ, the cornerstone; make them holy by a fresh gift of your Spirit. Give us all a deeper trust in the power and wisdom revealed in our crucified Lord. This we ask through Christ, who is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Adapted from the RC Sacramentary²

(or)

Loving God, you sent your Son to restore to us the joy of your presence that we might worship you in spirit and in truth. Deliver N and N whom you have called from every spiritual obstacle and deceit. Reveal in us all the splendor of your dwelling place, the glory of Christ's body created anew in the resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

From the ACC³

3. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

PM lays hands on the head of each baptismal candidate [or affirmer] in turn. The sponsor stands behind with hands on shoulders or kneels beside with a hand on a shoulder.

PM may say these words or an appropriate formula to each:

PM: May God who has begun this good work in you bring it to completion in Christ Jesus who is Lord forever and ever. *From Philippians*

Affirmer: Amen.

3. Option B: Anointing of the Hands

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate

Facing the baptismal candidates [or affirmers], the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., *We anoint you with/Receive* this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior. May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Affirmer: Amen.

[from the RCIA or ELW]⁵

All: refrain

4. Dismissal

AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. *Holy Baptism and Related Rites, Renewing Worship* volume 3. [RW3] Prepared for provisional use. Copyright 2002. Administered by Augsburg Fortress, pg. 15.
2. US Catholic 1973 *Sacramentary*, Cf. Opening Prayer for Common of the Dedication of a Church Outside the Dedicated Church.
3. “Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates” in *Making Disciples*, p. 30, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. *RCIA* #301

RITE OF HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

LENT IV B

For Affirmers

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the baptismal candidates and affirmers' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the affirmers and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, as we lead these persons toward baptism [and/or Affirmation], we are called to support them with our fellowship and prayers.

AM: Would the affirmers (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors..

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that affirmers and the community are doing the same reflection. Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners.

After everyone is standing in front, facing forward toward the congregation and the PM:

AM: Jesus calls us to turn away from self-centeredness and to live in God's great love. Empowered by the Spirit, we renounce the power of evil. Let us pray that God will expose the world's empty promises, and reveal in us the immeasurable riches of God's redeeming grace. Let us all kneel down/bow our heads and open ourselves to the Spirit's call.

Adapted from ELCA¹

The people kneel, bow heads, or assume other postures appropriate to prayer..

Reader/catechist:

a. How have you been surprised by God's grace at work within you?

(90-second pause)

Musicians & all: Love of the Father, life of the world, open our hearts!

b. How is Jesus freeing you from fleshly desires to be gracious toward others? *(pause & music)*

c. What are you still afraid to admit about yourself? Where are you still trapped in a false image you are trying to create for myself?

(pause & music)

d. Jesus was lifted on the cross to reveal and heal the harm of our destructive words and ways. What is Jesus revealing and healing in us?

(pause & music)

PM (**standing**) Lord God, source of unfailing life, by the death and resurrection of Christ you have cast out the shadows of hatred and lies and poured the light of truth and love upon the human family. Hear our prayers for our affirmers. Deliver them and deliver us all from the power of evil.

May we all live as children of the light, faithful witnesses to the faith that lives in us. We ask this through Christ Jesus, for he is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Inspired by the RCIA²

3. **Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing**

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

PM lays hands on the head of each affirmer in turn, with sponsor either standing behind with hands on shoulders or kneeling beside with a hand on a shoulder.

PM could say these words or an appropriate formula to each:

PM: May God who has begun this good work in you bring it to completion in Christ Jesus who is Lord forever and ever. *From Philipians*

Affirmer: Amen.

3. **Option B: Anointing of the Hands**

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal candidates [or affirmers], the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., *We anoint you with/Receive* this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate: Amen.

[from the RCIA or ELW]⁴

All: refrain

4. **Dismissal**

--AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. *RW3*, pg. 15.
2. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: LTP, 1988, Cf. collects in #168.
3. *RCIA* #301b

RITE OF HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

LENT V B

For Affirmers

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the participants' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the affirmers and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, as we lead these persons toward affirmation, we are called to continue to support them with our fellowship and prayers.

AM: Would the affirmers (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that baptismal affirmers and the community are doing the same reflection.

Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners.

After everyone is standing in front, facing forward toward the congregation and the PM.

AM: Jesus draws all people to him from the cross. The church, confident in the life-giving presence and mercy of Christ, now prays for you as Jesus draws you to the day of your Affirmation. Aware of our common sinfulness and of God's mercy, let us all kneel down/bow our heads and open ourselves to the Spirit's call.

Adapted from ELCA¹

The people assume postures appropriate to prayer as they are able.

Reader/catechist:

a. When do I find it difficult to follow Jesus?

(90-second pause or whatever seems appropriate for this gathering) Musicians & all: Lord lifted high, obedient Son raise us to life!

b. What is it that keeps me from seeing Jesus? *(pause & music)*

c. What do I need to die to in my life so that I can receive new life in Jesus? *(pause & music)*

d. The crucified Jesus is our King. What part can I play in changing people's ideas and attitudes toward the poor and vulnerable members of our society? *(pause & music)*

3. – Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

--PM lays hands on the head of each affirmer in turn, with sponsor either standing behind with hands on shoulders or kneeling beside with a hand on a shoulder.

--PM may say these words or an appropriate formula to each:

PM: Merciful God, we come to the Passover of the Lord, the day of judgment of this world when the prince of this world is driven out. Give our affirmers and give us all the freedom to turn from the life of this passing age and to welcome the life of the age to come; for by faith we all share in the resurrection triumph of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

Adapted from the ACC²

PM: God who has begun this good work in you bring it to completion in Christ Jesus who is Lord forever and ever. *From Philippians*

Affirmer Amen.

All: refrain

4. Option B: Anointing of the Hands

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate

Facing the baptismal candidates [or affirmers], the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., *We anoint you with/Receive* this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior. May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate: Amen.

[from the RCIA or ELW]⁴

All: refrain

Dismissal

AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. RW3, pg. 15.
2. "Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates" in *Making Disciples*, p. 31, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
3. RCIA #103 or *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 277

RITE OF HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

LENT III Year C

For Affirmers

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the participants' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the affirmers and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, as we lead these persons toward affirmation, we are called to support them with our fellowship and prayers.

AM: Would the affirmers (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that affirmers and the community are doing the same reflection. Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners.

After everyone is standing in front, facing forward toward the PM:

AM: The barren fig tree requires the gardener's care in order to thrive and bear fruit, and so the church confesses our need for Christ and our trust in God's mercy. We invite you whom God has chosen for affirmation to join the people of God in opening ourselves to the Spirit's work.

Adapted from the ELCA¹

The people kneel, bow heads, or assume other postures appropriate to prayer as they are able.

Reader/catechist:

a. How has God already guided and nurtured you toward a fruitful life? *(90-second pause)*

Musicians & all: God of all mercy, source of new life, help us bear fruit!

b. What needs to be "pruned" from your life so you may bear fruit?

(pause & music)

c. What nourishment helps you bear fruit? *(pause & music)*

d. What nourishment does our world need from you to bear good fruit? *(pause & music)*

PM *(standing)*: God of love, you are the true vinedresser; you prune away our sinfulness that we might bear good and abundant fruit. Hear our prayers for these affirmers. Cleanse them from the sins that burden them and make them holy by the constant working of your Spirit.

Help us all to hear your voice, calling us to repentance and a change of heart. This we ask through

Christ, who is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Inspired by RCIA²

(or)

God of all the ages, in the fullness of time you sent your Anointed One to bring to fulfillment the promised day of salvation. Cultivate what you have planted in these affirmers; and, in this time of your grace, turn their hearts to you. May their lives, and the lives of all of us, bear fruit in this life and in the life to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

From the ACC³

3. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

PM lays hands on the head of each affirmer in turn with sponsor either standing behind with hands on shoulders or kneeling beside with a hand on a shoulder.

PM may say these words or an appropriate formula to each:

PM: God who has begun this good work in you bring it to completion in Christ Jesus who is Lord forever and ever. *[from Philippians]*

Affirmer: Amen.

All: refrain

3. Option B: Anointing of the Hands

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal candidates[or affirmer, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., we anoint you with /N.N., receive this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior. May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Affirmer: Amen.

From the RCIA and the ELCA⁵

4. Dismissal

AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. *Holy Baptism and Related Rites, Renewing Worship* volume 3. [RW3] Prepared for provisional use. Copyright 2002. Administered by Augsburg Fortress, pg. 19.
2. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: LTP, 1988, Cf. collects in #155.
3. "Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates" in *Making Disciples*, p. 32, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. *RCIA* #301b

RITE OF HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

For Affirmers

LENT IV Year C

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the baptismal candidates and affirmers' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the affirmers and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, as we lead these persons toward affirmation, we are called to support them with our fellowship and prayers.

AM: Would the affirmers (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that affirmers and the community are doing the same reflection. Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners.

After everyone is standing in front, facing forward toward the congregation and the PM:

AM: The younger son abandoned his life of sin and returned to the joy of the father; the older son learned the need for compassion and mercy. And so, the church, empowered by the Spirit, is called to renounce any attachment to evil in ourselves and in the world. To receive the embrace of God's forgiveness and love, and enter into the joy of our Father in heaven, let us together open ourselves to the Spirit's work.

The people kneel, bow heads, or assume other postures of prayer as they are able..

Adapted from the ELCA¹

Reader/catechist:

- a. Whose story in this gospel passage resonates most with your own story? *(90-second pause)*

Musicians & all: God of compassion, mercy, and grace, welcome us home!

- b. Where in your story do you need to hear and receive God's compassion?
(pause & music)

- c. What will you do to become more like the father who is merciful to both his sons? *(pause & music)*

d. What will you do to bring God's mercy, reconciliation, and joy to our world?

(pause & music)

PM (**standing**): God of mercy, like the younger son, some of us cry: "I have sinned against you; I am not worthy to be called your child." Like the older son, hurt and angry, some of us stand outside the door. Open wide your arms in mercy to all who trust in your love, especially N&N&N, and deliver us all from any attachment to evil. Give us courage to proclaim to the whole world the mercy and joy that we have found in Christ Jesus, who is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Inspired by the Rite of Penance²

(or)

Father of mercy, when we come to ourselves and acknowledge the poverty of our alienation from one another and from you, your loving arms embrace us. Reveal your healing love to N and N whom you have called by name. May they know themselves welcome in the household of faith where we all find reconciliation and joy through the mercy of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.

[from the ACC]³

3. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

PM lays hands on the head of each affirmer in turn with sponsor either standing behind with hands on shoulders or kneeling beside with a hand on a shoulder.

PM may say these words or an appropriate formula to each:

PM: God who has begun this good work in you bring it to completion in Christ Jesus who is Lord forever and ever. *From Philippians*

Affirmer: Amen.

All: refrain

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This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal candidates, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., we anoint you with /N.N., receive this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior.

May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Affirmer: Amen.

From the RCIA and the ELCA³

3. Dismissal --AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. *RW3*, pg.19.
2. *Rite of Penance*, New York: Pueblo, 1976, #88.
3. *RCIA* #301b

RITE OF HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

LENT V Year C

Affirmers

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the baptismal candidates' and participants' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the affirmers and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, as we lead these persons toward affirmation, we are called to continue to support them with our fellowship and prayers

AM: Would the affirmers (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

2. Reflection

The core symbol is affirmers and the community are doing the same reflection. Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners.

After everyone is standing in front, facing forward toward the congregation and the PM:

AM: Mary of Bethany in faith anointed Jesus in preparation for the crux of his ministry as the Messiah, God's Anointed Son. The church entrusts you to the life-giving presence and mercy of God as you draw nearer to the day of your affirmation. Aware of our common sinfulness and of God's mercy, let us all kneel down/bow our heads and open ourselves to the Spirit's work.

Adapted from ELCA¹

The people kneel, bow heads, or assume other postures of prayer as they are able.

Reader/catechist:

a. Judas was one of Jesus's closest companions, but he betrayed Jesus. What betrayals in your life, by you or others, remain as obstacles to following Jesus now? *(90-second pause or whatever seems appropriate for this gathering)*

Musicians & all: God of all mercy, giver of grace, work new wonders!

b. Judas claimed concern for people in need, but he was a hypocrite. What masks of your own selfishness are you afraid to take off?

(pause & music)

c. People in need are always with us. Where have our hearts grown tired and cold toward others?

(pause & music)

d. Jesus restored Lazarus to life. How do you already find Jesus restoring life in you?
(pause & music)

PM (standing) God of boundless compassion, you are slow to anger and rich in mercy. Grant us pardon and trust in you. Through your life-giving Spirit, anoint us all with faith, hope, and love, that we may always walk with you in the way of the cross and the glory of the resurrection. We ask this through Christ Jesus, who is Lord forever and ever. **All: Amen.**

Inspired by the RCIA²

(or)

Gracious God, in Jesus our Savior, you have made us your friends and shared in our very lives. Like Mary of Bethany, may N. and N., your chosen ones, and all your people find freedom and courage to pour out our very lives, a fragrant offering to the one who gave his very life for us all, your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Adapted from ACC³

3. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

PM lays hands on the head of each affirmer in turn with sponsor either standing behind with hands on shoulders or kneeling beside with a hand on a shoulder.

PM may say these words or an appropriate formula to each:

PM: God who has begun this good work in you bring it to completion in Christ Jesus who is Lord forever and ever. *From Philippians*

Affirmer: Amen.

All: refrain

3. Option B: Anointing of the Hands

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal candidates, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., we anoint you with /N.N., receive this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior.

May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Affirmer: Amen.

From the RCIA and the ELCA⁴

All: refrain

4. Dismissal

AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. *RW3*, pg.19.
2. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: LTP, 1988, Cf. collects in #175.
3. "Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates" in *Making Disciples*, p. 32, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. *RCIA #103/Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 277.

Mystagogy: The Fourth Phase of the Catechumenal Process

FOREWORD

The Spirit is not finished with the newly baptized. At Baptism they have not graduated but have just begun a new life of Christian discipleship within the community. How could a community best accompany these “newborns” on the first steps of this lifelong journey?

After several years of collaboration on JBL’s composite rites for the first three phases of the catechumenal process, our working group decided to embark upon the development of both catechetical and liturgical resources for the fourth phase, mystagogy. That was our challenge.

In the first project we could draw upon the richness of the material available across several North American Christian traditions: Roman Catholic, Episcopal, United Methodist, Anglican Church of Canada, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in our attempt to produce a single resource recognizable by our various traditions as well as useful for training session. (Cf. <https://journeytobaptism.org/resources/worship-resources/>)

When we looked this time at the different denominational resources, we found some suggestions about homilies or sermons addressed to the newly baptized, a possibility of their continued inclusion in the Prayers of the People as well as a call to sacramental reflection or a gifts assessment. Yet there was no integrated liturgical and catechetical process similar to the process of intense preparation. This time we would have to be creative.

In our efforts we found ourselves guided by the following insights:

1. We would continue to be guided by the Scriptures. Since this phase typically occurs during the season of Easter, we would attend the structure of the readings from Easter Day to Pentecost, especially the readings from the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles.
2. We would suggest that the newly baptized regularly be the focus of some portion of corporate worship so that they could experience the ongoing love, support, and prayers of the congregation as they had during intense preparation.
3. The sessions for the first few weeks would be reflective, focusing upon the work of the Spirit during the prior phases of the process and upon the newly baptized’s experience of the rich rites of Baptism.
4. The sessions during subsequent weeks would be more active, helping the newly baptized move forward in the integration into the Christian community and its mission of service. During our conversations about this component, we came to realize that the attempt to discern what particular gifts the Spirit had given the newly baptized had to happen within the context of a prior discernment about baptism, along with all the baptized, because all of the baptized are called to a life of shared discipleship within the Church and for the world.

As we said in the introduction to the composite rites, we engaged our work with a deep sense of reverence for each other, for the gifts our traditions had already brought forth, and for the differing ways our traditions or individual congregations may use or perhaps further adapt our work to suit their contexts.

With shared love in our one Lord, Jesus Christ, and shared passion for the work of preparing and

supporting those who seek to live his way with us, we offer our work.

Michael Marchal RC

Taylor W. Burton Edwards ELCA

David Gambrell PCUSA

John W. H. Hill ACC

Lisa Kimball TEC

Thomas Schattauer ELCA

With thanks to Susan Forshey (TEC) and Todd Townshend (ACC) who began this work with us but who had to leave because of professional responsibilities.

Introduction to Mystagogy

The 4th Period of the Catechumenal Process

Baptism is an event. Yet, as a sign of God's mercy and belonging, Baptism stands over the whole course of one's life. It is an event with a trajectory, not just a moment in time. Some metaphors used in the New Testament to describe the meaning of baptism are of radical, inward transformation: death to resurrection, rebirth in the Spirit, darkness to light. Others portray a radical relocation within a community: from alien to member of God's own People, from slave to heir, from being cut off to becoming a full member of the Body of Christ.

A metaphor which does *not* work with Baptism is graduation. Graduation marks the definitive end of a process and a separation from an institution or a community. The most common term used for the newly baptized in the early centuries of the Christian Church was "neophytes," a Greek term meaning "those newly sprouting." (See I Corinthians 3:6 and I Timothy 3:6). Neophytes have become part of God's family and been welcomed with joy, but they still need the support of the community for continued growth as they take their first steps into baptismal living, into an ongoing, fruitful life of mutually accountable Christian discipleship.

But not only neophytes need such support. So do those who, for any number of reasons, are choosing a journey of affirmation at some remove from the time of their baptism.

And so, just as the initial catechumenal process does not end at baptism, those seeking to affirm their baptismal vows may be offered period of reflection about what has happened at the font, perhaps many years ago, how they have been sustained by the sacraments since that time, and about what gifts the Spirit has continued to give them for living out the diverse vocations to which God has called them as Christians. The classic term for this fourth and final period of the catechumenal process is "mystagogy," a Greek term which means to be "led through the mysteries." Various other names have been given to this phase: Integration, Baptismal Living, Post-baptismal Catechesis. All of these point to the need for both reflection on the past and discernment about their future in the Christian community.

This double focus on the experience of the sacraments and the empowerment and calling into ministry reflects the Gospels of the Sundays of Easter, the first four of which proclaim our relationship with the risen Lord, and the last four of which challenge us to recognize the personal and corporate consequences of the resurrection and sending of the Spirit.

The catechetical and liturgical resources given here are an integrated approach for a congregation to lead affirmers through this fourth period. As in the third period of intense preparation, there are rituals enacted with the gathered community to mark the affirmers' ongoing growth. The initial phase of reflection on what the Risen Christ has been doing within the participants climaxes on Easter 3 with an Order for Bearing Witness. The phase of discernment of vocation and gifts is blessed on Easter 5 and leads up to the Reaffirmation of the Vocation to Christian Discipleship on Pentecost.

In other words, through continued modeling on how to listen to the Spirit speaking through shared worship, catechetical reflection, and service, affirmers along with all the baptized are called to a life of shared discipleship within the Church and for the world.

When Baptism is celebrated at Easter, mystagogy unfolds during Easter Season; if on the Baptism of the Lord, then during the Season after Epiphany.

A Suggested Timeline of Mystagogy for Affirmers

Introduction

The catechumenal process is marked throughout by reflective learning with the congregation, in which all baptismal identities are awakened. The traditional term for this is *mystagogical learning*.

The period of intense reflective learning after Baptism is also called *mystagogy*.

The following timeline attempts to chart the interconnection between the catechetical and liturgical components of that period.

Overall liturgical suggestions

1. The congregation may provide white robes (albs) for all the newly baptized.
2. During mystagogy, affirmers are consistently the focus of part of the sermon.
3. Affirmers are mentioned in the Prayers of the People.
4. Affirmers may lead and/or craft the Prayers of the People.

Overall catechetical suggestions

1. The total number of participants in any group should not exceed fifteen.
2. Sponsors should be included if at all possible.

TIMELINE

1st week: 1st catechetical session – reflection on the celebration of Baptism

2nd week: 2nd catechetical session – reflection on the Meal from the perspective of a member of the congregation

3^d Sunday: The Meal & the Order for Bearing Witness to the Work of the Risen Christ

– Affirmers may be involved in planning worship. The pastor may want to engage them in sermon preparation.

– Competent readers among the affirmers may be lectors.

– Affirmers may bake the bread for communion and process with the gifts at the offertory. They may also be trained to assist at the distribution of communion.

3^d week: 3^d catechetical session – Vocations discernment begins.

4th week: 4th catechetical session – Vocations discernment continues.

5th Sunday: The Order Blessing for Spirit's guidance in discernment by Affirmers

5th week: 5th catechetical session – Vocations discernment continues.

6th week: 6th catechetical session – Vocations discernment continues.

7th week – 7th catechetical session – Vocations discernment concludes—unless it is necessary to continue it after Pentecost.

Pentecost: Affirmation of Vocation to Christian Discipleship

Guidance for Group Meetings during Mystagogy

Introduction

The catechumenate is both a *process* and an *event*. For the participants it is the slow journey of encountering Christ at work within them through their repeated encounters with the community of believers and the Scriptures.

In the weeks between Easter and Pentecost, it is the task of the community to lead affirmers to a deeper appreciation of what has already happened to them, as well as what is now happening among them and within them, and to help them discern afresh the gifts they have been given for the service not only of the Christian community but also of the world.

Mystagogical learning is reflective learning. It begins with reliving the memories of the events that have shaped us. Our memories are most powerfully triggered by concrete, physical encounter. The following outline is meant to help the participants get in touch with and process those memories.

Group Meeting 1: Reflecting on What Happened

Though this session focuses on the experience of the affirmers, their sponsors should also be invited and should share appropriately in the group's reflections as well. Do not make the groups too large (more than 15, including sponsors and catechist). If the group is quite small, those who recently participated in mystagogy as affirmers may be invited. Otherwise they could be invited to the second session.

Step 1: Gathering

The usual meeting room might be the place to begin, especially if the weather means that people have to deal with winter coats or umbrellas, etc. Make them comfortable.

Introduce the session in the usual way, congratulate them on their recent sacramental celebration, and explain the purpose of this gathering.

Step 2: Walking Through It

Move into the worship space where the events of Baptism occur. Ask group members to describe the space where their own baptisms occurred, and any reflections they have about the significance of that space.

If their Baptism was celebrated at Easter or at the Easter Vigil, relight the Easter Candle, and ask about any memories they have of the role of light at their baptism, whether the Paschal Candle or other forms of light. What did that mean to them personally.

Move to the font if the group is not already there. When they were asked to renounce evil and to profess their faith in the Trinity and their commitment to Christ, what did they experience? Did any memories from the past surface at that moment? Any hopes for the future? What was happening within them as they made their profession?

If they were immersed, how did they experience being in the water? What happened within them while they were in the water? If water was poured over their head, how did they experience that moment? What happened within them?

If the next rituals occurred at the font, stay there. If they happened elsewhere, move to that location. Also, if any of these additional rites was enacted, then prepare in advance the oil, a robe, and/or a candle at the location where they were used.

When a hand was laid upon them and the Spirit was invoked and a cross signed on them (possibly with oil), what part of that moment most touched them? What seemed to them to be happening within them?

If they were presented with a robe to wear in some fashion, how did being dressed differently make them feel? What did that change mean to them?

If they were given a candle, possibly lighted from the Easter Candle, what memories or insights did that gesture evoke within them? Did it bring forth any hopes for the future? What does it mean now?

When they were presented to the congregation, what did they experience, other than the common dislike of being in front of a group of people?

Frequently those baptized are also the ones who present the bread and wine for the Table; if so, move to the Table and ask how they experienced that gesture? Especially in terms of a connection to the congregation and to Christ himself?

To wrap up this reflection, you might describe three great images of Baptism, among others, that occur in the New Testament: rebirth by water and the Spirit, dying and rising in Christ, and cleansing. Which of these comes closest to what they experienced? Which comes closest to what they are seeking now?

Step 3: Gospel Reflection

In some manner, share with them the Doubting Thomas episode from John that is the gospel reading for the Second Sunday of Easter. Unlike Thomas they have not seen or touched the Savior, but they have come to know and believe in him through the sacraments entrusted to the church. What is their image of Jesus now? How do they feel connected to him?

Conclude with prayer in some way, but at this moment joining hands is a way of bonding for those who have been through a common experience and those who accompanied them. The Lord's Prayer is the classic prayer of the baptized.

Group meeting 2: Reflecting on the Eucharist (prior to Easter 3)

Sharing in the Eucharist is the ongoing support of our Christian journey. The newly-baptized are now sharing in it as full members of Christ's Body. The gospels for this Sunday in all three cycles describe a meal shared by the disciples with the risen Lord. Small group work this day might include a shared meal as the frame for reflection on encounters with Christ in the breaking of the bread.

Though this session is focused upon the experience of the newly baptized and affirmers, their sponsors should also be invited and should share appropriately in the group's reflections as well. If the group is quite small, those who were baptized the previous year could also be invited.

Step 1: Gathering

If there is to be no meal, then the usual pattern that the group is used to from intense preparation would be appropriate.

If there is to be a shared meal, try to make it as intimate and welcoming as possible. Some people might volunteer to prepare the meal, or it might be potluck.

Step 2: Informal *lectio divina*

Begin by providing a framework for next Sunday's Gospel about Jesus eating with his disciples.

Have someone read the text aloud.

Share in silence.

Ask them to share what word or phrase spoke to them.

Ask them to share the reaction this raised for them and why.

Reread the text.

Ask how this text challenges or comforts them.

Step 3: Instruction and Reflection upon the Eucharist

Explain how the Eucharist has two moments: the Prayer of Thanksgiving and the sharing of the elements in communion.

The Prayer of Thanksgiving has three components, and we are called through active listening to engage each one personally.

Remembrance: In Jewish tradition to recall God's deeds of love for us is to relive them, to be present again at each saving moment.

How do I claim those moments for myself?

Invocation of the Spirit: Worship is not about magic words but about opening ourselves up to the transforming power of the Spirit. The presider asks the Father to pour out the Spirit upon the gifts and upon those who share them.

How do I open myself up to the Spirit's power?

Intercession: How do I lift up not only myself but the world's needs and concerns for transformation?

What has sharing in communion come to mean to you?

How has it been an encounter with the risen Christ?

How has it connected you with others who share this Meal?

What implications has it had for living out your Baptism?

Step 4: Preparation for Witness

If possible, arrange for affirmers to have roles in the Sunday service as readers, presenters of the bread and wine, servers or assistants. Mention them as well in the prayers of the people.

If the accompanying Order for Mystagogy on Easter 3 is to be used, then explain to them how it

will happen, and invite them to prepare for that moment. Fuller directions are given in the text of that Order.

It would be appropriate to end this meeting with the Lord's Prayer and its request for the gift of daily bread.

Group meetings for Discernment of Vocation: Easter Week 3 through 7

Easter 4 marks an inflexion point in the readings for Easter Season and the work of mystagogy. We move from a reflection on the experience of the sacraments to a focus through the rest of the season on the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Group meetings during this time use a process of discernment of spiritual gifts and vocations that the newly-baptized will affirm on Pentecost.

We commend these resources as possible guides for these sessions.

Go, Make Disciples: An Invitation to Baptismal Living, pp. 134-6 .

This resource contains two simple exercises to reflect upon how the participants minister in their daily lives, plus suggestions for how to prepare for the Rite of Affirmation.

Collegeville Institute

This resource contains a program named "Called to Life" which would fit with mystagogy. For deepening Christian life in a congregation, there is another one named "Called to Work" that is focused on a profession.

<https://collegevilleinstitute.org/vocation-projects/resources-for-congregations/>

United Methodist Church: Discernment of spiritual gifts and ministry

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/diy-tools-for-spiritual-gifts-discernment-and-ministry-deployment>

(Spiritual gifts and personality inventories may be discussed in a single session)

ELCA: Life of Faith Initiative:

The purpose of the Life of Faith initiative is to stir up a culture change that frees us to make *the service by the baptized in the arenas of daily life the central focus of the church's mission*.

<https://lifeoffaith.info>

And we commend this or a similar pattern for these meetings to maintain continuity in the practice of *lectio divina* throughout the second period of mystagogy.

Pattern for Typical Catechetical Sessions, Weeks 3-7 of Mystagogy

Welcome everyone.

Remind everyone of confidentiality.

Check-in about how life is going.

Informal Lectio Divina of the Gospel reading.

Discernment of vocation and gifts assessment.

Informal Lectio Divina of the Acts reading.

Begin by pointing out that this is a story of how a Spirit-filled community attempted to live out their encounter with the risen Christ.

Share in a time of prayer together.

Announcements and reminders

An Order for Mystagogy on Easter III

For Affirmers

Giving Witness to the Work of the Risen Christ

Introduction: In all three cycles this Sunday's Gospel passage focuses on a meal shared between the risen Lord and his disciples. It would therefore be appropriate for affirmers to offer the various ministries during Sunday Eucharist: readers, presenters of bread and wine, distributors of communion, servers or assistants, as well as being mentioned in the Prayers of the People.

The primary symbol is the community itself in the midst of whom now stand the affirmers *without their sponsors* because they are full members of Christ and the church.

There are two possible placements of this order: after the sermon, just prior to the confession of faith, and at the beginning of the Sending rite. After the sermon, it functions as a witness to the word proclaimed and the living Word. At the beginning of the Sending rite, it functions as a witness also to the service and leadership roles affirmers at the Eucharist and to remind the whole community that we are all sent from font and Table to make such a witness to our encounter with Christ. In either case, affirmers are invited to participate in this rite. At the previous group session they should learn that they will have this opportunity to speak and be encouraged to do so.

Witness and Confession of Faith or Sending

After the Sermon or after the Prayer after Communion, the AM addresses the affirmers, who may be called forward by name.

AM: May our affirmers (N.&N.) come to the pulpit/lectern and face the congregation.

When the affirmers have arranged themselves by the lectern/pulpit, The PM stands before them and addresses them.

PM: You have been baptized with water and the Holy Spirit, and today you have assisted/will assist at our celebration of the breaking of the bread. In the name of the Church, I invite you to bear witness to the One you have come to know as you have shared in this sacrament with us.

The affirmers each may share a word or sentence or brief statement capturing their encounters with the Risen Christ in the Eucharist, in the Church, or in their daily living

Then the PM addresses the affirmers:

PM: Thank you for the witness to the work of Jesus among us that you have given.

Now look around at these people, *(pause)*

and remember that you are part of God's family. Look around at this place, *(pause)*

and remember you are at home.

Look at this table, *(pause)*

and be glad that all it holds is yours forever.

We are grateful to be sharing this life in Christ with you now and in the age to come.

The PM then invites the congregation to express gratitude for what they have shared, such as applause or another appropriate sign. A simple sung Alleluia may then be offered or an appropriate refrain such as:

ELW # 209 & 210

Blessed be God, the source of all life, the word of salvation, the spirit of mercy.

Conclusion

Option 1: If this order is before the Creed, the Creed is then confessed. At the prayers of the people, a petition for the affirmers is included among the petitions for the day, such as the following:

Creator of all,
in these affirmers we see signs of your sanctifying work
drawing them into faithful discipleship to Jesus, your Son.
Grant that all whom you have made holy and brought into this communion
may be daily renewed in the power of your Spirit. Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Option 2: before the sending

After applause or some other appropriate sign and the refrain, prayer is offered.

PM: Creator of all,
in these affirmers we see signs of your sanctifying work
drawing them into faithful discipleship to Jesus, your Son.
Grant that all whom you have made holy and brought into this communion
may be daily renewed in the power of your Spirit.

All: **Amen.**

Before the rite of sending, the AM reminds the congregation the affirmers will help lead the processional into the world. They enter the processional immediately following the torches and gospel book.

An Order for Mystagogy on Easter V For Affirmers

Invitation to Discernment of Vocation

Introduction: The first three Sundays of Easter reflect upon the experience of the sacramental moments of Christian initiation. Starting in the fourth week the emphasis shifts to attempting to discern the Spirit's calling (vocation) on their lives in the Church and in the world.

The word "vocation" comes from the Latin for "calling." It suggests something one does in response to God's purpose in our lives. We discover our callings in life as we discern the promptings of the Holy Spirit within us and in our relationships with others. Much like faith, awareness of our callings shifts and transforms over time.

Every person has many vocations. These callings arise from the contexts of our lives, where our gifts interact with others. A person has a calling as member of a family, as friend and neighbor, and as citizen, as well as in one's work and other activities (volunteer, artistic, physical, religious).

Today's rite takes place at the beginning of the sending rite to reflect the focus on the Spirit's gifts for mission that the newly baptized are now exploring. It is meant to invoke the Spirit's blessing upon this process of discernment.

The primary symbol is the community itself with whom the affirmers stand, no longer accompanied by sponsors. They are all full members of Christ and the church.

Prayers of the People

It is appropriate on this day also to include an intercession for the newly baptized and affirmers in the Prayers of the People, such as the following:

Grant that all who are baptized into Christ, especially these affirmers,,
may faithfully reflect in the world
the love and joy and peace of your kingdom.
Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Invitation and Blessing

AM addresses the affirmers.

PM moves to a position among the people, facing the affirmers..

AM: May our affirmers (N.&N.) now come to face the congregation.

The affirmers move into position

PM to the affirmers:

In baptism and communion,
you have experienced the presence of Jesus.
In our midst you have borne witness to the Risen Christ.
Now in your discernment we invite you to claim your calling among us and in the world,
in the name of Jesus
and the power of the Spirit.

All are invited to stand and extend hands in a gesture of blessing.

PM: Holy Spirit, come to us. All: **Holy Spirit, come to us.**

PM: Generous God, by your Spirit you call your people and fill them with diverse gifts.
Guide now these members of your people as they continue to discern your call in their lives.

Open their eyes to what you have given,
and move their hearts to follow your lead
that they may grow as members of Christ's body,
and as his witnesses with us in service to all.

We ask this in Jesus' name, trusting in the Spirit's power now and forever.

All: **Amen.**

(Refrain: *ELW* #217: May the God of all grace who has called you to glory support you and make you strong.)

Dismissal

A processional hymn or other acts of sending may follow. Affirmers remain in place until the processional, leading the congregation (following the cross and torches) into the world.

About the Affirmation of Vocation

This rite of affirmation provides an occasion to acknowledge the gifts of the affirmers by naming and affirming their particular vocations as part of the Christian community.

The word “vocation” comes from the Latin for “calling.” It suggests something one does in response to God’s purpose in our lives. We discover our callings in life as we discern the promptings of the Holy Spirit within us and in our relationships with others. Much like faith, awareness of our callings shifts and transforms over time.

Every person has many vocations. These callings arise from the contexts of our lives, where our gifts interact with others. A person has a calling as member of a family, as friend and neighbor, and as citizen, as well as in one’s work and other activities (volunteer, artistic, physical, religious).

In the journey of baptismal living, Christians engage these arenas of life as disciples of Christ. We are sustained in our callings by the promise of God’s love and mercy within a community of faith. Through our callings, the Holy Spirit directs our lives in loving service to others and toward God’s purpose of abundant life for all.

This rite provides an occasion to acknowledge the gifts of affirmers by naming and supporting them in claiming their callings and the resources they have to fulfill them.

Affirmation of Vocation to Discipleship at Pentecost

This rite marks the conclusion of the first phase of mystagogical reflection and personal assessment of the Spirit's gifts. Reflection, assessment, and ministry empowered by the gifts of the Spirit continues through lives of discipleship.

In the journey of baptismal living, the newly baptized and all Christians engage all arenas of life as disciples of Christ. We are sustained in our callings by the promise of God's love and mercy within a community of faith. Through our callings, the Holy Spirit directs our lives in loving service to others and toward God's purpose of abundant life for all.

Because in baptism the Spirit empowers us to go forth as disciples, this rite fittingly occurs as part of the sending rite, though it may be located elsewhere within the service.

Those affirming vocation to discipleship gather with the ministers at the baptismal font in full view of the congregation. To reinforce the baptismal roots of this rite, the affirmers carry their baptismal candles which they light from the paschal candle with the assistance of an assisting minister if necessary.

AM: We invite the affirmers to come to the font with your baptismal candles and face the congregation.

The PM faces and addresses the affirmers.

PM: By water and the Spirit, you have been joined with Christ in his death and resurrection and given new birth as God's own children. You committed yourself then to living the covenant of baptism in your daily life and service.

For these last weeks you have been reflecting on your new life in Christ and the gifts the Spirit has given you to live out your calling.

Now, on this Day of Pentecost, I ask you: How will you endeavor to follow Jesus Christ in active discipleship?¹

One by one, the affirmers speak about the call to discipleship that each has discerned and also about what gifts of the Spirit have been received to live out that calling.

After each speaks, the congregation sings a refrain.

ELW #217: *May the God of all grace, who has called you to glory support you and make you strong.*

If other members of the congregation have also been engaged in mystagogical reflection the AM may invite them forward at this time to give witness.

The PM addresses the affirmers..

PM: N.&N., both your work and your rest are in God. With the Spirit's help, endeavor to pattern your life on the Lord Jesus Christ: in gratitude to God and in service to others, at morning and evening, at work and at play, all the days of your life.

AM: Let us pray for these newly-baptized, affirmers, and for ourselves in our vocations.

PM: Father of love, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you have knit these your servants into the one Body of your Son, Jesus Christ and called them to live daily as witnesses to your life-giving grace.²

Give them courage, patience and vision, and strengthen us all in our baptismal vocation of witness in the world and of service to others. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.³

All: Amen.

The sending rite continues.

REFERENCES

1. *Come to the Waters*, 143.
2. From "Recognition of Ministries in the Congregation," *Sundays and Seasons* (online subscription resource), Augsburg Fortress, 2007.
3. From "ELW Prayer 335b," *Sundays and Seasons* (online subscription resource), Augsburg Fortress, 2007.

Part 3: Combined Rites for Those Preparing for Baptism and Affirmation

Introduction

There is a classic phrase in work with the catechumenate: the first challenge is “sorting the fish.” The seekers who approach a congregation are in totally diverse stages of formation and information and sacramental status; yet they are all experiencing a call to conversion. The “Guide for Accompanying Any Spiritual Seeker” in the Catechetical Resources section of the Journey to Baptismal Living website contains a detailed description both of how to conduct an initial conversation with a seeker and how to figure out what their formation process might look like.

Because of that diversity in background, separating the unbaptized and the baptized in a catechetical process is unnecessary. Yet, in the liturgical process, it is crucial. We would suggest therefore reading the introductions to Part 1 and Part 2 to understand the differences between Receiving Hearers and Welcoming the Already Baptized to a Journey of Affirmation, between Calling to Baptism (and Enrollment) and the Call to Continuing Conversion—and why we urge not combining those rites.

The combined rites given here, then, are the Rites of Healing and Deliverance which emphasize the element of repentance in the conversion process and so are appropriate for any seeker and indeed for the whole congregation. Sacramental status is not a crucial distinction. In the same way the rites suggested for mystagogy are combined since everyone in the process would now be baptized. How you treat these persons in formation is one matter. Ritually, the actions would be the same.

Catechumenal work can be at times complicated but is always rewarding. We offer these rites in the hope that they will be a support in your efforts and with our prayers for your ministry.

RITE OF HEALING & DELIVERANCE

LENT III A

For Baptismal Candidates and Affirmers

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nn6tR-NluRk>

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

*The core symbol is presence and action of the community and the participants”
evolving role in it*

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the baptismal candidates, affirmers and their sponsors forward by name.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters,, siblings in Christ,
as we lead these candidates toward Baptism and the Affirmation of Baptism,
we are called to continue to support them with our fellowship and prayers.

AM: Would the baptismal candidates please come forward with their sponsors.

AM: Would the affirmers (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that baptismal candidates, affirmers and the community are doing the same reflection. Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners, and everyone is called anew to repentance in preparation for Easter. The community’s modeling of repentance and prayers are part of their role in the formation of the baptismal candidates.

After everyone is standing in the front or center, facing forward toward the PM.

AM: As the woman of Samaria confessed her faith in Jesus Christ,
the giver of the water of life,
so the church confesses our need for Christ and our trust in God’s mercy.

We invite you whom God has chosen for baptism
and you who are affirming your life among the baptized
to join all the people of God in confessing
our common sinfulness and need for God’s mercy.
Let us all open ourselves to the Spirit’s work.

Adapted from ELCA¹

The people assume postures appropriate to prayer as they are able.

Reader/catechist:

a. In what ways do you find yourself in a desert? Alone, thirsty, dried out, wandering?
(90-second pause or whatever seems appropriate for this gathering)

Musicians & all: God of all goodness, fountain of life, give us to drink!

b. What are you afraid to tell other people about yourself, even Jesus? *(pause & music)*
What would you tell Jesus about your thirst and your hesitation? *(pause & music)*

c. How have you already received living water from Jesus? How have you shared it with others?
(pause & music)

PM *(standing)* God of power, you sent your Son to be the Savior of the World. Like the woman of Samaria, may these baptismal candidates thirst for living water and may we all find in Jesus the fountain we seek. Free us all from the sins and weaknesses that weigh us down; and make us holy by a fresh gift of your Spirit. Teach us how to worship and serve you in spirit and truth. We ask this through Christ Jesus, for he is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Inspired by the RCIA²

(or)

God of mercy, through your Son you revealed your faithful care for the woman of Samaria and offered salvation to all who are lonely and estranged. In your great love, show your mercy to these baptismal candidates, N and N who desire to be reborn as your children. As they draw near to the fountain of living water, heal them and heal us all from all bitterness and resentment, from all that holds us back from you. By the consolation of your gracious Spirit, awaken in us all a real thirst for a share in your eternal life. May our lives be a sign of your redeeming love for all among whom we live. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

Adapted from the ACC³

3. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

PM lays hands on the head of each baptismal candidate and affirmer in turn, with sponsor either standing behind with hands on shoulders kneeling beside with a hand on a shoulder.

PM may say this or another appropriate formula to each.

PM: N., Christ our Savior strengthen you with his power, for he is Lord forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate/Affirmer: Amen

From the RCIA⁴

All: **refrain**

PM: N., God who has begun this good work in you bring it to completion in Christ Jesus, who is Lord forever and ever. *From Philipians.*

Baptismal Candidate/Affirmer: Amen.

All: **refrain**

3. Option B: Anointing of the Hands

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal candidates and affirmers, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., *We anoint you with/Receive* this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior. May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate/Affirmer: Amen.

All: refrain

Adapted from the RCIA⁵

4. Dismissal

AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. [*Holy Baptism and Related Rites, Renewing Worship* volume 3. \[RW3\] Prepared for provisional use. Copyright 2002. Administered by Augsburg Fortress, pg. 12.](#)
2. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: LTP, 1988, Cf. collects in #155.
3. "Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates" in *Making Disciples*, p. 29, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. RCIA #301b

RITE OF HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

LENT IV A

For Baptismal Candidates and Affirmers

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the baptismal candidates and affirmers' and affirmers' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the baptismal candidates, affirmers and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ,
as we lead these candidates toward Baptism and the Affirmation of Baptism,
we continue to support them with our fellowship and prayers.

AM: Would the baptismal candidates please come forward with their sponsors.

AM: Would the affirmers (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that baptismal candidates, affirmers and the community are doing the same reflection. Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners. Their modeling of repentance and prayers are part of their role in the formation of the baptismal candidates.

After everyone is standing in front, facing forward toward the PM:

AM: As the blind man turned away from the shadows and toward Christ, the light, so the church, empowered by the Spirit, renounces the power of evil in all its forms. Let us pray to God who fills the world and our hearts with light. Let us all open ourselves to the Spirit's work.

Adapted from the ELCA¹

The people kneel, bow heads, or assume other postures of prayer.

Reader/catechist:

In your life's journey what has kept you from seeing the truth?

(90-second pause or whatever seems appropriate for this gathering)

Musicians & all: Lord of all mercy, giver of light, restore our sight!

What truth have you failed to acknowledge about yourself? About others? *(pause & music)*

How has Christ's light already scattered the shadows in your life?

(pause & music)

Where are the shadows in society or in the Church that obscure the light of Christ?

(pause & music)

PM (standing) Lord God, source of unfailing life, by the death and resurrection of Christ you have cast out the shadows of hatred and lies and poured the light of truth and love upon the human family. Hear our prayers for our baptismal candidates. Enable them to pass into the fullness of your light and deliver them and deliver us all from the power of evil. May we all live as children of the light, faithful witnesses to the faith that lives in us. We ask this through Christ Jesus, for he is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Inspired by the RCIA²

(or)

Gracious God, you helped the man born blind to believe in Jesus as the Christ, and through that faith to receive the light of your kingdom. Free your chosen ones from the falsehoods that surround and blind them.. Strengthen their hearts with your loving Spirit that truth may be the foundation of their lives. May we all live in your light forever and fearlessly bear witness to what we have seen and heard. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

Adapted from the ACC³

3. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.]

PM lays hands on the head of each baptismal candidate and affirmer in turn. A sponsor stands behind each affirmer with hands on shoulders, or kneeling beside with a hand on a shoulder.

PM may say the following or an appropriate formula to each.

PM: Christ our Savior strengthen you with his power for he is Lord forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate/Affirmer: Amen

From the RCIA⁴

All: refrain

(or)

PM: God who has begun this good work in you bring it to completion in Christ Jesus, who is Lord forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate/Affirmer: Amen.

From Philippians.

All: refrain

3. Option B: Anointing of the Hands of the Baptismal Candidates

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal candidates and affirmers, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while

saying to each:

N.N., *We anoint you with/Receive* this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior. May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate/Affirmer: Amen.

All: refrain

Adapted from the RCIA⁵

4. Dismissal

AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. RW3, pg. 12.
2. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: LTP, 1988, Cf. collects in #168.
3. "Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates" in *Making Disciples*, p. 30, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. RCIA #301b

RITE OF HEALING & DELIVERANCE

LENT V Year A

For Baptismal Candidates and Affirmers

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the baptismal candidates' and affirmers' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the baptismal candidates and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters,, siblings in Christ, as we lead these candidates toward Baptism or Affirmation, we are called to continue to support them with our fellowship and prayers.

AM: Would the baptismal candidates (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

AM: Would the affirmers (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that baptismal candidates, affirmers and the community are doing the same reflection. Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners.

After all those called are standing in front, facing forward toward the PM and the congregation..

AM: As Mary and Martha prayed for their brother Lazarus, so the church prays for you, for ourselves, and for all the world, confident in the life-giving presence and mercy of Christ. Aware of our common sinfulness and of God's mercy, let us all open ourselves to the Spirit's work.

The people kneel, bow heads, or assume other postures of prayer.

{Adapted from ELCA}¹

Reader/catechist:

a. What part of your life makes you feel as if you were living in a tomb? What old habits or ways of looking at life make you feel trapped and lifeless?

(90-second pause or whatever seems appropriate for this gathering)

Musicians & all: God of the living, not of the dead, raise us to life!

b. What part of society or the Church makes you feel the same way? *(pause & music).*

c. When do you experience a call to come forth from your tomb? To find liberation?

(pause & music)

d. How has Jesus been restoring you to life? When do you feel his new life in you?

(pause & music)

PM (standing) Father, source of all life,

in giving life to the living you show the image of your glory;

in raising the dead you reveal your unbounded power.

Free these baptismal candidates who await your life-giving sacraments from the grasp of death.

Deliver them and deliver us all from the corruption of evil.

Through your life-giving Spirit fill us all with faith, hope, and love,

that we might live with you in the glory of the resurrection.

We ask this through Christ Jesus, who is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Inspired by the RCIA²

(or)

Almighty God, fountain of life, you seek your glory in humanity fully alive;

you make known your love in the resurrection of the dead.

Rescue from the tyranny of death these chosen ones, N and N,

who approach the waters of new birth for the first time,

and these who are affirming what you have begun in them.

Make us all to hunger for the banquet of life

By faith, may they share with all he baptized in the resurrection triumph of your Son,

Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

Adapted from the ACC³

3. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

PM lays hands on the head of each baptismal candidate or affirmer in turn. The sponsor stands behind with hands on shoulders or kneels beside with a hand on a shoulder. PM may say these words or an appropriate formula to each:

PM: Christ our Savior strengthen you with his power, for he is Lord forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate: Amen

From the RCIA⁴

Baptismal Candidate/Affirmer: refrain

(or)

PM: God who has begun this good work in you bring it to completion in Christ Jesus, who is Lord forever and ever. *From Philippians*

Affirmer: Amen.

All: refrain

3. Option B: Anointing of the Hands of the Baptismal Candidates

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal candidates and affirmers, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., *We anoint you with/Receive* this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior. May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate/Affirmer: Amen.

All: refrain

Adapted from the RCIA⁵

4. Dismissal

(AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.)

REFERENCES

1. RW3, pg. 12.
2. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: LTP, 1988, Cf. collects in #175.
3. "Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates" in *Making Disciples*, p. 31, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. RCIA #301b
5. RCIA #103 or *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 277

RITE OF HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

LENT III B

For Baptismal Candidates Affirmers

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the baptismal candidates and affirmers' and affirmers' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the baptismal candidates, affirmers and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, as we lead these candidates toward Baptism or the Affirmation of Baptism, we are called to support them with our fellowship and prayers.

AM: Would the baptismal candidates (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

AM: Would the affirmers (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that baptismal candidates and affirmers and the community are doing the same reflection. Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners.

After everyone is standing in front, facing forward toward the congregation and the PM.

AM: Jesus came to the temple in Jerusalem and drove out the human obstacles between the people and God. The Church confesses our need for him to do this same delivering work in us. We invite you whom God has chosen for baptism and you who have chosen to affirm the baptismal covenant afresh to join the people of God as we all kneel down/bow our heads and open ourselves to the Spirit's call.

[adapted from the ELCA]¹

[The people kneel, bow heads, or assume other postures appropriate to prayer.]

Reader/catechist:

a. Looking at our own lives, what should we ask Jesus to drive out from us? *(90-second pause)*

Musicians & all: Christ crucified, true power of God, now set us free.

b. How have we betrayed our relationship with Jesus by putting other "gods" into our lives? *(pause and then music)*

c. What stumbling blocks within us keep God's power from working through us?
(pause and then music)

d. What prevents us from hearing the voices of poor and vulnerable people? (pause & music)

PM (standing):

God of all power, from living stones, your chosen people, you are building an eternal temple to your glory. Hear our prayers N&N whom you have called to baptism or Affirmation.

Cleanse them from sin; set them firmly on Christ, the cornerstone; make them holy by a fresh gift of your Spirit. Give us all a deeper trust in the power and wisdom revealed in our crucified Lord. This we ask through Christ, who is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Adapted from the RC Sacramentary²

(or)

Loving God, you sent your Son to restore to us the joy of your presence that we might worship you in spirit and in truth. Deliver N and N whom you have called from every spiritual obstacle and deceit. Reveal in us all the splendor of your dwelling place, the glory of Christ's body created anew in the resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

From the ACC³

3. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

PM lays hands on the head of each baptismal candidate or affirmer in turn. The sponsor stands behind with hands on shoulders or kneels beside with a hand on a shoulder.

PM may say these words or an appropriate formula to each:

PM: May Christ our Savior strengthen you with his power for he is Lord forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate/Affirmer: Amen

From the RCIA⁴

(or)

PM: May God who has begun this good work in you bring it to completion in Christ Jesus who is Lord forever and ever. *From Philippians*

Affirmer: Amen.

3. Option B: Anointing of the Hands

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal candidates and affirmers, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., *We anoint you with/Receive* this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior. May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate/Affirmer: Amen.

*[from the RCIA or ELW]*⁵

All: refrain

4. **Dismissal**

AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. *Holy Baptism and Related Rites, Renewing Worship* volume 3. [RW3] Prepared for provisional use. Copyright 2002. Administered by Augsburg Fortress, pg. 15.
2. US Catholic 1973 *Sacramentary*, Cf. Opening Prayer for Common of the Dedication of a Church Outside the Dedicated Church.
3. "Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates" in *Making Disciples*, p. 30, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. RCIA #301b

RITE OF HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

LENT IV B

For Baptismal Candidates and Affirmers

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the baptismal candidates and affirmers' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the baptismal candidates, affirmers and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, as we lead these candidates toward baptism [and/or Affirmation], we are called to support them with our fellowship and prayers.

AM: Would the baptismal candidates (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

AM: Would the affirmers (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that baptismal candidates and affirmers and the community are doing the same reflection. Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners.

After everyone is standing in front, facing forward toward the congregation and the PM:

AM: Jesus calls us to turn away from self-centeredness and to live in God's great love. Empowered by the Spirit, we renounce the power of evil. Let us pray that God will expose the world's empty promises, and reveal in us the immeasurable riches of God's redeeming grace. Let us all kneel down/bow our heads and open ourselves to the Spirit's call.

Adapted from ELCA¹

The people kneel, bow heads, or assume other postures appropriate to prayer..

Reader/catechist:

a. How have you been surprised by God's grace at work within you?

(90-second pause)

Musicians & all: Love of the Father, life of the world, open our hearts!

b. How is Jesus freeing you from fleshly desires to be gracious toward others? *(pause & music)*

c. What are you still afraid to admit about yourself? Where are you still trapped in a false image you are trying to create for myself?

(pause & music)

d. Jesus was lifted on the cross to reveal and heal the harm of our destructive words and ways. What is Jesus revealing and healing in us?

(pause & music)

PM (standing) Lord God, source of unfailing life, by the death and resurrection of Christ you have cast out the shadows of hatred and lies and poured the light of truth and love upon the human family. Hear our prayers for our baptismal candidates: enable them to pass into the fullness of your light. Deliver them and deliver us all from the power of evil.

May we all live as children of the light, faithful witnesses to the faith that lives in us. We ask this through Christ Jesus, for he is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Inspired by the RCIA²

(or)

O God, rich in mercy, look upon your chosen ones (N and N) who wait in joyful hope for the day when they will pass through the waters of baptism and be lifted up to the New Life of Jesus Christ. Free us all from evil, and fill us all with your grace as we look upon Jesus lifted up and see in him your power to save the world, for he is Lord, now and forever.

All: Amen.

From the ACC³

3. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

PM lays hands on the head of each baptismal candidate or affirmer in turn, with sponsor either standing behind with hands on shoulders or kneeling beside with a hand on a shoulder.

PM could say these words or an appropriate formula to each:

PM: May Christ our Savior strengthen you with his power for he is Lord forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate/Affirmer: Amen

From the RCIA⁴

(or)

PM: May God who has begun this good work in you bring it to completion in Christ Jesus who is Lord forever and ever. *From Philippians*

Affirmer: Amen.

3. Option B: Anointing of the Hands

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal candidates and affirmers, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., *We anoint you with/Receive* this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate: Amen.

*[from the RCIA or ELW]*⁵

All: refrain

4. Dismissal

--AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. RW3, pg. 15.
2. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: LTP, 1988, Cf. collects in #168.
3. "Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates" in *Making Disciples*, p. 31, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. RCIA #301

RITE OF HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

LENT V B

For Baptismal Candidates and Affirmers

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the baptismal candidates' and affirmers' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the baptismal candidates, affirmers and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, as we lead these candidates toward Baptism or Affirmation,, we are called to continue to support them with our fellowship and prayers.

AM: Would the baptismal candidates (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

AM: Would the affirmers (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that baptismal candidates, affirmers and the community are doing the same reflection. Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners.

After everyone is standing in front, facing forward toward the congregation and the PM.

AM: Jesus draws all people to him from the cross. The church, confident in the life-giving presence and mercy of Christ, now prays for you as Jesus draws you to the day of your Baptism or Affirmation. Aware of our common sinfulness and of God's mercy, let us all kneel down/bow our heads and open ourselves to the Spirit's call.

Adapted from ELCA¹

The people assume postures appropriate to prayer as they are able.

Reader/catechist:

a. When do I find it difficult to follow Jesus?

(90-second pause or whatever seems appropriate for this gathering) Musicians & all: Lord lifted high, obedient Son, raise us to life!

b. What is it that keeps me from seeing Jesus? *(pause & music)*

c. What do I need to die to in my life so that I can receive new life in Jesus? *(pause & music)*

d. The crucified Jesus is our King. What part can I play in changing people's ideas and attitudes toward the poor and vulnerable members of our society? *(pause & music)*

PM (**standing**) Father, source of all life, in giving life to the living you show the image of your glory; in raising the dead you reveal your unbounded power. Free from the grasp of death these chosen ones, N&N, who await your life-giving sacraments, and deliver them, and deliver us all, from the corruption of evil. Through your Spirit who gives life, fill us all with faith, hope, and love, that we might live always with you in the glory of the resurrection. We ask this through Christ Jesus, who is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Inspired by the RCIA²

(or)

Merciful God, as we come to the Passover of the Lord, the day of judgment of this world when the prince of this world is driven out, grant that our baptismal candidates, seeing Jesus lifted up on the cross, may be drawn into his eternal embrace. Give us all the freedom to turn from the life of this passing age and to welcome the life of the age to come; for by faith we all share in the resurrection triumph of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen

Adapted from the ACC³

3. **Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing**

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

PM lays hands on the head of each baptismal candidate and affirmer in turn, with sponsor either standing behind with hands on shoulders or kneeling beside with a hand on a shoulder.

PM may say these words or an appropriate formula to each:

PM: Christ our Savior strengthen you with his power for he is Lord forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate/Affirmer: Amen

[from the RCIA]⁴

All: refrain

(or)

PM: God who has begun this good work in you bring it to completion in Christ

Jesus who is Lord forever and ever. *[from Philippians]*

Affirmer Amen.

All: refrain

4. **Option B: Anointing of the Hands**

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal candidates and affirmers, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., *We anoint you with/Receive* this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior. May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate/Affirmer: Amen.

*[from the RCIA or ELW]*⁵

All: refrain

Dismissal

AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. RW3, pg. 15.
2. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: LTP, 1988, Cf. collects in #175.
3. "Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates" in *Making Disciples*, p. 31, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. RCIA #301b
5. RCIA #103 or *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 277

RITE OF HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

For Baptismal Candidates and Affirmers

LENT III Year C

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the participants' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the baptismal candidates, affirmers, and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, as we lead these candidates toward baptism or Affirmation, we are called to support them with our fellowship and prayers.

AM: Would the baptismal candidates (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

AM: Would the affirmers (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that baptismal candidates, affirmers and the community are doing the same reflection. Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners.

After everyone is standing in front, facing forward toward the PM:

AM: The barren fig tree requires the gardener's care in order to thrive and bear fruit, and so the church confesses our need for Christ and our trust in God's mercy. We invite you whom God has chosen for baptism or affirmation to join the people of God in opening ourselves to the Spirit's work.

Adapted from the ELCA¹

The people kneel, bow heads, or assume other postures appropriate to prayer as they are able.

Reader/catechist:

a. How has God already guided and nurtured you toward a fruitful life? *(90-second pause)*

Musicians & all: God of all mercy, source of new life, help us bear fruit!

b. What needs to be "pruned" from your life so you may bear fruit?

(pause & music)

c. What nourishment helps you bear fruit? *(pause & music)*

d. What nourishment does our world need from you to bear good fruit? *(pause & music)*

PM (**standing**): God of love, you are the true vinedresser; you prune away our sinfulness that we might bear good and abundant fruit. Hear our prayers for these chosen ones, (N&N). Cleanse them from the sins that burden make them holy by the constant working of your Spirit.

Help us all to hear your voice, calling us to repentance and a change of heart. This we ask through Christ, who is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Inspired by RCIA²

(or)

God of all the ages, in the fullness of time you sent your Anointed One to bring to fulfillment the promised day of salvation. Cultivate what you have planted in your chosen ones (N&N); and, in this time of your grace, turn their hearts to you. May their lives, and the lives of all of us, bear fruit in this life and in the life to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

From the ACC³

3. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

PM lays hands on the head of each baptismal candidate or affirmer in turn with sponsor either standing behind with hands on shoulders or kneeling beside with a hand on a shoulder.

PM may say these words or an appropriate formula to each:

PM: Christ our Savior strengthen you with his power, for he is Lord forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate/Affirmer: Amen

[from the RCIA]⁴

All: refrain

(or)

PM: God who has begun this good work in you bring it to completion in Christ Jesus who is Lord forever and ever. *[from Philippians]*

Baptismal Candidate/Affirmer: Amen.

All. refrain

3. Option B: Anointing of the Hands

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal candidates and affirmers, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., we anoint you with /N.N., receive this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior. May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate /Affirmer: Amen.

From the RCIA and the ELCA⁵

4. Dismissal

AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. *Holy Baptism and Related Rites, Renewing Worship* volume 3. [RW3] Prepared for provisional use. Copyright 2002. Administered by Augsburg Fortress, pg. 19.
2. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: LTP, 1988, Cf. collects in #155.
3. "Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates" in *Making Disciples*, p. 32, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. *RCIA* #301b

RITE OF HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

For Baptismal Candidates and Affirmers

LENT IV Year C

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

1. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the baptismal candidates and affirmers' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the baptismal candidates, affirmers, and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, as we lead these candidates toward Baptism or Affirmation, we are called to support them with our fellowship and prayers.

AM: Would the baptismal candidates please come forward with their sponsors.

AM: Would the affirmers (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

2. Reflection

The core symbol is that baptismal candidates, affirmers and the community are doing the same reflection. Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners.

After everyone is standing in front, facing forward toward the congregation and the PM:

AM: The younger son abandoned his life of sin and returned to the joy of the father; the older son learned the need for compassion and mercy. And so, the church, empowered by the Spirit, is called to renounce any attachment to evil in ourselves and in the world. To receive the embrace of God's forgiveness and love, and enter into the joy of our Father in heaven, let us together open ourselves to the Spirit's work.

The people kneel, bow heads, or assume other postures of prayer as they are able..

Adapted from the ELCA¹

Reader/catechist:

a. Whose story in this gospel passage resonates most with your own story? *(90-second pause)*

Musicians & all: God of compassion, mercy, and grace, welcome us home!

b. Where in your story do you need to hear and receive God's compassion?
(pause & music)

c. What will you do to become more like the father who is merciful to both his sons? (pause & music)

d. What will you do to bring God's mercy, reconciliation, and joy to our world? (pause & music)

PM (standing): God of mercy, like the younger son, some of us cry: "I have sinned against you; I am not worthy to be called your child." Like the older son, hurt and angry, some of us stand outside the door. Open wide your arms in mercy to all who trust in your love, especially (N&N), and deliver us all from any attachment to evil. Give us courage to proclaim to the whole world the mercy and joy that we have found in Christ Jesus, who is Lord forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Inspired by the Rite of Penance²

(or)

Father of mercy, when we come to ourselves and acknowledge the poverty of our alienation from one another and from you, your loving arms embrace us. Reveal your healing love to (N & N) whom you have called by name. When they come to the waters of new creation, may they know themselves welcome in the household of faith where we all find reconciliation and joy through the mercy of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.

[from the ACC]³

1. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

PM lays hands on the head of each baptismal candidate in turn with sponsor either standing behind with hands on shoulders or kneeling beside with a hand on a shoulder.

PM may say these words or an appropriate formula to each:

PM: Christ our Savior strengthen you with his power, for he is Lord forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate/Affirmer: Amen

[from the RCIA]⁴

All: refrain

(or)

PM: God who has begun this good work in you bring it to completion in Christ Jesus who is Lord forever and ever. *[from Philippians]*

Affirmer: Amen.

All. refrain

3. Option B: Anointing of the Hands

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal candidates and affirmers, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to each:

N.N., we anoint you with /N.N., receive this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior. May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate/Affirmer: Amen.

From the RCIA and the ELCA⁵

3. **Dismissal** --AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. RW3, pg.19.
2. Rite of Penance, New York: Pueblo, 1976, #88.
3. "Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates" in *Making Disciples*, p. 32, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. RCIA #301b

RITE OF HEALING AND DELIVERANCE

For Baptismal Candidates and Affirmers

LENT V Year C

green = explanations of symbols at work.

(red) = rubrics, directions

gold = sources and explanations

2. Calling Forward

The core symbol is the community and the baptismal candidates' and affirmers' evolving role in it.

After homily/sermon, AM/catechist calls the baptismal candidates, affirmers and their sponsors forward.

AM/Catechist: Brothers and sisters, siblings in Christ, as we lead these candidates toward baptism or Affirmation, we are called to continue to support them with our fellowship and prayers

AM: Would the baptismal candidates please come forward with their sponsors.

AM: Would the affirmers (N&N) please come forward with their sponsors.

3. Reflection

The core symbol is baptismal candidates, affirmers and the community are doing the same reflection. Baptism is a transformative experience in the Spirit, but the baptized are still sinners.

After everyone is standing in front, facing forward toward the congregation and the PM:

AM: Mary of Bethany in faith anointed Jesus in preparation for the crux of his ministry as the Messiah, God's Anointed Son. The church entrusts you to the life-giving presence and mercy of God as you draw nearer to the day of your baptism or affirmation. Aware of our common sinfulness and of God's mercy, let us all kneel down/bow our heads and open ourselves to the Spirit's work.

Adapted from ELCA¹

The people kneel, bow heads, or assume other postures of prayer as they are able.

Reader/catechist:

a. Judas was one of Jesus's closest companions, but he betrayed Jesus. What betrayals in your life, by you or others, remain as obstacles to following Jesus now? *(90-second pause or whatever seems appropriate for this gathering)*

Musicians & all: God of all mercy, giver of grace, work new wonders!

b. Judas claimed concern for people in need, but he was a hypocrite. What masks of your own selfishness are you afraid to take off?

(pause & music)

c. People in need are always with us. Where have our hearts grown tired and cold toward others?

(pause & music)

d. Jesus restored Lazarus to life. How do you already find Jesus restoring life in you?
(pause & music)

PM (standing) God of boundless compassion, you are slow to anger and rich in mercy. Grant us pardon and trust in you. Free these chosen ones from the grasp of death; deliver them from the corruption of evil and lead them to your life-giving sacraments. Through your life-giving Spirit, anoint us all with faith, hope, and love, that we may always walk with you in the way of the cross and the glory of the resurrection. We ask this through Christ Jesus, who is Lord forever and ever.
All: Amen.

Inspired by the RCIA²

(or)

Gracious God, in Jesus our Savior, you have made us your friends and shared in our very lives. Like Mary of Bethany, may N. and N., your chosen ones, and all your people find freedom and courage to pour out our very lives, a fragrant offering to the one who gave his very life for us all, your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Adapted from ACC³

3. Option A: Prayer for Deliverance and Healing

This gesture of hand-laying is one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same.

PM lays hands on the head of each baptismal candidate or affirmer in turn with sponsor either standing behind with hands on shoulders or kneeling beside with a hand on a shoulder.

PM may say these words or an appropriate formula to each:

PM: Christ our Savior strengthen you with his power, for he is Lord forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate/Affirmer: Amen

[from the RCIA]⁴

All: refrain

(or)

PM: God who has begun this good work in you bring it to completion in Christ Jesus who is Lord forever and ever. *[from Philippians]*

Affirmer: Amen.

All. refrain

3. Option B: Anointing of the Hands

This gesture of anointing with a healing oil is also one of the oldest rituals of the catechumenate, done in imitation of Jesus who used it in his ministry of healing and deliverance and sent his disciples out to do the same. Any light, plain, unscented plant-based oil is appropriate.

Facing the baptismal candidates, the PM anoints each with plain oil on both hands, while saying to

each:

N.N., we anoint you with /N.N., receive this healing oil in the name of Christ our Savior. May he strengthen you with his power, for he lives and reigns forever and ever.

Baptismal Candidate/Affirmer: Amen.

From the RCIA and the ELCA⁵

All: refrain

4. Dismissal

AM dismisses everyone to their appropriate place.

REFERENCES

1. *RW3*, pg.19.
2. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Chicago: LTP, 1988, Cf. collects in #175.
3. "Prayers for Deliverance for Baptismal Candidates" in *Making Disciples*, p. 32, <https://www.anglican.ca/makingdisciples/>
4. *RCIA* #301b
5. *RCIA* #103/*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 277

Introduction to Mystagogy

The 4th Period of the Catechumenal Process

Baptism is an event. Yet, as a sign of God's mercy and belonging, Baptism stands over the whole course of one's life. It is an event with a trajectory, not just a moment in time. The core metaphors used in the New Testament to describe the meaning of baptism tend to be images of radical, inward transformation: death to resurrection, rebirth in the Spirit, darkness to light. Other images portray a radical outward transformation within a community: from alien to member of God's own People, from slave to heir, from being cut off to becoming a full member of the Body of Christ.

A metaphor which does *not* work with Baptism is graduation. The graduation of a graduate marks the definitive end of a process and a separation from an institution or a community. Instead, the most common term used for the newly-baptized in the early centuries of the Christian Church was "neophytes," a Greek term meaning "those newly sprouting." (See I Corinthians 3:6 and I Timothy 3:6). Neophytes have become part of God's family and been welcomed with joy, but they still need the support of the community for continued growth as they take their first steps into baptismal living, into an ongoing, fruitful life of mutually accountable Christian discipleship.

But not only neophytes need such support. So do those who, for any number of reasons, are choosing a journey of affirmation at some remove from the time of their baptism.

And so, the catechumenal process does not end with Baptism but with a period of reflection both about what has just happened around the font *and* about what gifts the Spirit has given them for living out the diverse vocations to which God has called them as Christians. Likewise, those seeking to affirm their baptismal vows at a later time may be offered period of reflection about what has happened around the font, perhaps many years ago, how they have been sustained by the sacraments since that time, and about what gifts the Spirit has continued to give them, or that they may be called to discover afresh, for living out the diverse vocations to which God has called them as Christians.

The classic term for this fourth and final period of the catechumenal process is "mystagogy," a Greek term which means to be "led through the mysteries." Various other names have been given to this phase: Integration, Baptismal Living, Post-baptismal Catechesis, but they all point to the need for both reflection on the past and discernment about their future in the Christian community.

This double focus on the experience of the sacraments and the empowerment and calling into ministry reflects the Gospels of the Sundays of Easter, the first four of which proclaim our relationship with the risen Lord, and the last four of which challenge us to recognize the personal and corporate consequences of the resurrection and sending of the Spirit.

The catechetical and liturgical resources given here are an integrated approach for a congregation to lead both the newly baptized and affirmers through this fourth period. As in the third period of intense preparation, there are rituals enacted with the gathered community to mark the ongoing growth of the newly baptized and affirmers alike. The initial phase of reflection on what the Risen Christ has been doing within the participants climaxes on Easter 3 with an Order for Bearing Witness. The phase of discernment of vocation and gifts is blessed on Easter 5 and leads up to the Reaffirmation of the Vocation to Christian Discipleship on Pentecost.

In other words, through continued modeling on how to listen to the Spirit speaking through

shared worship, catechetical reflection, and service, the newly baptized along with affirmers and all the baptized are called to a life of shared discipleship within the Church and for the world.

When Baptism is celebrated at Easter, mystagogy unfolds during Easter Season; if on the Baptism of the Lord, then during the Season after Epiphany.

A Suggested Timeline of Mystagogy

for the Newly Baptized and Affirmers

The catechumenal process is marked throughout by reflective learning with the congregation, in which all baptismal identities are awakened. The traditional term for this is *mystagogical learning*.

The period of intense reflective learning after Baptism is also called *mystagogy*.

The following timeline attempts to chart the interconnection between the catechetical and liturgical components of that period.

Overall liturgical suggestions

1. The congregation may provide white robes (albs) for all the newly baptized.
2. During mystagogy, both the newly baptized and affirmers are consistently the focus of part of the sermon.
3. The newly baptized and affirmers are mentioned in the Prayers of the People.
4. The newly baptized and affirmers may lead and/or craft the Prayers of the People.

Overall catechetical suggestion

1. The total number of participants in any group should not exceed fifteen.
2. Sponsors should be included if at all possible.

TIMELINE

1st week: 1st catechetical session – reflection on the celebration of Baptism

2nd week: 2nd catechetical session – reflection on the Meal from the perspective of a member of the congregation

3^d Sunday: The Meal & the Order for Bearing Witness to the Work of the Risen Christ

- The newly baptized wear white robes to make them visible and to declericalize the alb.
- The newly baptized and affirmers may be involved in planning worship. The pastor may want to engage them in sermon preparation.
- Competent readers among the newly-baptized and affirmers may be lectors.
- Nonverbal forms of ministry the newly-baptized may offer include baking the bread for communion and processing with the gifts at the offertory. Both the newly baptized and affirmers may be trained to assist at the distribution of communion.

3^d week: 3^d catechetical session – Vocations discernment begins.

4th week: 4th catechetical session – Vocations discernment continues.

5th Sunday: The Order Blessing for Spirit's guidance in discernment

5th week: 5th catechetical session – Vocations discernment continues.

6th week: 6th catechetical session – Vocations discernment continues.

7th week – 7th catechetical session – Vocations discernment concludes—unless it is necessary to continue it after Pentecost.

Pentecost: Affirmation of Vocation to Christian Discipleship

Guidance for Group Meetings during Mystagogy

Introduction

The catechumenate is both a *process* and an *event*. For the participants it is the slow journey of encountering Christ at work within them through their repeated encounters with the community of believers and the Scriptures.

As a *process*, it moves the participants through several stages of a more personal knowledge of Christ and a deeper commitment to him—until at last, for those preparing for baptism, they encounter the waters of the font and are reborn in the Spirit. That *event* definitively makes them new members of his Body.

In the weeks between Easter and Pentecost, it is the task of the community now to lead the newly baptized to a deeper appreciation of what has just happened to them, among them, and within them and to help them discern what gifts they have been given for the service not only of the Christian community but also of the world. The community also brings affirmers to a deeper appreciation of what has already happened to them, as well as what is now happening among them and within them, helps affirmers discern afresh their gifts and callings.

Mystagogical learning is reflective learning. It begins with reliving the memories of the events that have shaped us. Our memories are most powerfully triggered by concrete, physical encounter. The following outline is meant to help the participants get in touch with and process those memories.

Group Meeting 1: Reflecting on What Happened

Though this session focuses on the experience of the newly baptized and affirmers,, their sponsors should also be invited and should share appropriately in the group's reflections as well. Keep the group size, including sponsors and catechist, to no more than 15. If the group is quite small (fewer than seven), those who were baptized the previous year or recently participated in mystagogy as affirmers could also be invited. Otherwise they could be invited to the second session.

Step 1: Gathering

The usual meeting room might be the place to begin, especially if the weather means that people have to deal with winter coats or umbrellas, etc. Make them comfortable!

Introduce the session in the usual way, congratulate them on their recent sacramental celebration, and explain the purpose of this gathering.

Step 2: Walking Through It

Move into the worship space where the events of Baptism occurred. For the newly baptized that will be in your church's worship space. For affirmers, it may have been somewhere else. Ask each to describe the significance of the space where they were baptized for them at the time.

If their Baptism was celebrated at Easter or at the Easter Vigil, relight the Easter Candle, and ask how they felt as the light of Christ spread through the room. What did that mean to them personally?

Move to the font if the group is not already there. When they were asked to renounce evil and to profess their faith in the Trinity and their commitment to Christ, what did they experience? Did any memories from the past surface at that moment? Any hopes for the future? What was happening within them as they made their profession?

If they were immersed, how did they experience being in the water? What happened within them while they were in the water?

If water was poured over their head, how did they experience that moment? What happened within them?

If the next rituals occurred at the font, stay there. If they happened elsewhere, move to that location. Also, if any of these additional rites was enacted, then prepare in advance the oil, a robe, and/or a candle at the location where they were used.

When a hand was laid upon them and the Spirit was invoked and a cross signed on them (possibly with oil), what part of that moment most touched them? What seemed to them to be happening within them?

If they were presented with a robe to wear in some fashion, how did being dressed differently make them feel? What did that change mean to them?

If they were given a candle, possibly lighted from the Easter Candle, what memories or insights did that gesture evoke within them? Did it bring forth any hopes for the future?

When they were presented to the congregation, what did they experience, other than the common dislike of being in front of a group of people?

Frequently those baptized are also the ones who present the bread and wine for the Table; if so, move to the Table and ask how did they experience that gesture? Especially in terms of a connection to the congregation and to Christ himself?

To wrap up this reflection, you might describe three great images of Baptism, among others, that occur in the New Testament: rebirth by water and the Spirit, dying and rising in Christ, and cleansing. Which of these comes closest to what they experienced, or, for affirmers, what they are seeking now?

Step 3: Gospel Reflection

In some manner, share with them the Doubting Thomas episode from John that is the gospel reading for the Second Sunday of Easter. Unlike Thomas they have not seen or touched the Savior, but they have come to know and believe in him through the sacraments entrusted to the church. What is their image of Jesus now? How do they feel connected to him?

Conclude with prayer in some way, but at this moment joining hands is a way of bonding for those who have been through a common experience and those who accompanied them. The Lord's Prayer is the classic prayer of the baptized.

Group meeting 2: Reflecting on the Eucharist (prior to Easter 3)

Sharing in the Eucharist is the ongoing support of our Christian journey. The newly-baptized are now sharing in it as full members of Christ's Body. The gospels for this Sunday in all three cycles describe a meal shared by the disciples with the risen Lord. Small group work this day might include a shared meal as the frame for reflection on encounters with Christ in the breaking of the bread.

Though this session is focused upon the experience of the newly-baptized, their sponsors should also be invited and should share appropriately in the group's reflections as well. If the group is quite small, those who were baptized the previous year could also be invited.

Step 1: Gathering

If there is to be no meal, then the usual pattern that the group is used to from intense preparation would be appropriate.

If there is to be a shared meal, try to make it as intimate and welcoming as possible. Some people might volunteer to prepare the meal, or it might be potluck.

Step 2: Informal *lectio divina*

Begin by providing a framework for next Sunday's Gospel about Jesus eating with his disciples.

Have someone read the text aloud.

Share in silence.

Ask them to share what word or phrase spoke to them.

Ask them to share the reaction this raised for them and why.

Reread the text.

Ask how this text challenges or comforts them.

Step 3: Instruction and Reflection upon the Eucharist

Explain how the Eucharist has two moments: the Prayer of Thanksgiving and the sharing of the elements in communion.

The Prayer of Thanksgiving has three components, and we are called through active listening to engage each one personally.

Remembrance: In Jewish tradition to recall God's deeds of love for us is to relive them, to be present again at each saving moment.

How do I claim those moments for myself?

Invocation of the Spirit: Worship is not about magic words but about opening ourselves up to the transforming power of the Spirit. The presider asks the Father to pour out the Spirit upon the gifts and upon those who share them.

How do I open myself up to the Spirit's power?

Intercession: How do I lift up not only myself but the world's needs and concerns for transformation?

What has sharing in communion come to mean to you?

How has it been an encounter with the risen Christ?

How has it connected you with others who share this Meal?

What implications has it had for living out your Baptism?

Step 4: Preparation for Witness

If possible, arrange for affirmers to have roles in the Sunday service as readers, presenters of the bread and wine, servers or assistants. Mention them as well in the prayers of the people.

If the accompanying Order for Mystagogy on Easter 3 is to be used, then explain to them how it will happen, and invite them to prepare for that moment. Fuller directions are given in the text of that Order.

It would be appropriate to end this meeting with the Lord's Prayer and its request for the gift of daily bread.

Group meetings for Discernment of Vocation: Easter Week 3 through 7

Easter 4 marks an inflexion point in the readings for Easter Season and the work of mystagogy. We move from a reflection on the experience of the sacraments to a focus through the rest of the season on the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Group meetings during this time use a process of discernment of spiritual gifts and vocations that the newly-baptized will affirm on Pentecost.

We commend these resources as possible guides for these sessions.

5. *Go, Make Disciples: An Invitation to Baptismal Living*, pp. 134-6 .

This resource contains two simple exercises to reflect upon how the participants minister in their daily lives, plus suggestions for how to prepare for the Rite of Affirmation.

6. Collegeville Institute

This resource contains a program named "Called to Life" which would fit with mystagogy.

For deepening Christian life in a congregation, there is another one named "Called to Work" that is focused on a profession.

<https://collegevilleinstitute.org/vocation-projects/resources-for-congregations/>

7. United Methodist Church: Discernment of spiritual gifts and ministry

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/diy-tools-for-spiritual-gifts-discernment-and-ministry-deployment> (Spiritual gifts and personality inventories may be discussed in a single session)

8. ELCA: Life of Faith Initiative:

The purpose of the Life of Faith initiative is to stir up a culture change that frees us to make *the service by the baptized in the arenas of daily life the central focus of the church's mission.*

<https://lifeoffaith.info>

And we commend this or a similar pattern for these meetings to maintain continuity in the practice of *lectio divina* throughout the second period of mystagogy.

Pattern for Typical Catechetical Sessions, Weeks 3-7 of Mystagogy

- I. Welcome everyone.
- J. Remind everyone of confidentiality.
- K. Check-in about how life is going.
- L. Informal Lectio Divina of the Gospel reading.
- M. Discernment of vocation and gifts assessment.
- N. Informal Lectio Divina of the Acts reading.

Begin by pointing out that this is a story of how a Spirit-filled community attempted to live out their encounter with the risen Christ.

- O. Share in a time of prayer together.
- P. Announcements and reminders

An Order for Mystagogy on Easter III

Giving Witness to the Work of the Risen Christ

Introduction: In all three cycles this Sunday's Gospel passage focuses on a meal shared between the risen Lord and his disciples. It would therefore be appropriate for the newly baptized and affirmers to experience exercising the various ministries during Sunday Eucharist: readers, presenters of bread and wine, distributors of communion, servers or assistants, as well as being mentioned in the Prayers of the People.

The primary symbol is the community itself in the midst of whom now stand the newly baptized and affirmers *without* their sponsors. This is because they have become full members of Christ and the church.

There are two possible placements of this order: after the sermon, just prior to the confession of faith, and at the beginning of the Sending rite. After the sermon, it functions as a witness to the word proclaimed and the living Word. At the beginning of the Sending rite, it functions as a witness also to the service and leadership roles of the newly baptized and affirmers at the Eucharist and to remind the whole community that we are *all* sent from font and Table to offer witness to our encounter with Christ. In either case, persons are invited to participate in this rite as they choose. At the previous group session, they will have been reminded they have this opportunity to speak and should be encouraged to do so.

Witness and Confession of Faith or Sending

After the Sermon or after the Prayer after Communion, the AM addresses the newly baptized, who may be called forward by name.

AM: May our newly baptized (N&N) and affirmers (N&N) come to the pulpit/lectern and face the congregation.

When the newly-baptized have arranged themselves by the lectern/pulpit, The PM stands before them and addresses them.

PM: You have been baptized with water and the Holy Spirit, and today you have assisted/will assist at our celebration of the breaking of the bread. In the name of the Church, I invite you to bear witness to the One you have come to know as you have shared in this sacrament with us.

The newly baptized and affirmers each may share a word or sentence or brief statement of their encounters with the Risen Christ in the Eucharist, in the Church, or in their daily living.

Then the PM addresses the newly-baptized and affirmers::

PM: Thank you for the witness to the work of Jesus among us that you have given.

Now look around at these people, *(pause)*
and remember that you are part of God's family.

Look around at this place, *(pause)*
and remember you are at home.

Look at this table, *(pause)*
and be glad that all it holds is yours forever.

We look forward to sharing this life in Christ with you now and in the age to come.

The PM then invites the congregation to express gratitude for what they have shared, such as applause or another appropriate sign. A simple sung Alleluia or an appropriate refrain may be sung such as:

ELW # 209 & 210

Blessed be God, the source of all life, the word of salvation, the spirit of mercy.

Conclusion

Option 1: If this order is before the Creed, the Creed is then confessed. At the prayers of the people, a petition for the newly-baptized and affirmers is included among the petitions for the day, such as the following:

In these newly-baptized we see signs of your new creation
and in these affirmers, signs of your sanctifying work
drawing them into faith discipleship to Jesus, your Son.

Grant that all whom you have made holy and brought into this communion
may be daily renewed in the power of your Spirit. Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Option 2: before the sending

After applause or some other appropriate sign and the refrain, prayer is offered.

PM: Creator of all,
in these newly-baptized we see signs of your new creation
and in these affirmers, signs of your sanctifying work
drawing them into faith discipleship to Jesus, your Son.

Grant that all whom you have made holy and brought into this communion
may be daily renewed in the power of your Spirit; through Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**

Before the rite of sending, the AM reminds the congregation the newly baptized and affirmers will help to lead the processional into the world. They enter the processional immediately following the torches and gospel book.

An Order for Mystagogy on Easter V

Invitation to Discernment of Vocation

Introduction: The first three Sundays of Easter reflect upon the experience of the sacramental moments of Christian initiation. Starting in the fourth week the emphasis shifts to attempting to discern the Spirit's calling (vocation) on their lives in the Church and in the world.

The word "vocation" comes from the Latin for "calling." It suggests something one does in response to God's purpose in our lives. We discover our callings in life as we discern the promptings of the Holy Spirit within us and in our relationships with others. Much like faith, awareness of our callings shifts and transforms over time.

Every person has many vocations. These callings arise from the contexts of our lives, where our gifts interact with others. A person has a calling as member of a family, as friend and neighbor, and as citizen, as well as in one's work and other activities (volunteer, artistic, physical, religious).

Today's rite takes place at the beginning of the sending rite to reflect the focus on the Spirit's gifts for mission that the newly baptized are now exploring and affirmers are re-examining. It invokes the Spirit's blessing upon this process of discernment.

The primary symbol is the community itself with whom the newly baptized and affirmers now stand, no longer accompanied by sponsors. They are full members of Christ and the church.

Prayers of the People

It is appropriate on this day also to include an intercession for the newly baptized and affirmers in the Prayers of the People, such as the following:

Grant that all who are baptized into Christ, especially these newly baptized,
may faithfully reflect in the world
the love and joy and peace of your kingdom.
Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Invitation and Blessing

The AM addresses the newly baptized. The PM moves to a position among the people, facing the newly baptized and affirmers.

AM: May our newly baptized and affirmers (N&N) now come to face the congregation.
The newly baptized and affirmers move into position.

PM to the newly baptized and affirmers::

In baptism and communion,
you have experienced the presence of Jesus.

In our midst you have borne witness to the Risen Christ.

Now in your discernment we invite you to continue to claim your calling among us
and in the world,
in the name of Jesus
and the power of the Spirit.

All are invited to stand and extend hands in a gesture of blessing.

PM: Holy Spirit, come to us. All: **Holy Spirit, come to us.**

PM: Generous God, by your Spirit you call your people and fill them with diverse gifts.
Guide now these new members of your people as they discern your call in their lives.

Open their eyes to what you have given,
and move their hearts to follow your lead
that they may grow as members of Christ's body,
and as his witnesses with us in service to all.

We ask this in Jesus' name, trusting in the Spirit's power now and forever.

All: **Amen.**

(Refrain: *ELW* #217: May the God of all grace who has called you to glory support you and make you strong.)

Dismissal

A processional hymn or other acts of sending may follow. The newly baptized and affirmers remain in place until the processional, leading the congregation (following the cross and torches) into the world.

About the Affirmation of Vocation

This rite of affirmation provides an occasion to acknowledge the gifts of the newly baptized and affirmers by naming and affirming their particular vocations as part of the Christian community.

The word “vocation” comes from the Latin for “calling.” It suggests something one does in response to God’s purpose in our lives. We discover our callings in life as we discern the promptings of the Holy Spirit within us and in our relationships with others. Much like faith, awareness of our callings shifts and transforms over time.

Every person has many vocations. These callings arise from the contexts of our lives, where our gifts interact with others. A person has a calling as member of a family, as friend and neighbor, and as citizen, as well as in one’s work and other activities (volunteer, artistic, physical, religious).

In the journey of baptismal living, Christians engage these arenas of life as disciples of Christ. We are sustained in our callings by the promise of God’s love and mercy within a community of faith. Through our callings, the Holy Spirit directs our lives in loving service to others and toward God’s purpose of abundant life for all.

This rite provides an occasion to acknowledge the gifts of the newly baptized by naming and supporting them in claiming their callings and the resources they have to fulfill them.

Affirmation of Vocation to Discipleship at Pentecost

This rite marks the conclusion of the first phase of mystagogical reflection and personal assessment of the Spirit's gifts. Reflection, assessment, and ministry empowered by the gifts of the Spirit continues through lives of discipleship.

In the journey of baptismal living, the newly baptized, affirmers, and all Christians engage all arenas of life as disciples of Christ. We are sustained in our callings by the promise of God's love and mercy within a community of faith. Through our callings, the Holy Spirit directs our lives in loving service to others and toward God's purpose of abundant life for all.

Because in baptism the Spirit empowers us to go forth as disciples, this rite fittingly occurs as part of the sending rite, though it may be located elsewhere within the service.

Those affirming vocation to discipleship gather with the ministers at the baptismal font in full view of the congregation. To reinforce the baptismal roots of this rite, the newly baptized and affirmers carry their baptismal candles which they light from the paschal candle with the assistance of an assisting minister if necessary.

AM: We invite the newly-baptized and affirmers to come to the font with your baptismal candles and face the congregation.

The PM faces and addresses the newly baptized and affirmers..

PM: (Names of newly baptized), at Easter, by water and the Spirit, you were joined with Christ in his death and resurrection and given new birth as God's own children. Affirmers (N&N), though baptized at a different time, you, with the newly baptized, committed yourself then to living the covenant of baptism in your daily life and service.

For these last weeks you have been reflecting on your new life in Christ and the gifts the Spirit has given you to live out your calling.

Now, on the Day of Pentecost, I ask you: How will you endeavor to follow Jesus Christ in active discipleship?¹

One by one the newly baptized and affirmers speak about the call to discipleship that each has discerned and also about what gifts of the Spirit have been received to live out that calling.

After each speaks, the congregation sings a refrain.

ELW #217: *May the God of all grace, who has called you to glory support you and make you strong.*

If other members of the congregation have also been engaged in mystagogical reflection the AM may invite them forward at this time to give witness.

The PM addresses the newly baptized.

PM: N.&N., both your work and your rest are in God. With the Spirit's help, endeavor to pattern your life on the Lord Jesus Christ: in gratitude to God and in service to others, at morning and evening, at work and at play, all the days of your life.²

AM: Let us pray for these newly-baptized, affirmers, and for ourselves in our vocations.

PM: Father of love, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you have knit these your servants into the one Body of your Son, Jesus Christ and called them to live daily as witnesses to your life-giving grace.³

Give them courage, patience and vision, and strengthen us all in our baptismal vocation of witness in the world and of service to others. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The sending rite continues.

REFERENCES

1. *Come to the Waters*, 143.
2. From "Recognition of Ministries in the Congregation," *Sundays and Seasons* (online subscription resource), Augsburg Fortress, 2007.
3. From "ELW Prayer 335b," *Sundays and Seasons* (online subscription resource), Augsburg Fortress, 2007.

APPENDIX

A Holy Saturday Service of Preparation

- I. Introduction
- II. The Ephphetha
- III. The Giving of Names
- IV. The Giving of Robes and Candles
- V. Prayer and Exorcism
- VI. Final Blessing

Items Needed

Red vestments
White robes and candles
Brown robes
Name cards
Oil of Catechumens
Towel for the anointin

When everyone has assembled in the small chapel, the baptismal candidates and affirmers may be seated in one row of chairs with their sponsors seated facing them.

Introduction

PM: (seated) In the name of the Father, (+)
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
PM: The Lord be with you. (or one of the other Greetings)
All: And with your spirit.

PM welcomes everyone and gives an introduction to the service.

The Ephphetha

PM turns to the candidates for baptism (and/or affirmers) and addresses them in these or similar words:

PM: N&N,
during these months of your preparation,
God has always been with you to guide you
and to lead you to a deeper knowledge and love of God
and of the Church which Jesus established
by his death on the Cross.
As you prepare now to become full members
or affirm full membership in the Church,
never forget
that it was God's free gift of grace
that first called you here,
God's grace which enabled you to hear
and understand the Word,

God's grace which has given you the power

to change your life.

AM: Let us all stand and pray that these baptismal candidates (and affirmers) might respond fully to the call of God's grace.

(pause)

AM: Sponsors, I invite you now to mark the baptismal candidates and affirmers with the sign of faith;
Affirmers, I invite you to mark yourselves with the same sign,
and I invite everyone to repeat these words after me.

(on the ears)

Christ opened the ears of the deaf.*
In his name we say to you:* Ephphetha, be opened!*(+)
May you hear his call to faith.*

(on the mouth)

Christ opened the mouth of the mute*
and gave them speech.*
In his name we say to you:* Ephphetha, be opened!*(+)
May you profess the faith you have heard*
to the glory and praise of God.*

AM: **Motions all to be seated.**

The Giving of the Name

Scripture Reading - one of the sponsors
Instruction - one of the catechists
Explanation and Presentation of the Baptismal Name -
catechists and sponsors

(PM indicates the white robes.)

The Giving of Robes and Candles

PM: (addressing baptismal candidates)

N&N,

In baptism you become a new creation
and clothe yourselves in Christ.
This white garment is yours;
bring it unstained to the judgment-seat of Christ
so that you may have eternal life.

Baptismal Candidates: Amen.

(The sponsors then give the baptismal candidates their baptismal candles.)

PM: In baptism you will be enlightened by Christ.
Walk always as a child of the light
and keep the flame of faith alive in your hearts.
When Christ comes again,
may you go out to meet him
with all the saints in the heavenly kingdom.

Baptismal Candidates: Amen.

(PM indicates the brown robes which the baptismal candidates will wear until they are baptized and asks the sponsors to give them to their baptismal candidate.)

Prayer and Exorcism

PM: For one last time let us entrust these baptismal candidates
to God's love and care.

AM: Would everyone except the baptismal candidates please stand. Sponsors, place your hands upon their shoulders!

PM: (extending right hand over the baptismal candidates)

Father of all mercies,
you gave us your beloved Son
to rescue us from sin by the power of his Cross
and to give us the true freedom of your children.

Look now on N&N.
They have experienced temptation and know their human weakness.
Look on them with love
and fulfill their hope in your sight.
Search their inmost heart today,
and guard them as they await the fullness of life in Jesus.
Bring to completion the plan of your love.
May they share the fellowship of your Church
in the full glory of the resurrection.
We ask this through Christ our crucified Lord.
All: Amen.

For affirmers: PM lays hands on their heads and says to each:

PM/AM: N., may God who has begun a good work in you,
bring it to completion on the day of Christ Jesus.
All: Amen!

For the baptismal candidates: PM/AM anoints the palms of each with the Oil of Catechumens and

says to each:

PM: N., we anoint you with this saving oil
in the name of Christ our Savior.
May he strengthen you with his power
who lives and reigns forever and ever.
All: Amen!

PM wipes his hands on a towel.

Blessing

AM: Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing!

(Pause)

PM: As the glory of Easter draws near,
may God fill us all with new strength and life;
in the name of the Father, (+)
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
All: Amen!

AM: Be at peace as you await this night!

All: Thanks be to God!

This service was developed by Mike Marchal and has been used in parishes in which he has served as catechist.