



Sermon Discussion Guide for Groups

The Sacraments Are Sacred Containers That Carry Presence

Preached by Daniel Grothe

August 16, 2026

Summary

Have someone in your group read the following summary aloud.

Pastor Daniel explores how God, though invisible, makes Himself known and present in the world through "sacred containers," or sacraments. Drawing from John 1:1 and 1:14, he explains that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and that God continues to reveal Himself through people, places, and things. Seven traditional sacraments he discusses include baptism, confirmation classes, Holy Communion, confession/forgiveness, anointing with oil, ordination, and marriage. Each is a channel through which God's healing presence reaches a broken world.

The sermon builds toward a powerful conclusion rooted in Colossians 1, where Paul describes the mystery now revealed as "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Pastor Daniel challenges the congregation to see themselves as living sacraments, sent into the world to make the invisible God visible through love

and service. He illustrates this with the story of a church staff member who, after losing his son in a tragic accident, continued to serve others walking through grief. The call to the church is clear: receive God's presence through the sacraments, and carry His presence into the city and the world.

Key Passages

- John 1:1
- John 1:14
- James 5:16
- Colossians 1:26-27

Opening Prayer

Open your session in prayer, using the words below or your own

Heavenly Father, we come before you today as a people who need you. We acknowledge that we do not have enough wisdom, strength, or love on our own. As we open your Word and discuss what it means to be carriers of your presence, we ask that you open our hearts and minds to what you want to speak to each of us today. Let this time not be about impressing one another but about drawing closer to you and to each other. May your Spirit lead our conversation, and may we leave this time changed. In Jesus' name, **Amen**.

Getting Going

Allow time for each member to answer the following questions before moving on.

What is one object, place, or tradition from your childhood that holds deep meaning for you, and why does it matter so much?

Discussion Questions

Answer as many of these questions as time and interest allow.

1. Pastor Daniel described several ways people misunderstand who God is, such as seeing Him as an impersonal or distant figure. How did you picture God before you came to faith, and how has that picture changed?
2. The sermon defines sacraments as 'sacred containers that carry the glorious presence of God.' Before hearing this message, how did you define a sacrament? Did the sermon change your understanding?
3. Pastor Daniel said that God acts in and through people, places, and things to bring His healing presence to the world. Can you think of a moment in your life when you experienced God's presence through a person, a place, or a physical object?
4. Baptism is entering into the death of Jesus and being raised into new life. If you have been baptized, what did your experience mean to you? If you have not, what has held you back?

5. James 5:16 says to confess your sins to one another so that you may be healed. Why do you think confession within community is difficult, and how can this group become a safe place for that kind of honesty?
6. Pastor Daniel shared the story of Danny Rodriguez, who continued to serve others even while walking through the devastating loss of his son. What does Danny's actions reveal about what it means to be a living sacrament? How does his story challenge or inspire you?
7. Pastor Daniel compared the sacraments to a football playbook – at some point the life of faith has to get into your body through practice, not just study. Which spiritual practice or sacrament do you need to engage with more intentionally, and why?
8. Colossians 1:27 says 'Christ in you, the hope of glory.' If you truly believed that you are one of the greatest sacraments God gives to the world, how would it change the way you approach your daily life?

Making It Personal

Take the opportunity noted below to apply this week's sermon to your everyday life.

This week, identify one person in your life who is walking through a difficult season. Make a deliberate move toward them as a living sacrament of God's healing presence. This could be a phone call, a meal dropped off, a handwritten note, or simply sitting with them and listening. Ask God to make you His visible

love to that person. Come back next week ready to share what happened.

Key Takeaways

Commit to memory one point from the message before dismissing.

- God reveals Himself to the world through sacred containers called sacraments, which include baptism, discipleship, communion, confession, anointing with oil, ordination, and marriage. These are not empty rituals but active channels of God's healing presence.
- Confession within community is essential to healing. James 5:16 teaches that when we open our lives to one another and pray for each other, healing follows. Secrets left unspoken remain unaddressed, but vulnerability in community invites the Holy Spirit to move.
- The life of faith must move from the mind into the body through spiritual practices. Just as a football player must internalize the playbook on the field, Christians must engage the sacraments and spiritual disciplines so that the kingdom of God becomes embodied in their lives.
- Every believer is a living sacrament. Colossians 1:27 reveals that 'Christ in you, the hope of glory' means each person filled with the Spirit of Jesus becomes the way the invisible God is made visible, tangible, and real to a hurting world.

- - The church is called to receive God's presence on the weekend and then carry it outward Monday through Saturday, becoming God's healing presence in the city and the world through everyday acts of love and service.

Closing Prayer

Have someone from your group close your time in prayer, using the words below or your own.

Lord Jesus, thank you for not staying distant. Thank you for becoming flesh and dwelling among us, and for continuing to make yourself known through the sacred containers of the sacraments and through the lives of your people. As we leave this time together, we ask that you would seal in our hearts what you have spoken today. Give us the courage to confess, to serve, to show up, and to carry your presence into every corner of our lives. Make us living sacraments of your healing love. Where there is grief, let us bring comfort. Where there is loneliness, let us bring friendship. Where there is shame, let us bring grace. Christ in us, the hope of glory. May that be true of each person in this room this week. We pray this in the powerful name of Jesus, and all God's people said, **Amen**.