

WHAT ARE SACRAMENTALS, ANYWAY?

Consider this scenario:

Jeopardy Program

Category, 'Church Topics': blessings, rosaries, statues, scapulars

Contestant's reply: What are sacramentals?



This certainly is the correct answers, but what are sacramentals, anyway?

- The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that sacramentals are *“holy things or actions of which the church makes use to obtain for us from God, through her intercession, spiritual and temporal favors.”*
- A sacramental is anything set apart or blessed by the church to excite good thoughts and to help devotion. It is through the prayers of the church offered for those who make use of these sacramentals, as well as through the devotion they inspire, that they convey and obtain God's grace and blessings.
- Unlike the sacraments which bestow upon us sanctifying grace, sacramentals are sacred signs meant to prepare us for the sanctifying grace received in the sacraments and to remind us of the call to holiness in the sacraments.
- There is no complete list in the Church naming all the sacramental but they can be placed into two groups:

BLESSED MATERIAL OBJECTS

Statues and images of Our Lord, Our Blessed Lady, and the saints, rosaries, crucifixes, holy water, palms, prayer books, holy oil, relics, medals, scapulars, litanies etc.

HOLY ACTIONS

Blessings by the priest, bishop, Sign of the Cross, genuflections, Stations of the Cross, Washing of the Feet on Holy Thursday

TEACHING YOUR STUDENTS ABOUT SACRAMENTALS

The best way to teach your students about sacramentals is, most probably, the “SHOW and TELL” experience, and what better place to do this than your church!

- In a previous lesson, explain to your students what sacramentals are, emphasizing that they may be MATERIAL OBJECTS or ACTIONS, giving examples of both. You might like to entice your students about your next lesson by telling them that you will be taking them on a ‘holy field trip.’
- If possible, invite your parish priest or deacon to introduce your students to the various sacramentals found in your church.
- As you enter church, have your students recognize the holy water font. Explain to them that holy water is a sacramental which reminds us of the waters of Baptism. Have them carefully bless themselves. Making the Sign of the Cross is also a sacramental.



- Before entering the pew, review how they are to genuflect, either blessing themselves or saying a short aspiration, “Jesus I adore You.” Again, tell them this action is a sacramental.
- Ask them to quietly look around the church to see if there are any objects near the altar that are sacramentals: the candles, the sanctuary lamp, and the votive candles. These all remind us that Jesus is the ‘Light of the World.’
- Looking at the crucifix, explain that this reminds us of Jesus’ great love for us by dying on the cross. If your church has a Resurrected Jesus, tell them that this shows us that after Jesus died on the cross, He resurrected from the dead on the third day.
- Walk around your church to take notice of the statues and images. Explain that just as we have pictures of grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, in our homes, the church has statues and pictures to remind us of all God’s holy people, the saints, Our Lord and Our Lady, who love us very much, and to whom we can pray to.
- As a closing lesson, have your students work in small groups to brainstorm. Direct them to write down all the sacramentals that they know. Have them tell if they are ACTIONS or MATERIAL OBJECTS.
- Younger children can fold a piece of paper in fours and draw 4 or 8 sacramentals that they saw when they visited the church.



TEACHING ABOUT SACRAMENTALS THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR

SEPTEMBER - Sign of the Cross; genuflecting; picture of Our Lady of Sorrows, September 15th

OCTOBER – Blessing of Animals, Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, October 4th; Feast of the Holy Rosary, October 7th; statue of Our Lady of Fatima, October 13th

NOVEMBER – Grace Before & After Meals for Thanksgiving; The Miraculous Medal , Feast of St. Catherine Laboure ,Nov. 28th ; ‘Hail and Blessed be the Hour’ Prayer ,Feast of St. Andrew , Nov. 30th

DECEMBER Novena to the Christ Child; Litany of the Holy Name of Jesus

JANUARY – “Chalking the Door” ,Blessing of the Home and the Classroom on the Feast of the Epiphany

FEBRUARY - Blessing of Candles, February 2nd,Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord; Blessing of Throats, February 3rd,Feast of St. Blaise; being signed with blessed ashes on Ash Wednesday

MARCH –Stations of the Cross, crucifix; Angelus ,March 25th)

APRIL – Washing of the Feet on Holy Thursday; Blessing of Easter Water, Easter Vigil; Chaplet of Divine Mercy & Image , 2nd Sunday after Easter

MAY - Holy Rosary; different Images of Our Lady : Our Lady of Good Counsel, Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of Guadalupe

JUNE - Image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Litany of the Sacred Heart.



DID YOU KNOW?

- A SCAPULAR is a particular type of sacramental.
- The word scapular comes for the Latin word ‘scapula’ which means shoulder blade.



- The **scapular** was a type of work apron, frequently used by **monks**, consisting of large pieces of cloth front and back joined over the shoulders with strips of cloth. It forms part of the habit of some religious orders including the Carmelites, Benedictines, and Dominicans.
- There are about 18 scapulars approved by the church
- The most well-known scapular is the **SCAPULAR OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL** often called the '**BROWN SCAPULAR.**'
- The story of the Brown Scapular is about the visit of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, who appeared to St. Simon Stock, a Carmelite monk, from Cambridge, England, on July 16, 1260.
- Our Blessed Lady, holding the Child Jesus in her arms, and the scapular in her hand, said to St. Simon, *"Take, beloved son, this scapular of thy order as a badge of my confraternity and for thee and all Carmelites a special sign of grace; whoever dies in this garment, will not suffer everlasting fire. It is the sign of salvation, a safeguard in dangers, and a pledge of peace and of the covenant."*
- During the Middle Ages, pious lay people adopted a smaller version of the religious scapular. This consisted of two small pieces of woolen cloth joined by two strings, and was worn around the neck and underneath the person's clothing. Eventually these scapulars were signs of groups of laity who joined together and attached themselves to the works of a religious community. *(Father William Sanders)*
- Catholics from all over began wearing the BROWN SCAPULAR, praying to Our Lady to guide and protect them, asking her to be with them, especially, at the hour of death.
- The Church celebrates the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel on July 16th.



<http://www.catholictv.org/shows/wow-the-catholictv-challenge/sacramentals-0> VIDEO SHOW

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SMESmQ8Ukg> YOU TUBE WHAT ARE SACRAMENTALS – GR. 4-8

http://freebrownscapular.com/brown_scapular_miracles.html MIRACLES OF THE BROWN SCAPULAR

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7C-tSP3icM> YOU TUBE SACRAMENTAL SIGNS GRADES 6-8

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBSFgJEvJBk&t=29s> YOU TUBE WORDS & PICTURES – ALL GRADES

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLJ2VupvOfM> OUR LADY OF MT. CARMEL GRADES 1-4