
A Celebration of Baptism
An Ecumenical Liturgy

Consultation on Common Texts

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Consultation on Common Texts

[Note: This description was prepared in 1988 and has not been revised.]

The Consultation on Common Texts (CCT) originated in the mid 1960s as a forum for consultation on worship renewal among many of the major Christian Churches in the United States and Canada. At present, participants in the CCT include persons from the following Churches or Church agencies:

The Anglican Church of Canada, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Reformed Church in North America, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, International Commission on English in the Liturgy (an agency of several Roman Catholic conferences of bishops, including Canada and the United States), Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Polish National Catholic Church, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Presbyterian Church in Canada, Reformed Church in America, Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship, United Church of Canada, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church.

Projects and publications sponsored by the Consultation on Common Texts include the following:

Prayers We Have in Common. This project sought to provide a contemporary and ecumenical English version of prayers in regular use by the Churches. Initiated by the CCT, it became part of the work of the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET). These texts have now been revised by ICET's successor, the English Language Liturgical Consultation and published under the title *Praying Together: A Revision of Prayers We Have in Common* (1988).

A Liturgical Psalter for the Christian Year. Growing out of an early study of the liturgical use of psalms, this was prepared and edited by the Rev. Dr. Massey H. Shepherd, Jr., with the assistance of the CCT. It was published jointly by Augsburg Publishing House and The Liturgical Press in 1976.

Ecumenical Services of Prayer. This was a result of desire expressed by various members of the CCT to have a simple resource for worship in common on those occasions when Christians of various traditions gather for meetings or celebrations of an ecumenical nature. It was published by the Paulist Press in 1983.

Common Lectionary: The Lectionary Proposed by the Consultation on Common Texts. In order to achieve even greater unity in worship, the CCT has proposed a harmonization of denominational variants in the lectionary for the Sundays and major feast days of the Christian year, based on the three year lectionary systems now in use in many of the Churches in North America. Published by The Church Hymnal Corporation in 1983, this project is being evaluated by the Churches.

A Christian Celebration of Marriage: An Ecumenical Liturgy. As a contribution to the pastoral ministry of the Churches to those entering into ecumenical marriages, CCT prepared a wedding liturgy. It is ecumenical in being prepared and endorsed by CCT, which is an ecumenical body concerned with liturgical matters. In addition it is drawn from or based upon the wedding liturgies of the CCT Churches. Finally, it was prepared with ecumenical marriages in mind. This was published by Fortress Press in 1987.

A Celebration of Baptism: An Ecumenical Liturgy. The liturgy of baptism presented here is proposed by CCT as a further step in the contemporary liturgical and theological convergence regarding baptism.

Introduction

There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism.

We are fortunate to live in an age in which there is increasing convergence among the divided Churches in liturgical practice, theological understanding, and in their witness and service. Baptism, in which one is incorporated into Christ and the Church and which is a sacrament of unity, is an important issue in the ecumenical movement.

Liturgies of baptism adopted or proposed by a number of Churches in recent years show remarkable similarities, and bilateral and multilateral theological dialogues have shown increasing agreement in the understanding of baptism. The major Christian Churches of North America generally recognize each other's baptism.

Nevertheless, unity regarding baptism is not complete. Differences in understanding still exist, the baptisms of some Churches are not accepted by others, there still are many baptistries in our towns and cities, and individuals are still baptized into many divided denominations as well as into the one Church of Jesus Christ.

It is as a further step forward in ecumenical convergence regarding baptism that the Consultation on Common Texts proposes *A Celebration of Baptism: An Ecumenical Liturgy*. As an agreed liturgy prepared by an ecumenical-liturgical body whose members come from seventeen Churches in Canada and the United States, it stands as a concrete expression and sign of the Churches' belief in "one baptism," and as well is an expression of the liturgical and theological convergence and consensus regarding baptism referred to above.

A Celebration of Baptism: An Ecumenical Liturgy is proposed as a symbol of baptismal unity, for study, and for liturgical use.

It is commended for study because it is a concrete liturgical expression of that degree and kind of theological convergence represented by various bilateral dialogues and by the World Council of Churches' 1982 document, *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*. Furthermore, with accompanying commentary it identifies—liturgically—the issues at stake in discussions of baptism, shows how these are dealt with by a responsible ecumenical-liturgical body, and presents concrete liturgical solutions while recognizing that there may be other acceptable solutions as well. In addition, it is a demonstration of ecumenical agreement regarding the structure and content of the liturgy of baptism. Finally, it presents a consensus model that may help Churches that undertake a revision of their own baptismal liturgies.

It is also commended for use. Some Churches or local congregations may use *A Celebration of Baptism: An Ecumenical Liturgy* as their usual baptismal liturgy. It will witness to the belief of the Churches that "there is one baptism." It may also be used on specific occasions when the universal character of baptism is especially prominent, for instance, the baptism of children of ecumenical marriages, and at ecumenical services when baptism is celebrated. Celebrations of the Easter Vigil provide yet another opportunity for use of this liturgy.

Pastoral Notes

The Liturgy as a Whole

A Celebration of Baptism: An Ecumenical Liturgy assumes that baptism will be celebrated in the context of a principal Sunday liturgy of the local congregation. Easter Sunday (and the Easter Vigil, where this is celebrated) is the most appropriate time for baptisms. Other especially appropriate times are Pentecost, All Saints, and Epiphany/Baptism of the Lord.

This liturgy names the introductory and concluding parts of the Sunday liturgy and common elements of these parts (greeting, prayer of the day, blessing, dismissal), but leaves the details of these to local choice.

Within the Sunday liturgy in general, the liturgy of baptism is placed following the proclamation and preaching of the Word of God. The “Prayers” (General Intercessions, Prayers of the Church, Prayers of the People) that commonly are part of the response to the Word, follow the liturgy of baptism and will refer to the newly baptized. The Profession of Faith that often is part of the liturgy of the Word is part of the baptismal liturgy and therefore is not used in its usual place.

The shape of the liturgy of baptism itself is straightforward. It begins with an Introduction and the Presentation of Candidates, and then moves on to Thanksgiving over the Water. The Profession of Faith follows, leading to the Baptism: baptism in water and laying on of hands. The subsequent Signing with the Cross, giving of a Baptismal Garment, and Giving of the Light are optional. The liturgy of baptism concludes with a Welcome and The Peace.

The liturgy of baptism is followed by the celebration of the eucharist. Though this sometimes will not be done, it is prescribed here to indicate that first eucharist is an integral part of the process of becoming a Christian and that baptizing in the context of the eucharist is a normative part of the Christian tradition. It is expected that adults and older children will commune immediately following baptism; if not at the same service, then as soon as possible. This liturgy also implies that infants and younger children will commune immediately following their baptism, though this is not the present practice of all Churches.

Within the eucharistic liturgy, it is appropriate for the newly baptized to present the gifts of bread and wine. In addition, they will be among the first to commune.

The Candidates

A Celebration of Baptism: An Ecumenical Liturgy is intended for the baptism of both adults and infants. Most of the service is identical for the two types of candidates. However, there are separate forms of the “Presentation of Candidates” for adults and infants. Other adaptations, if required, will be made by the minister; for example, it may be possible to immerse infants even if the font is too small for this to be done with adults. When both adults and infants are baptized in the same service, the two forms of the Presentation of Candidates will be combined as appropriate.

It is assumed that adult candidates and the parents of infant candidates will have received adequate preparation for baptism.

Participation

Baptism in the context of Sunday worship will be a celebration of the entire local church community, and all present will participate fully in the liturgy of baptism as well as in the rest of the Sunday liturgy.

Community involvement in the baptismal liturgy itself is indicated in part by texts printed in **[boldface]**; some of these are integral parts of the liturgy while others are optional or model texts. Appropriate printed aids need to be supplied to the congregation to facilitate their full participation.

In addition, the congregation participates through hearing and seeing. It is important that all hear the several dialogues between the minister and the candidates, as well as all of the prayers and other texts said by the minister. Amplification should be provided for the candidates if required. Similarly, all present should be able to see as much as possible of the liturgy of baptism.

Ministry

The primary minister in the liturgy of baptism is the entire worshiping assembly: the local church community.

Within the liturgical assembly, one or more ordained ministers preside or assist; there may be various assisting lay ministers; others may minister by reading scripture. Other ministerial roles include those of sponsors of adult and infant candidates, and parents of the latter. A representative of the congregation may have a ministerial role in the Giving of the Light and the giving of a Baptismal Garment.

When large numbers of candidates are baptized in a single service, the assistance of several ordained and lay ministers and of the sponsors may be helpful, particularly in the parts of the liturgy that follow baptism in water.

Signs and Symbols

The primary nonverbal act in the liturgy of baptism is the actual baptism in water. It is envisioned that the font containing the water of baptism be large, dignified and architecturally prominent. Prior to the prayer of Thanksgiving, water is poured visibly and audibly into the font (though the font may already be partially filled).

Two modes of baptism in water are specified; the first is immersion, and the second is pouring. Both immersion and pouring will be performed three times, accompanied by the three parts of the trinitarian formula. It is assumed that water will be used generously even if baptism is by pouring.

If immersion is used, then an opportunity must be provided for the newly baptized to dry themselves and change clothes. This would least break the flow of the liturgy if it were to follow the Prayers and precede the beginning of the liturgy of the eucharist. Alternatively, this may be done immediately after the baptism in water or following the laying on of hands or the signing with the cross.

Another important nonverbal element is the laying on of hands, in which hands are outstretched over all the newly baptized. This gesture will be made so that it may be seen by all, and so that its importance is obvious. An assisting minister will hold the liturgical book containing the accompanying prayer in order that the minister will be able to stretch out both hands.

Following the water baptism and laying on of hands, several other nonverbal elements are provided as options. One of these is the making of the sign of the cross on the forehead of each newly baptized person. A sizable cross will be traced on the forehead. The minister's finger(s) may be dipped in oil or chrism (perfumed oil) prior to making the sign of the cross. This oil

should be allowed to remain on the foreheads of the newly baptized for the remainder of the liturgy.

A white baptismal garment may be given to each person. Finally, candles may be lighted from the paschal candle and presented to each of the newly baptized.

Movement, Posture, and Gesture

During the liturgy of the Word, candidates, sponsors and parents will be seated among the congregation. At the Presentation of Candidates, however, they will move to the font in response to the minister's invitation. Candidates will stand so that their faces can be seen by both the congregation and the minister.

Unless the font is in front, the baptismal party—candidates, sponsors, parents, and minister—will also have to move to and from the font.

Finally, if there is immersion, candidates will at some point have to leave, change clothes, and then return.

Following the Prayers, the newly baptized, sponsors, and parents return to places among the congregation for the liturgy of the eucharist.

It is appropriate for the congregation to stand whenever they speak texts of their own, as well as during the central prayers and acts: the Thanksgiving over the Water, Profession of Faith, and the Baptism (water baptism and laying on of hands). Thus the congregation may stand during most of the liturgy of baptism, though this will depend on the number of candidates and individual circumstances.

During the Thanksgiving over the Water the minister may use several gestures. During the early part of the Thanksgiving the *orans* position of the hands is appropriate, whereas the petitions may be accompanied by a gesture of invocation. The minister may also touch the water as the presence of the Holy Spirit is prayed for, or immerse the paschal candle in it, or both.

Music

Singing is an important mode of congregational participation in the liturgy of baptism. Within the whole service, there may be singing during the gathering, liturgy of the Word, celebration of the eucharist, and at the dismissal, just as there would be on other Sundays. The songs chosen may reflect the fact that baptism is being celebrated.

Within the liturgy of baptism itself there may be singing whenever the candidates, sponsors, and parents move from one place to another (at the Presentation of Candidates, before and after the Baptism, and while the newly baptized dress following immersion), *if* these movements will take very long.

The acclamations within the first and third prayers of Thanksgiving over Water will be sung whenever possible. Another text may replace those printed. In addition, *A Celebration of Baptism: An Ecumenical Liturgy* provides an opportunity for the singing of a short acclamation immediately following each baptism in water.

Psalms (for example 23, 42) and other appropriate songs may be chosen.

Adaptations

Alternative texts are provided for the Presentation of Candidates, the Thanksgiving over the Water, the Renunciations, Profession of Faith, and the baptismal formula itself.

Other texts are provided as models, and the minister is given the option of using “these or similar words.” Finally, rubrics indicate that in a number of cases the minister or other persons “may” say or do this or that.

Options and alternatives will be chosen intelligently in light of the circumstances of individual celebrations of baptism.

At some baptisms it may be appropriate for the ordained minister of the Church in which the baptisms are to be celebrated to be joined by an ordained minister of another local congregation of the same or a different denomination. The former might be considered the “host presiding minister” while the latter may participate as “guest presiding minister” or in some other ministerial role. Exactly how the parts of the service are shared by the two ordained ministers will be worked out by them together with the candidates or parents, and in accord with the customs and disciplines of the two Churches.

Finally, baptism sometimes is celebrated at interchurch (ecumenical) services, as for example, at an ecumenical Easter Vigil liturgy. Here again, one minister will take the role of liturgical president, with other ministers also taking significant roles. Care will be taken to provide adequate printed or other aids to facilitate the full participation of all those present. In addition, music will be chosen that all have in common, or an opportunity provided to teach music that might be new.

Language and Texts

The language used in *A Celebration of Baptism: An Ecumenical Liturgy* is inclusive. It is hoped that the language used in preaching, other prayers, and informal speech will be consistent with this usage.

The text of the Apostles’ Creed used here is the new (1988) international and ecumenical version of the English Language Liturgical Consultation.

Many have seriously questioned the gender-specific character of the trinitarian formula used in baptism. The CCT is aware of this debate and sympathetic with many of the concerns raised. However, this formula is grounded in scripture and has been used through Christian history. All branches of the Church regard this formula and the use of water as the essentials of a valid baptism. No other words provide the necessary link with the heritage of the Church or maintain the necessary unity with the Church universal.

In accordance with the longstanding tradition of the Church, liturgical prayers such as the Thanksgivings over the Water are addressed to the first person of the Trinity, made *through* the second person of the Trinity, and *in* the third person of the Trinity. Again in accord with ancient tradition, the first person of the trinity is most commonly named “God,” and less commonly as “Lord” or “Father.”

A Celebration of Baptism

Order of Service

GATHERING

Greeting
Prayer of the Day

WORD OF GOD

Proclamation of Scripture
Sermon or Homily

THE BAPTISM

Introduction
Presentation of the Candidates
Thanksgiving over the Water
Profession of Faith
Baptism
Signing with the Cross
Baptismal Garment
Giving of the Light
Welcome
The Peace
Prayers

THE EUCHARIST

DISMISSAL

Blessing
Commissioning or Dismissal

A Celebration of Baptism

Gathering

GREETING

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Word of God

PROCLAMATION OF SCRIPTURE

SERMON OR HOMILY

The Baptism

*Texts said or sung by the congregation are in **boldface**.*

INTRODUCTION

The minister may briefly introduce the liturgy of baptism in these or similar words.

Brothers and sisters in Christ,
through the Sacrament of Baptism
we share in the death and resurrection of Christ,
and are incorporated into Christ's Holy Church.

Baptism proclaims the faith of the Church.
By the sign of water God cleanses from sin,
renews life, and prefigures the reconciliation
of all things promised in Christ.

In baptism we are given the Holy Spirit
as a pledge of this reconciliation.

The same Spirit binds us to each other
and joins us to Christ's ministry
of love, peace, and justice.

PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES

One of the following forms is used, as appropriate.

First Form: For Adults and Older Children

The minister may say in these or similar words:

The candidates for Holy Baptism will now be presented.

A sponsor for each candidate, in turn, presents the candidate with these or similar words:

I present N. to receive the Sacrament of Baptism.

The minister addresses each candidate, using these or similar words:

Putting your whole trust
in the grace and love of Jesus Christ,
do you desire to be baptized?

The candidate responds:

I do.

The minister addresses the sponsors for each candidate:

Will you continue to walk with N.
in this new life in Christ?

The sponsors respond:

I will, with God's help.

After all the candidates have been presented, the minister addresses the congregation:

People of God,
will you promise to uphold and support N. and N. (*or, these persons*)
in their life in Christ?

We will, with God's help.

Second Form: For Infants and Younger Children

The minister may say in these or similar words:

The candidates for Holy Baptism will now be presented.

Candidates unable to answer for themselves are presented individually by their parent(s) and sponsors:

I present N. to receive the Sacrament of Baptism.

The minister addresses the parent(s), using these or similar words:

Putting your whole trust
in the grace and love of Jesus Christ,
do you desire to have your child(ren) baptized?

The parent(s) respond(s):

I do.

The minister again addresses the parent(s):

Will you be responsible for nurturing the child(ren) you present
in the faith and life of the Christian community?

The parent(s) respond(s):

I will, with God's help.

The minister addresses the sponsors:

Will you by your prayers and witness
help this child (these children) grow into the full stature of Christ?

The sponsors respond:

I will, with God's help.

After all the candidates have been presented, the minister addresses the congregation:

People of God,
will you promise to uphold and support N. and N. (*or*, these persons)
in their life in Christ?

We will, with God's help.

THANKSGIVING OVER THE WATER

Water is poured visibly and audibly into the font.

One of the following Thanksgivings is used.

First Thanksgiving

The minister says:

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Blessed are you, gracious God,
creator of the universe, ruler of heaven and earth.
You are the source of light and life for all creation.
In your goodness you give us the sign of water.

Glory to you for ever and ever.

or

Blessed be God for ever and ever.

At the beginning your Spirit was at work,
brooding over the waters of creation's birth,
bringing forth life in all its fullness.

Through the gift of water
you nourish and sustain all living things.

Glory to you for ever and ever.

or

Blessed be God for ever and ever.

In the time of Noah you destroyed the wicked
and cleansed the earth through the waters of the flood.

By the pillar of cloud and fire
you led Israel through the waters of the Red Sea
out of slavery to freedom in the promised land.

Glory to you for ever and ever.

or

Blessed be God for ever and ever.

In the waters of the river Jordan
Jesus was baptized by John
and anointed by the Holy Spirit.
He is the never-failing spring
who has promised that all who thirst
can come to the living water.

Glory to you for ever and ever.

or

Blessed be God for ever and ever.

By the baptism of his own death and resurrection
he set us free from bondage to sin and death
and opened to us the joy and freedom of everlasting life.
As he suffered for us, the piercing of his side
brought forth water and blood.

Glory to you for ever and ever.

or

Blessed be God for ever and ever.

That we might live no longer for ourselves,
but for him who died and rose for us,
Christ sent the Holy Spirit,
his own first gift for those who believe.
He sends us out to proclaim the gospel to all nations,
baptizing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Glory to you for ever and ever.

or

Blessed be God for ever and ever.

Therefore, saving God,
we bless you for the water with which you bless us.
We pray that N. and N. (*or*, these persons)
who come to the waters of life
will live in your grace,
sharing in the death and resurrection of Jesus.
Send your Holy Spirit
upon us and upon this water,
that all who are gathered under this sign
may be one in Christ.

Glory to you for ever and ever.

or

Blessed be God for ever and ever.

We give you praise and honor and worship
through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
now and for ever.

Glory to you for ever and ever. Amen.

or

Blessed be God for ever and ever. Amen.

Second Thanksgiving

The minister says:

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We thank you, almighty God, for the gift of water.
Over water the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation.
With water you destroyed evil in the days of Noah.
Through water you led the children of Israel
out of their bondage in Egypt into the land of promise.
In water your Son Jesus received the baptism of John
and was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Christ,
that he might lead us through his death and resurrection,
from the bondage of sin into everlasting life.
We thank you, loving God, for the water of baptism.
In it we are buried with Christ in his death.
By it we share in the resurrection.
Through it we are reborn by the Holy Spirit.
Therefore in joyful obedience to your Son,
we receive into the community of faith
those whom you have called and justified.

Pour out your Holy Spirit,
that as N. and N. (*or*, these persons)
are made a new creation through these baptismal waters,
they may preach good news to the poor,
proclaim release to the captives
and set at liberty those who are oppressed.
To Christ, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory,
now and for ever.
Amen.

Third Thanksgiving

The minister says:

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We give you thanks, almighty God and Father,
for by the gift of water
you nourish and sustain all living things.
Glory to you for ever and ever.

or

Blessed be God for ever and ever.

We give you thanks that through the waters of the Red Sea,
you led your people out of slavery to freedom in the promised land.
Glory to you for ever and ever.

or

Blessed be God for ever and ever.

We give you thanks for sending Jesus your Son,
who for us was baptized by John in the River Jordan
and anointed as Christ by your Holy Spirit.
To renew the world he suffered the baptism
of his own death and resurrection,
setting us free from the bondage of sin and death,
making the whole creation new,
and opening to us the joy and freedom of everlasting life.
Glory to you for ever and ever.

or

Blessed be God for ever and ever.

We give you thanks for your Holy Spirit
who teaches us and leads us into all truth,
filling us with diverse gifts
so that we might proclaim the gospel to all nations
and serve you as a royal priesthood.

Glory to you for ever and ever.

or

Blessed be God for ever and ever.

We give you thanks for the gift of baptism.
In this water we are buried with Christ in his death;
from this water we are raised to share in his resurrection;
through this water we are reborn of the Holy Spirit.

Glory to you for ever and ever.

or

Blessed be God for ever and ever.

By the power of your Spirit, bless this water,
that it may be a fountain of deliverance and rebirth.
Wash away the sins of all who are cleansed by it.
Raise them to new life,
and graft them to the body of Christ.
Pour out your Holy Spirit upon N. and N. (*or*, these persons)
that they may have power to do your will,
and reveal your love to all.
To Christ, to you, and to the Holy Spirit,
be all glory and honor,
now and for ever.

Glory to you for ever and ever. Amen.

or

Blessed be God for ever and ever. Amen.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

The minister addresses the candidates in these or similar words:

I ask you to reject sin,
profess your faith in Christ Jesus,
and confess the faith of the Church.

RENUNCIATIONS

One of the following forms is used.

If such is the custom, all those present may also be invited to respond as part of the renewal of their baptismal covenant.

First Form

The minister says to the candidates who can answer for themselves, or to the parents and sponsors of infants and younger children:

Do you renounce Satan
and all the spiritual forces of wickedness
that rebel against God?

The candidates, or parents and sponsors, respond:
I renounce them.

The minister says:

Do you renounce the evil powers of this world,
which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God?

The candidates, or parents and sponsors, respond:
I renounce them.

The minister says:

Do you renounce all sinful desires
that draw you from the love of God?

The candidates, or parents and sponsors, respond:
I renounce them.

Second Form

The minister says to the candidates who can answer for themselves, or to the parents and sponsors of infants and younger children:

Do you renounce evil and its power in the world,
which defy God's righteousness and love?

The candidates, or parents and sponsors, respond:
I renounce them.

The minister says:

Do you renounce the ways of sin
that separate you from the love of God?

The candidates, or parents and sponsors, respond:

I renounce them.

PROFESSION

The minister may say:

Let us join with those who are to be baptized
in professing the faith of the Church,
and renew our own baptismal covenant.

One of the following forms is used.

First Form

The minister says to the candidates who can answer for themselves, or to the parents and sponsors of infants and younger children, and all those present:

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty?

Response:

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

The minister says:

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

Response:

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

The minister says:

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

Response:

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Second Form

The minister says to the candidates who can answer for themselves, or to the parents and sponsors of infants and younger children, and all those present:

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth?

Response:

I do believe.

The minister says:

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
and born of the Virgin Mary,
who suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
who descended to the dead,
and on the third day rose again;
who ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father;
who will come again to judge the living and the dead?

Response:

I do believe.

The minister says:

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen?

Response:

I do believe.

BAPTISM

One of the following forms is used.

First Form

Each candidate may be presented by name to the minister.

The minister immerses the candidate, or pours water three times upon the candidate, saying:

N., I baptize you
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Second Form

Each candidate may be presented by name to the minister.

The minister immerses the candidate, or pours water three times upon the candidate, saying:

N. is baptized
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

After each baptism the congregation may respond, saying or singing:

Amen.

or singing a verse such as:

**This is the fountain of life,
water made holy by the suffering of Christ,
washing all the world.**

or

**You who are washed in this water
have hope of Christ's kingdom.**

The minister holds hands outstretched over the newly baptized and says:

(If it is the custom, one or both hands may be placed upon the head of each candidate.)

All-powerful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we give you thanks
for freeing your sons and daughters from the power of sin
and for raising them up to a new life of grace.
Sustain them with your Holy Spirit:
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord,
the spirit of joy in your presence.

Amen.

SIGNING WITH THE CROSS

The minister may mark the sign of the cross on the forehead of each of the baptized. Chrism or oil may be used.

As the sign of the cross is being made, the minister says:

N., child of God,
I sign you with the cross;
you are marked as Christ's for ever.

BAPTISMAL GARMENT

Here, or at another appropriate place, the newly baptized may be given a white garment.

As it is put on, the minister or a sponsor may say:

In baptism you have put on Christ;
you have become a new creation.

GIVING OF THE LIGHT

Baptismal candles may be lighted from the paschal candle. These candles may be given to each of the baptized by a minister, sponsor, or representative of the congregation, saying:

Receive the light of Christ;
you have passed from darkness to light.

The one who presents the candle, or the entire congregation, may continue:

You have been enlightened by Christ.
Walk always as children of the light.

WELCOME

The minister says:

With joy and thanksgiving we welcome you
into Christ's one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

The minister, or the entire congregation, continues:

We are the People of God,
members of the household of faith,
a royal priesthood.
Proclaim with us the good news of Christ
for all the world.
We are one in Christ Jesus:
share with us at the table of God's kingdom.

THE PEACE

The minister says:

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

A sign of peace is exchanged, using these or similar words:

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

PRAYERS

The service continues with the Prayers (Prayers of the People; General Intercessions; Prayers of the Church), making special mention of the newly baptized.

(If the eucharist is not celebrated on a particular occasion, the Lord's Prayer should be said at the conclusion of the Prayers.)

The Eucharist

Dismissal

BLESSING

COMMISSIONING OR DISMISSAL

A Celebration of Baptism

An Ecumenical Liturgy

The Consultation on Common Texts

The Consultation on Common Texts is a forum for consultation on worship renewal among many of the major Christian Churches in the United States and Canada. Participants in the CCT include persons from the following churches or church agencies [1988]:

The Anglican Church of Canada, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Reformed Church in North America, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, International Commission on English in the Liturgy (an agency of several Roman Catholic conferences of bishops, including Canada and the United States), Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Polish National Catholic Church, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Presbyterian Church in Canada, Reformed Church in America, Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship, United Church of Canada, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church.

The Baptism

The liturgy of baptism follows the gathering of God's People and the proclamation and preaching of the Word of God.

*The people are invited to respond as indicated in **boldface**. The minister may also invite them to participate in additional responses. In several places two options are given.*

INTRODUCTION

The minister may briefly introduce the liturgy of baptism.

PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES

First Form: Adults and Older Children

Sponsors present the candidates.

The minister questions each candidate.

The minister questions the sponsors of each candidate.

The minister addresses the congregation:

People of God, will you promise to uphold and support N. and N. (*or, these persons*) in their life in Christ?

We will, with God's help.

Second Form: Infants and Younger Children

Parents present the candidates.

The minister questions the parents of each candidate.

The minister questions the sponsors of each candidate.

The minister addresses the congregation:

People of God, will you promise to uphold and support N. and N. (*or, these persons*) in their life in Christ?

We will, with God's help.

THANKSGIVING OVER THE WATER

Water is poured into the font.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The minister proclaims the prayer of thanksgiving, at the conclusion of which all respond:

Amen.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

The minister addresses the candidates.

RENUNCIATIONS

The minister questions the candidates who can answer for themselves, or the parents and sponsors of infants and younger children.

If such is the custom, all those present may also be invited to respond as part of the renewal of their baptismal covenant.

First Form

Do you renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God?

R. I renounce them.

Do you renounce the evil powers of this world, which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God?

R. I renounce them.

Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw you from the love of God?

R. I renounce them.

Second Form

Do you renounce evil and its power in the world, which defy God's righteousness and love?

R. I renounce them.

Do you renounce the ways of sin that separate you from the love of God?

R. I renounce them.

PROFESSION

First Form

The minister questions the candidates who can answer for themselves, or the parents and sponsors of infants and younger children.

If such is the custom, all those present may also respond.

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty?

R. I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

R. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

R. I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Second Form

The minister questions the candidates who can answer for themselves, or the parents and sponsors of infants and younger children.

If such is the custom, all those present may also respond.

The minister three times asks:

Do you believe . . . ,
and each time those questioned respond:
I do believe.

BAPTISM

The minister immerses the candidate, or pours water three times upon the candidate, saying the baptismal formula.

After each baptism the congregation may respond by saying or singing:

Amen.

The people may also respond by singing a verse such as:

This is the fountain of life,
water made holy by the suffering of Christ,
washing all the world.

or

You who are washed in this water
have hope of Christ's kingdom.

The minister holds hands outstretched over the newly baptized and prays over them, at the conclusion of which all respond:

Amen.

SIGNING WITH THE CROSS

The minister may mark the sign of the cross on the forehead of each of the baptized.

BAPTISMAL GARMENT

The newly baptized may be given a white garment.

GIVING OF THE LIGHT

Baptismal candles may be lighted and presented to each of the baptized, saying:

Receive the light of Christ;
you have passed from darkness to light.

The one who presents the candle, or the entire congregation, may continue:

You have been enlightened by Christ.
Walk always as children of the light.

WELCOME

The minister says:

With joy and thanksgiving we welcome you into Christ's one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

The minister, or the entire congregation, continues:

We are the People of God,
members of the household of faith,
a royal priesthood.
Proclaim with us the good news of Christ
for all the world.
We are one in Christ Jesus:
share with us at the table of God's kingdom.

THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

A sign of peace is exchanged, using these or similar words:

The peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

PRAYERS

The service continues with the Prayers, making special mention of the newly baptized.

The eucharist may follow. If it does not, the Lord's Prayer is said following the Prayers.

The liturgy concludes in the usual way.

Acknowledgment

A Celebration of Baptism: An Ecumenical Liturgy was prepared by the Consultation on Common Texts and published in 1988. Copyright © 1988 Consultation on Common Texts. Used by permission.