

“A New Creation” Watercolor Project on Baptism

A confirmation lesson on baptism, making bookmarks with watercolor

Objectives:

- To reinforce students’ understanding that baptism gives us new life in Christ on a daily basis.
- To spread the Good News of God’s love and acceptance to visitors.

Audience: Confirmation students

Duration: 60 minutes plus a short follow-up later to finish bookmarks

Materials/Preparation Needed:

- Bibles
- Copies of Luther’s *Small Catechism*
- Bottles of liquid watercolor available online or in craft stores
- Cold press watercolor paper, 140 lb. , cut to 9” x 2.5” size plus scraps for practice
- Paint trays with compartments to hold watercolors OR small paper cups
- Clear cups of water
- Brushes of all sizes
- Other items to apply paint: small pieces of sea sponge, eye droppers, straws
- (Optional) Kosher salt, plastic wrap, different widths of craft tape, white crayons
- Paper towels
- Flat trays or plates to put under the bookmarks to catch extra paint
- Hole punch
- 1/8 inch ribbon cut to 18” length in different colors
- 2” x 4” clear labels printed with a theme verse to put on back of bookmarks.
- Plastic tablecloths



Watch YouTube videos on using watercolor liquids or look through painting with watercolor resources to discover different techniques for using watercolors that you can share with your students. They also can discover different ways to use the paint on their own. It doesn’t take a lot of expertise to make some beautiful designs! You can use the liquid watercolor full strength or dilute it to get lighter colors.

To prepare for the class, put plastic tablecloths down on work stations. Lay out cups of brushes and paints as well as other supplies for each table. (*Suggestion: To avoid distracting students during the discussion, keep the supplies on a side table until you are ready to start. Then have students from each table transfer the supplies to their tables.*)

Lesson/Event:

A. Introduction

1. Welcome students as they come in and have them sit at the tables. Make sure that students are distributed evenly among the tables since they will need space to work.
2. Open with a prayer for your time together.
3. Have students open Luther's *Small Catechism* to the section on the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Depending on whether this is a follow-up session (recommended) or a session to introduce baptism, review what a sacrament is and what the physical and spiritual elements of baptism.
4. Read together the section on "How can water do such great things?" What does water with God's word bring about? (*new birth in the Holy Spirit*)
5. Read "What is the significance of such a baptism with water?" Point out that Luther says that our old selves are "drowned" through repentance every day and we become a new person. This is a daily occurrence.

Say: Life can get really messy at times, when we are struggling with a situation or with ourselves. (Share some personal examples to which the students might relate.) What are some things that can make life difficult for people your age? What are ways that you or other young people can screw up and make life difficult for themselves and others?

6. Say: The great news is that God is there for us to take that mess we have made and do something awesome with it. Have students open bibles to 2 Corinthians 5:17 and have someone read it out loud. Through baptism, we become a new creation in Christ! That is good news for us and good news to share.

B. Bookmark Activity:

1. Say: Today, we are going to use water to demonstrate what we have just learned, that God takes the messiness of our lives and through the water and Word of Baptism, he makes us something new and wonderful.
2. Explain to students that they will be making watercolor bookmarks. They can make one for themselves to keep and the others will be given to visitors that come to our church to share the Good News. Demonstrate some techniques they can use with the watercolors. Suggest that they try some things on the sample paper before they move to the bookmarks. Caution against using too much water.

3. Have students bring the prepared supplies to each table. As they work, move around to assist as needed. Bookmarks that are finished can be moved to the side to dry on newsprint.

(Note: Bookmarks are best left to dry overnight and then pressed flat. Once they are flat, punch a hole at the top, thread and knot 2-3 colored ribbons at the top, and add a verse printed on the clear label to the back of the bookmark. Alternatively, the verse could be handprinted on the bookmark.)

4. Once students have had an opportunity to make several bookmarks, have them help clean up the materials and return to their seats.

C. Closing:

1. To end the session, ask students some of the following questions or your own based on student experience.
 - How did the activity remind you of our daily lives?
 - How did the water aid the process of decorating the bookmarks? How does that relate to the water of baptism?
 - If you used a straw to apply watercolor, what did that do to the paint? How is your breath like the power of the Holy Spirit?
 - What message do we want to send to our visitors with these bookmarks? Have 3-4 possible verses that students might choose to put on the back of the bookmarks. Some examples might be: 1 John 4:7a, 2 Corinthians 5:17, John 3:16, Philippians 4:2
2. Remind students that they will be finishing up the bookmarks with ribbons and verses the next session.
3. Have the students gather around the decorated bookmarks. Bless the bookmarks and those who will receive them.
4. Suggest that students and their families help greet visitors so they can personally pass out the bookmarks to them.