A Liturgy and Prayers for Adults and Youth
Seeking Baptism

This liturgy is intended to be used to introduce and bless a youth or adult who seeks baptism. It assumes that between this liturgy and the time of the baptism, the congregation provides a period of spiritual formation for the “inquirer.” It also assumes that each inquirer has a sponsor from the congregation. A sponsor prays for, supports, and accompanies the inquirer in the time of formation.

A service like this would especially be appropriate at the beginning of Advent or Lent. The following presentation and prayers may occur at the beginning of a service, at the main entrance or door of the worship space. With an easy adaptation it may also occur following an opening hymn or prayer at the front of the worship space. Participants will include the inquirers as well as a sponsor, a pastor, and other representatives of the congregation.

The Presentation

Leader: God is in this place.
The doors of God’s holy place open wide.
Those who seek faith, hope, and love may find it here among us.
Dear friends, we gather to greet these persons (or names)
whom God has sought out
and brought to this moment
to inquire into faith
and live in Christ’s beloved community.
In the name of Christ, let us welcome them (or names)
into this journey of faith with Christ’s church.

Sponsor: I present (name) to be welcomed into this community of faith.

The Seeking Question

Leader (directed to inquirers):
(Name), what do you seek?

(The inquirer answers with a statement such as one that follows or with an answer drawn from the inquirer’s own experience: “Faith and fullness of life,” “To hear God’s Word with you,” “To seek life in Jesus Christ,” “To follow God’s will,” “To discover God more deeply with you.” The leader might also invite inquirers to tell brief stories, describe circumstances that brought them to this point of decision, or share a prayer that lifts their hopes to God.)

The Invitation

Leader (directed to inquirers):
Friends, grace and hope are given to all who seek God.
We pray that you will meet God
in the holy waters of baptism.
Now we invite you to join us in listening for
and responding to the word of God.
Will you be faithful in seeking the way of Christ?
Each inquirer: I will, and I ask God to help me.

Leader (directed to sponsors and the congregation):

   All of us assembled are called to welcome and encourage (Names.)
   Will you care for (Names) with your prayer and companionship?

Sponsors and congregation:

   We will and ask God to help us.

Leader: Will you seek God’s word and way with (Names)?

Sponsors and congregation:

   We will and ask God to help us.

The Blessing

   (The leader and sponsor may place a hand on the shoulder of the inquirers. The congregations may also reach out their hands as blessing the inquirers.)

Leader: Eternal God,
who gave birth to (Names), and to all creation.
We give you thanks for (Names)
who you sought in holy love
and called to this day.
Inspire (them) with a passion to know you
and to live your way in this world.
Nourish (them) with your Wisdom and Word.
Form us all together as your people, one in your Holy Spirit.
In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Optional blessings and ritual actions

   (The leader may also do one or both of the following ritual actions.)

SIGNING OF THE CROSS

   (The leader traces a cross on the inquirer’s forehead and says words such as the following.)

Leader: (Name), receive the cross on your forehead,
a sign of God’s endless love and mercy for you.
Learn to know and to follow Christ.
PRESENTATION OF A BIBLE

(A representative of the congregation may present a Bible to each inquirer with words such as the following.)

Leader: Listen for the word of God.
Listen, more of God’s light will break through.
May God’s life-giving word comfort and inspire you.

Closing words
Leader (directed to the inquirers):

(Names), come into this holy place.
Together, let us discover God’s word and ways.

(The service continues with a hymn. If there is an entrance processional, the inquirers and sponsors may join in and take their place in the congregation.)