Chapter 17 Review Questions Answer Key
Introduction to the Sacraments

1. Describe two important concepts that are fundamental to understanding the liturgy and the Sacraments.

Symbols and rituals are two important concepts for understanding the liturgy and the Sacraments. A symbol is something concrete that is used to help us understand something that exists on an invisible or abstract level. A ritual is a kind of symbol, one that includes actions and words that have deeper meanings than what immediately meets the eye.

2. How are signs and symbols different?

A sign is an object that represents something else. It has a direct, unmistakable connection to the reality it represents, like a stoplight. In contrast, a symbol is a complex sign that represents more than a merely physical reality and often has multiple meanings, such as the flag of a country.

3. Describe two different kinds of symbols used in the Church’s sacramental rituals.

Two kinds of symbols are used in the Church’s rituals: covenant symbols and nature symbols. Covenant symbols receive their meaning from salvation history and remind us of God’s saving action in our lives. These include consecration with oil, immersion in water, and the laying on of hands. Nature symbols are more universal, seeming to carry the same meaning across time and location. Such symbols in the Sacraments include darkness, light, water, and fire.

4. Define Sacrament, and explain what a Sacrament does.

A Sacrament makes the spiritual reality of Jesus’ actions present at the time and place the Sacrament is celebrated. The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains that “the Sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us” (1131). Jesus himself acts in and through the sacramental ritual, and the grace of his actions is poured into the hearts of the participants through the power of the Holy Spirit. A Sacrament therefore effects change in us and in the world because of God’s power.

5. What do the Seven Sacraments help us remember?
The Seven Sacraments help us remember that Christ is the sacrament of salvation, which we experience through the life of the Church. They help us remember the life, ministry, and message of Jesus and celebrate his risen presence among us.

6. Name the Seven Sacraments, and give the essential sacramental symbol of each.

The following are the Seven Sacraments and their essential symbols:

- **Baptism**—Immersion in or pouring of water while saying, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”
- **Confirmation**—Laying on of hands and anointing with Sacred Chrism while saying, “Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit”
- **Eucharist**—Wheat bread and grape wine, and the words of Consecration
- **Penance and Reconciliation**—Laying on of hands and the words of absolution
- **Anointing of the Sick**—Anointing with the Oil of the Sick, accompanied by the liturgical prayer of the priest
- **Holy Orders**—Laying on of hands, and the prayer of Consecration asking for the gifts specific to that order
- **Matrimony**—Exchange of marriage vows

7. What is grace, and what does it empower us to do? Name four kinds of grace, and briefly describe each.

**Grace** refers to the free and undeserved gifts we receive from God. Grace empowers us to live lives of love, in service to God and others. The four kinds of grace are as follows:

- **Sanctifying grace** is God’s free and generous gift. It is a permanent disposition or change that orients us toward God and helps us live according to his call. We receive sanctifying grace and a share in divine life through Baptism.
- **Actual grace** is God’s intervention and support in the everyday moments of our lives. Actual graces are important for our growth in holiness.
- **Sacramental graces** are gifts specific to each of the Sacraments.
- **Charisms** are special graces associated with one’s state in life. These are intended to build up the Body of Christ.

8. Define **sacramental**, and give several examples.
A sacramental is an action or object that is sometimes accompanied by a special prayer. These symbols and rituals are related to the Sacraments, but they have been established by the Church, not by Christ. Examples include sprinkling with holy water, blessed candles, venerating the Bible or the cross, the Paschal (Easter) candle, votive lights, crosses, medals or statues of saints, the Stations of the Cross, blessed palm branches, blessed ashes, icons (special pictures of saints), incense, and blessings.