**Baptism**

**You will need:**

* white felt or cloth
* a doll and basket
* a white blanket or garment
* large bowl of water for the baptismal font
* small pitcher of water
* perfumed oil
* large candle for the Paschal candle
* small candle and holder or container (not plastic) with sand to hold lighted candle
* matches *(keep away from students)*
* small hand towel

*Children are seated in a semi-circle ready to listen to the story. When the children are settled, go to the shelf and carry the materials as you would the Bible. Place these beside you.*

*Begin by spreading out the white cloth in front of you. Smooth it out and say:*

**Jesus told his friends to baptise people in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.**

*Pick up the bowl of water and pitcher. Place on white cloth and say:*

**In Baptism we use water – water cleans and renews, water keeps us alive. Jesus was baptised in water.**

*Pick up the large candle and place on white cloth.*

*Light the candle as you say:*

**This is the Easter candle. Jesus said “I am the Light of the World”.**

*Put small container of oil on white cloth saying:*

**This is perfumed oil – that heals and strengthens, oil that kings, queens, priests and prophets were anointed with to strengthen them for their special work.**

*Pick up baby doll and say:*

**Today I’ll use this baby doll to show what happens in Baptism. It’s not always babies that are baptised. Sometimes people are older when they are baptised.**

**The priest meets everyone at the entrance to the church. He asks the parents “What name do you give your child?” We’d better give this baby a name. Look up and say, What name will we give this child? Take the first name suggested, and say clearly and distinctly:**

**(N………………), the Christian community welcomes you with great joy. In its name, I claim you for Christ, our Saviour. The priest makes the sign of the cross on the baby’s forehead and invites the parents and godparents to do the same.**

*Make the Sign of the Cross on the doll’s head and invite two or three children to do this also.*

*Gently place the baby back in the basket and continue.*

**The people listen to the Word of God** (*point to the Bible in the prayer place),* **say some prayers and gather around the font of water.**

*Move large bowl of water in front of you and pick up the doll again. Fill small pitcher of water from the large bowl (baptismal font). Pour water three times over the doll’s head as you say clearly and distinctly:*

**(N………………), I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.**

*Put some oil on your finger, make a cross on the doll’s head and say:*

**God our Father anoints you with the oil of Chrism. May you live always as a member of his body.**

*Wipe the doll’s forehead with towel and pick up white garment. Put it over the doll as you say:*

**(N………………), you are clothed in Christ. See in this white garment the sign of your Christian dignity.**

*Put doll back in basket. Pick up Easter candle, hold near doll and say:*

**The baby is given a candle that is lit from the Easter candle (Paschal candle). The priest asks the parents and godparents to help the child “to live always as a child of the light”.**

*Finally pick the doll up, cradling it and say:*

**When babies are born, they become part of a family.**

**When a person is baptised, that person becomes part of the Church.**

*Put doll back in basket and pause for a moment or two before engaging children with some of the ‘I wonder statements’.*

*Carefully pack story materials into storage box and put on shelf. Ensure that children are watching so they know how to pack the materials away and where to find them.*

**I wonder if you’ve ever seen something like this happen in the church.** (Give students the opportunity to share what they have seen)

**I wonder why the priest meets the people at the door of the church.**

**I wonder why the Sign of the Cross is made on the forehead of the person/people being baptised.**

**I wonder why white is the colour of the garment used in Baptism.**

**I wonder why the candle given to the newly baptised is lit from the Paschal or Easter candle.**

*Remember, there is no one response to these. Students will have different responses as they explore meaning in the symbols and actions.*