

The Baptism of Jesus

Teacher Pep Talk: Teaching about the Baptism of Jesus is really important and can be a lot of fun. There is so much to learn about it! Be sure to adjust the lesson to relate to the ages of the children in your classroom.

NOTE: You may want to ask your Pastor or Sunday School Director to come to your class to talk to the children about how your church celebrates the ordinance of baptism.

Jesus' baptism marks the beginning of His earthly ministry. When He was baptized, Jesus (the sinless Son of God) was identifying fully with us, sinful mankind. He told His cousin, John the Baptist, that he did so to fulfill all righteousness. God the Father then is heard from heaven and God the Holy Spirit appears and descends on Jesus as a dove. This is a very rare occurrence, in that all three persons of the Godhead are either seen or heard all at once.

You will need: Jar with lid, construction paper, copies of coloring page.

Major Points: Jesus, the Son of God, lived a sinless life.
Jesus was baptized.
God the Father was pleased with His Son, Jesus.

Scripture Ref. John 1:29-36 and Matthew 3:1-17 The Baptism of Jesus

Memory Verse: Matthew 3:17 ...“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

Lesson: **Jesus, the Son of God, lived a sinless life**

- How many of you ever get a little dirty? Just now and then? How many of you ever get Really Dirty? I mean ALL OVER.
- What do you do when you get dirty? How do you get clean? (*Take a bath or shower. Jump in the pool/ lake/ stream/ bucket of water/ etc.*) Do you wash your clothes, wash your hair, or brush your teeth? Do you need a water hose, fire hose or sprinkler? Whatever it takes you can wash up... these are all excellent ways to get clean if you are dirty... on the outside.
- Now, what do you do to get clean if you are soiled/dirty on the INSIDE? (*No answers... you can hear crickets...*)
- That's right! There is no way for us to clean ourselves up if we get dirty on the inside. Things that make us dirty on the inside are called **sins**.
- Sometimes we know are wrong, on purpose. We hurt other people or we do other things that God has told us NOT to do in His Word. All of us here have done things we know are wrong.

- But Jesus was different. Jesus NEVER did anything wrong.

Jesus was baptized

- John was a preacher, who preached near a river. The people of John's day had done wrong things and they knew it. He spoke to the people and said: You have done wrong things! Repent and be baptized.
- Hey, what does that word "Repent" mean? Repent means to admit you have done the wrong thing, to be sorry, and to ask God to forgive you.
- To be baptized means that they should come and be washed in the water in the river. It was a sign of the cleaning up that was taking place on the inside
- Many people were sorry for their sins. They lined up to be baptized by John.
- One day Jesus came to be baptized by John (who was His cousin)
- John didn't want to baptize Jesus. John knew that Jesus had NEVER done anything wrong. He had nothing to repent of.
- But Jesus said it was important for Him to do all things that were right to do.
- So, John baptized Jesus.

God the Father was pleased with His son, Jesus.

- Jesus was baptized and so identified Himself with us, sinful mankind, even though He'd never done anything wrong.
- When Jesus came up out of the water, at that moment, heaven was opened and the Spirit of God descended on Jesus like a dove. And he heard the voice of God the Father from Heaven who said "...This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."
- God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit were present all at the same time.
- God the Father never called anyone else His Son.

Let's pray and thank God for sending His Son Jesus, with whom He was well pleased.

PRAYER: Dear God,
Thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, with whom you are well pleased.
Thank you that He never did anything wrong.
Thank you that He did all things that were right, like being baptized.
Thank you that you love us. We love you back.
Amen

Suggested Activities: *(Choose a few activities for your class!)*

The Glass Jar

Before Class: Obtain one clean, clear jar with a lid. From white construction paper, cut out a cross that fits inside the jar. Also cut out several strips of black construction paper. **During Class:** Have the children sit in a circle around you. Have the jar with the lid and all the construction paper pieces available. (Optional: tape)

Start the discussion with the children.

- Hold up the jar and say “We are like this glass jar. When we do bad things, we get “dirty” on the inside.
- Put a couple of strips of black construction paper in the jar and close the lid. Shake the jar. Turn it upside down and shake it again. Say, “There is no way to get them out. They just stay in there and get worse.”
- Put a few more slips of black paper inside and say: “And when we do more bad things, it just looks worse and worse in there.”
- “Poor us... We can’t clean up the inside by ourselves. All the washing on the outside doesn’t clean up the inside.”
- “But the Good News is that when we accept Jesus as our Savior, He comes to live in our lives. He cleans up the inside and gives us His righteousness. (Take off the lid, dump out the black strips of paper, and put in the white cross.)
- “Now on the inside there is Jesus. He takes away all of our sins.” (Because of what Jesus did on the cross, God takes away all of our sins.)
- “When we have Jesus on the inside we may still occasionally do bad things. But this time they only can only bump up against (or stick to) the outside.” Toss black strips at the jar. They do not stick. (Optional: Use tape to stick black strips on outside of jar.)
- When we ask God to forgive us, He gives us His forgiveness and He washes away our sins. (Take black strips off the outside of the jar or let them simply fall to the ground.) God will never take His forgiveness (or love) away from us. He wants us to have them.
- After we ask for forgiveness and accept Jesus as our Savior, we can be baptized to show obedience to God.

Target Practice

Before Class: Create a target out with paper and markers and put it on the wall. Obtain a plastic bow and arrows with rubber tips. Alternatively obtain soft balls which can be easily thrown at the target or at a bucket.

During Class: Set up the target (or bucket) and let everyone take turns shooting at it. Congratulate everyone on their performance! Tell the children that sin is defined in the Bible as “missing the mark” or, in other words, as not hitting the center of the target every time. As you can see, none of us is perfect! But God is Perfect!! By grace through faith in Jesus, God gives us His perfect score!

Draw a Picture of the Baptism of Jesus

Before Class: Make a copy of the coloring page for each child in class. Provide crayons, pencils or markers so that the children can draw on it.

During Class: Give each child a copy of the coloring page with the Memory Verse on it. Ask the children to draw some part of the story of the Baptism of Jesus. Things the children might include in the picture include: Jesus, John the Baptist, the river (Jordan), and the Holy Spirit as a dove. **OPTIONAL:** Ask the children about their picture and write down exactly what they say on a little note pad. Attach the note to the picture and send it home.

Baptism is a Picture (for older children)

Explain to the children that Baptism is a picture for us of the Life, Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we are baptized, we are identifying fully with Him in His Life, Death and Resurrection.

During Jesus' Life:

Hold arms out in front of you crossed, one on top of the other.

Hold right arm up

Jesus was Alive

Dip right hand under left elbow

Jesus Died and was Buried

Raise right hand again

Jesus was Raised from the Dead

During Baptism:

Hold arms out in front of you crossed, one on top of the other.

Hold right arm up

During Baptism

Dip right hand under left elbow

We are Buried with Christ in Baptism

Raise right hand again

And we are Raised to walk in New Life

...
“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

Matthew 3:17