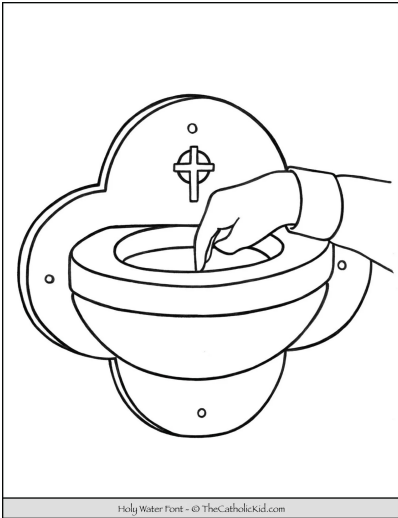


Understanding the Mass

The Holy Water Stoup

Each week, we are explaining the different parts of the Mass - what is in the church, what we use in the Mass, and why (and how) we celebrate Mass the way we do.

Today our topic is **The Holy Water Stoup**.



One of the first things we see when we enter our church is the **holy water stoup** - a word that comes from the Old Norse word *staup* ("pail" or "small cask").

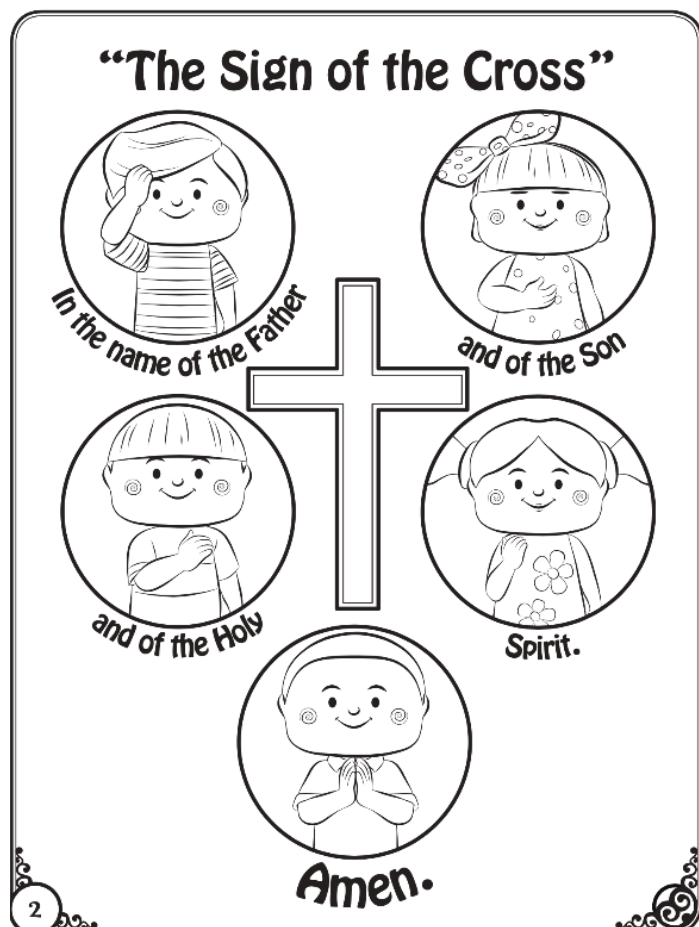
As we enter the church, we dip our fingers into water that has been blessed by a priest, and make the Sign of the Cross with our fingers.

By doing this, we remember the **Holy Trinity** - God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit - and also our Baptism.

We also make the Sign of the Cross to remind us that Jesus died for love of us on the Cross.

Making the **Sign of the Cross** can help us focus our thoughts before Mass begins.

- (1) As you touch your head, remember Mass is going to involve your thinking, your mind.
- (2) As you touch your chest, remember your love for God - and God's love for you!
- (3) As you touch your shoulders (which are a source of strength), remember that sometimes paying attention at Mass requires some effort.



Making the Sign of the Cross with the holy water from the holy water stoup reminds us that celebrating Mass involves all of us - our minds, our hearts, and our attention.