



BAPTISMAL PROMISES

9th Grade Make-Up Assignment

OBJECTIVES

- Students will look at the promises made at Affirmation of Baptism and unpack what they mean for them personally.
- Any students who have not previously shared their Discipleship Project will share.

THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT

Affirmation of Baptism is the culmination of three years in Epiphany's BreakThru program, and serves as an important faith milestone for students. As part of the liturgy for Affirmation of Baptism, students will be asked to make the following promises:

- Live among God's faithful people,
- hear the Word of God and share in the Lord's Supper;
- proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed;
- serve all people following the example of Jesus; and,
- strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

In this small group time, the group should discuss the ways that they intend to live out these promises beyond confirmation.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

Affirmation of Baptism Liturgy handouts
Baptismal promises coloring sheets
Crayons

DISCUSSION

Look at the Handout with the Affirmation of Baptism Liturgy and read through it with a parent. As you read it, highlight, underline, or circle the words that jump out to you and to write down notes about what those words mean to them or what questions they might have.

Discuss the following:

- What words jump out to you and why?
- What do those words mean to you?
- What questions do you have?

LIVING THE BAPTISMAL PROMISES

Live among God's faithful people: Living in community as God's faithful people is a gift of love, and an invitation to serve in mission. We are chosen not for position or privilege, but to live as faithful witnesses to the good news of Jesus Christ. In our baptism we were made children of God and members of the body of Christ, the church. God's message of hope and reconciliation strengthens us in our faith walk. Our life in Christian community supports us as we experience the joys and struggles of life. In our walk we are encouraged to equally embrace all differences and celebrate the diversity of gifts that can strengthen us. **As we live among God's faithful people, some of the things we do are:**

- Read and study God's Word
- Celebrate God's presence in our lives through regular participation in worship
- Receive gratefully God's blessings and return a portion of God's abundance through our giving
- Live a new life in Christ by caring for and encouraging others
- Pray daily for each other, our communities and all of creation as we move into God's future
- Renew daily a connection with baptism by making the sign of the cross on your forehead

What does it mean to you to live among God's faithful people? How do you intend to live out this promise?

Hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper: We listen deeply as we hear, read and study God's word. As God's word speaks to us, it comes both as command and promise. We listen to see how the message challenges us and encourages us in our lives. We listen for God's call and God's guidance. And we listen to the words of the Lord's Supper to remind us that the body of Christ was given for us and the blood of Christ was shed for us.

The Lord's Supper stands at the center of our lives as Christians. In that meal, we receive Jesus' presence into our very bodies. We receive God's gifts of forgiveness of sin, new life and salvation. At the same time, as a community God makes us into the body of Christ, one with all in every time and place who share this holy meal. We become the body of Christ for the sake of the world. That is, we participate in God's mission. Having been showered with God's gifts, God sends us forth to take that love and compassion out into the world to the lonely, the oppressed, the poor, the hungry, the imprisoned, the angry, and those suffering in mind, body and spirit.

There are many ways we hear God's word:

- The public reading of Scripture
- Preaching
- Bible study, devotional reading and retreats
- Sacraments
- Experiencing the Arts
- Forgiveness of sin
- All aspects of a congregation's educational ministry
- Continue the fellowship of the Lord's Supper through meal time prayer at the dinner table.

**What does it mean to you to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper?
How do you intend to live out this promise?**

Proclaim the Good News of God in Christ through word and deed: Think about proclaiming the good news. It's easy to envision a pastor in the pulpit on Sunday morning bringing the word of God to the gathered people. But through our baptismal covenant, we all are called to proclaim the good news of God in Christ. Not just the pastor, but every one of us. And not just once, or once in a while. We are called to proclaim the good news day after day, never ceasing, just as the disciples did in the passage above.

What does it mean to proclaim the good news of God in Christ? As the church, acting together and as individuals, we have a story to tell. We have the story of God's movement in our lives through the saving actions of Jesus Christ. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus is not simply a story in the Bible. Rather it's the story of our lives and the story of what brings us life. We simply share with others how God is working in our lives. We share the story that shapes our story. We are living out the story of Christ in us. **We are proclaiming the story of God's saving grace in our lives when we:**

- Invite others to the church where Christ is proclaimed
- Confess our faith through song and word in worship
- Offer encouragement to a friend and others who are ill or in need
- Show Christ through our daily lives and work, which express thanks to God and care for the common good
- Talk about our faith in our homes and with others
- Live prepared to give a reason for the hope within us

What does it mean to you to proclaim the Good News of God in Christ through word and deed? How do you intend to live out this promise?

Serve all people following the example of Jesus: Serving is at the heart of Jesus' ministry. Making the connection between Jesus feeding the five thousand and setting up a food pantry is easy. God serves others through us. Jesus calls us to be more than good wait staff. The ministry of feeding is commendable, but there is more to serving.

To follow the example of Jesus and serve all people requires us to get involved in the lives of others. Jesus valued relationships. Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman, making time for children or comforting his friends Martha and Mary serves as a blueprint for moving us beyond projects and anonymous charitable activities to relationships. Following the life of Jesus leads us into the mess of life where lives are transformed and Christ is made known. Serving as Jesus serves brings us closer to Jesus, the one who did not come to be served but to serve. **As we serve following the example of Jesus Christ, we can:**

- Visit the sick and the imprisoned
- Feed the hungry
- Respond to disasters
- Walk alongside others
- Give of our resources

What does it mean to you to serve all people following the example of Jesus? How do you intend to live out this promise?

Strive for justice and peace in all the earth: We celebrate the abundant blessings that are a part of this world. But we also walk in the struggle of human existence where we face our own sin, our self-centeredness, and the collective sin of human institutions, for example, the church, governments, the nations. In this struggle however, we meet the suffering God who bears the sins of the world and sends us out, as ones who are joined in the crucified Christ and in his solidarity with the pain of the world. As believers in Christ we are called to be about the work of justice in our personal and public life. We recognize that God's justice is something deeper and purer than our own best understanding of justice. And yet, we are called to love our neighbor as we would love ourselves. We speak the truth in love as we participate in God's mission of abundant life for all. With a deep awareness of our sinfulness and the sin of our society, with humility we speak with respect and promote change. And God calls us to speak out. An enemy of justice is silence. A justice mindset is one key way we practice our faith. A mindset and a heart filled with peace is faith in practice. Practicing our faith is something that we may never master. We always have more to learn. The focus of our practice is our gracious God, not the practices in themselves. Our faith practices are always an offering of response to our gracious God. May God work on you as you practice your faith in the midst of life in God's church and God's world. **As we seek justice and peace in all the earth things we might do are:**

- Pray for peace among nations and peoples
- Host an after-school, summer or weekend feeding program for children and families
- Begin a "Go Green" Initiative in our congregation and community
- Forgive as we have been forgiven by God
- Organize a community march against family violence
- Challenge the systems that perpetuate poverty
- Contact the ELCA Advocacy Office about joining with other Lutherans to speak to public officials about the difference your congregational ministries make in your community. You can also receive information and other alerts from them.
- Love all of humanity, respecting everyone, and seeing differences as a gift from God

What does it mean to you to strive for justice and peace in all the earth? How do you intend to live out this promise?