

**THE SACRAMENTS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH:
SEVEN SACRED ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS CHRIST**

SESSION I: PARTICIPANT HANDOUT

Pre-Assignment for Session I:

Ritual is defined as a sequence of activities involving gestures, words, actions, or objects performed according to a set sequence. Rituals may be prescribed by the traditions of a community, a religion or can be on a personal level to recount memories or bring structure to the daily task. Why do you think “rituals” are important to human beings? Name a ritual which has important significance to you.

Be prepared to share your answer.

Chapter I: -Father Banecker recounted his experience in anointing a patient near death.

What struck you about the healing aspects of this sacrament for the patient and the family?

Chapter II: In the Eastern Catholic Church, the Greek word for “Holy Mysteries” refers to the seven sacred rites which, by the power of the Holy Spirit, a divine encounter takes place with Jesus Christ. In your opinion, do you think most Latin Rite Catholics view the “sacraments” of First Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation as divine encounters or more associate these sacraments as school related activities? Explain with an example.

Chapter III: Father Banecker referred to a quote from Pope Leo the Great that everything that was present in the life of the Lord has passed into the mysteries (sacraments) of the Church. He also stated that the sacraments are more than inspiring moments in life; the sacraments give us access to the person of Jesus Christ and a grace which transforms us interiorly. As teachers and models of the faith, tell how you would explain one of these statements to your students.

Chapter IV: After listening to Father Banecker’s description of the R.C.I.A. as a process of integration into the faith life of the Catholic Church, share a way that you help your students to grow spiritually through your own modeling the faith.

Chapter V: Father Banecker gave startling statistics regarding “former” Catholics, particularly young people. How can you, as one person, help to stem this tide by proclaiming Jesus Christ and the beauty of the Catholic Church? Give an example.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSION II:

In session 1, Father Banecker referred to teachers of the faith as “front line evangelizers” and the seven sacraments as “windows” that allow us to encounter Christ as the first disciples experienced him.

Keeping both statements in mind, reflect upon this prayer of St. Teresa of Avila. Answer the reflection question which follows: “Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes with which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.”

Reflection question: As a teacher of the Catholic faith, how do you model the hands, the feet, the eyes, the body of Christ to your students? Give a concrete example. *Be prepared to share your answer.*