

The Seven Sacraments

The seven sacraments lay the foundation of every Christian life. Most Christians believe there are two sacraments. These are known as the '**Dominical Sacraments**' as they are based on the actions of Jesus.

The first of these is **baptism**, which was inspired by Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist and his command to his disciples to go out and baptise others.

The second is the **Eucharist** (also known as Holy Communion). This is a ceremony based around eating bread and drinking wine in memory of the Last Supper.

Some Christians, particularly Catholics and Orthodox Christians, believe there are five further sacraments (therefore seven sacraments in total). **This is what you need to know for your exam.**

Some Christians do not believe in any sacraments. An example of this are **Quakers**. They believe that *all life is sacramental*, not just individual actions. They therefore try to act in a good manner in every part of their life.



St Augustine defined a sacrament as '*An outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace*'. Sacraments are therefore important actions that allow Christians to achieve God's blessing.

Key Terms/Key Concepts

- Eucharist** – meaning 'thanksgiving'. The name Catholics use to describe the rite where the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus and are received by the people. Also the name for the Real Presence of Jesus in the Sacrament of Holy Communion
- Anoint** – to rub with oil
- Laying on of hands** – A bishop or priest laying their hands on someone receiving a sacrament
- Ordained** – Made a member of the clergy (e.g. a priest).



Sacraments of initiation

These lay the foundation of every Christian life.



For Catholics, baptism is the point at which they **enter the Catholic Church**. At the service of baptism, water is poured on a baby's head while the priest says: "*I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*"

The person being baptised becomes part of the family of God. Baptism takes away **original sin** (which all humans have inherited through the first sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden) and gives a new birth in the Holy Spirit. **The 'sign' through which they receive God's grace is the pouring of water.**

Catholic families are encouraged to baptise their children soon after birth, however sometimes people are baptised later, or even as adults.

Baptism



Confirmation completes the sacrament of baptism. As most Catholics are baptised as babies, confirmation is done when they are older. The person confirms the promises made on their behalf by their parents/guardians when they were baptised and this is a sign that they are mature enough to make the decision to be a Christian on their own.

For Catholics confirmation gives them the strength to follow Jesus and to become involved in the mission he left to the Church. **Its signs are the laying of hands on a person's head, most often by a bishop, and the anointing with oil.**

Confirmation



At the Last Supper before Jesus' death, he and his disciples ate bread and wine. He told them that the bread was his body and the wine was his blood, which he would sacrifice when he was crucified. He asked his followers to re-enact the meal when they came together after his death. Now when Catholics come together at Mass they take bread and wine in memory of Jesus' sacrifice. Catholics believe that when the bread and wine are consecrated (blessed), although their appearance doesn't change, they are actually transformed into the body and blood of Jesus. By receiving his body and blood, they are nourished spiritually. **The signs are the bread and wine.**

Eucharist

Sacraments of healing

These celebrate the healing power of Jesus.



By confessing and expressing sorrow for their sins, Catholics experience God's forgiveness and healing through absolution (forgiveness) by the priest. Their relationship with God and their unity as a Church is made whole again. **The signs of this sacrament are the confession of sins and the priest's words of absolution.**

Penance

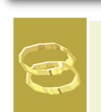


This unites a sick person's suffering with that of Jesus and brings forgiveness of sins. The individual is anointed with oil (a symbol of strength) and receives the laying-on of hands from a priest. In the past, this sacrament was only given to those close to death, but more recently the Church has encouraged its use for illness which is not necessarily life-threatening. **The signs are the anointing and the laying on of hands.**

Anointing of the Sick

Sacraments at the service of communion

These help individuals to serve the community and bring about the salvation of others



In matrimony, or marriage, a baptised man and woman are united. Matrimony needs the consent of the couple, as expressed in the marriage promises (vows). **The couple and their wedding rings are the signs of this sacrament.**

Matrimony



In holy orders, men are ordained as priests, deacons, or bishops. Priests serve as spiritual leaders of their communities, and deacons serve to remind us of our baptismal call to help others. Bishops carry on the teachings of Apostles. **The signs of this sacraments are the laying on of hands* and for a priest anointing with oil by a bishop.**

Holy Orders

Knowledge Check

Answer in full sentences or copy out the question.

- According to St Augustine, what is a sacrament?
- Why do Christians receive the sacraments?
- What are the dominical sacraments?
- Which type of Christians believe that 'all life is sacramental' and therefore do not accept the sacraments?
- Which Christians believe there are seven sacraments in total?
- Name each of the seven sacraments
- What is the purpose of the sacraments of initiation?
- What do the sacraments of healing celebrate?
- Which two sacraments help individuals to serve the community and bring about the salvation of others?
- What is meant by the term 'laying on of hands'?
- What is meant by the term 'anoint'?
- Which sacrament completes the sacrament of baptism?
- What is another term used for the sacrament of Holy Communion?
- Create a table outlining the signs of each sacrament

Choose a Task

- Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
- Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
- Create a poster/leaflet

CHALLENGE!

Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

Challenge

"Baptism is the **most important** sacrament."

Discuss the statement showing that you have thought of **more than one point of view**. (some might agree/disagree with this statement because...however I agree/disagree with this statement because...)

For each sentence, use PEEA (Point, Evidence, Explain, Analysis).
For example:
P – Make your point
E – Back it up with evidence or examples
E – Explanation (link back to the statement)
A – Say what is good or bad about the point you have just made