

First Sunday after Epiphany – year A

The Baptism of the Lord

Preparation

Read [Matthew 3:13-17](#). Pay attention to the words or phrases that jump at you. Read over the lesson so that you are familiar with what is intended to happen. Gather the materials that you will need for each section of the lesson. For deeper thinking or for ways to extend the lesson take a look at the following websites:

<http://www.textweek.com/yeara/baptisma.htm>

<http://www.msscrafter.com/newtestament/baptism.htm>

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/growingfaith.html>

<http://www.ebibleteacher.com/children/lessons/baptize.htm>

<http://talks2children.wordpress.com/category/baptism>

<http://www.sundayschoollessons.com/baplord.htm>

<http://www.word-sunday.com/Files/Seasonal/Baptism/A-Baptism-a.html>

http://www.episcopalchurch.org/109452_115820_ENG_HTML.htm

Gathering

Materials needed

- Small table or end of one table
- Candle and candle lighter
- Bible and bookmark
- White cloth
- Newsprint and markers
- Pictures of a baby, young child, a teenager, and an adult (can be magazine pictures or real photos)

Print up the prayer on the newsprint so that the readers can say the prayer with you. Gather around the small table or at the end of one table. With the children place the cloth on the table. Have them help you place the candle and the Bible on the cloth. Light the candle. Pray the following prayer together:

**Learning new things, we walk with God;
Loving new ways, we walk with Jesus;
Looking for hope, we walk with the Spirit. Amen.**

Blow out the candle. Welcome the children back and check in about their Christmas break and the new year. Show them the picture of the baby – ask the children how old they think the baby is. Show them the picture of the young child – ask the children how old they think the child is. Show them the picture of the teenager – ask them how old they think the teenager is. Show them the picture of the adult – ask them how old they think the adult is. Tell the children it takes a long time for someone to go from being a baby to an adult. The last time we talked about Jesus we were getting ready for him to be born, now we are going to meet Jesus as a grown up, getting ready to do what God wants him to do.

Story Time

Materials

- big piece of newsprint or poster board
- markers (brown/black and blue)
- dove image from end of lesson
- wall tack or tape
- scissors

Instructions

- On the newsprint or poster board draw a simple hill/mountain across it with the brown or black marker. In front of it draw a simple river with the blue marker. Put it up on the wall with the wall tack or tape where the children can see it. Copy the dove image at the end of the lesson and cut it out and then have it nearby.

John the Baptist was preaching by the River Jordan. *(point to the river on the poster)* He was telling the people how to live in the way God wanted them to. He was telling them it was time to turn their lives around.

John was also telling people that a way to show they were going to live God's way was to get baptized in the river. To have water washed over them to show they were clean, new people of God. Many, many people were coming to John to be baptized. To start living in God's loving way.

One day, while John was teaching the people and baptizing the people, Jesus came from Galilee to see him. Jesus knew that it was time for him to start doing the work that God wanted him to do. Jesus knew that he needed John to baptize him.

John tried to stop Jesus. John knew who Jesus was. He said, "Why are you coming to me? I should be baptized by you."

Jesus answered him by saying, "This is what God wants us to do. We will be bringing God's right way to the world."

John knew that Jesus was right. He baptized Jesus in the River Jordan. As Jesus was coming out of the water, the sky opened up. Jesus saw the Spirit of God coming down on him like a dove. It landed right on him.

Then a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, my beloved. I am well pleased with him."

Point out the poster to the children. Explain that each week that they are going to add a symbol (an object that reminds us of something) to the poster. Bring out the dove. Ask the children why we put a dove on for today? To remind us of Jesus' baptism. Have one of the children tape it onto the poster over the water.

Response

Project Idea 1: Baptism Wash Painting

This painting will engage the children's senses – sight and touch – and help them to remember Jesus' baptism.

Materials needed

- heavy drawing area or card stock
- white or yellow crayons
- blue tempera paint and paint brushes
- small containers
- newspaper
- dove image from end of lesson

Instructions

Copy the dove image at the end of lesson, trace onto card stock and cut a dove for each child. Cover the craft area with newspaper. Put some blue paint into the small containers and then add the water so that it is quite thin. Give each child a piece of heavy drawing area or card stock and the dove image. Have them place the dove on the paper and outline it (as heavily as they can) with a white or yellow crayon. Get them to outline as many doves as they want on the page. As they are doing this, remind them that the dove is something we use, a symbol, to talk about the Holy Spirit coming to be with us. When they are done their doves have them dip their paint brushes into the watered down blue paint and brush over their doves with the paint. As they do this they will see the doves showing up on the page. Encourage the children to find a place to hang up their paintings at home to remind them about Jesus' baptism.

Project Idea 2: Baptism Cards

Celebrating the baptism of others is a good way to remember Jesus' baptism – his ministry and our ministry.

Materials needed

- card stock
- dove image at end of lesson
- blue construction paper
- scissors
- glue
- markers
- glitter

Instructions

Fold card stock in half. Make a card for each child. Copy the dove image at the end of the lesson, cut out and trace onto the blue construction paper. Make one dove for each child. Give each child a prepared card and a blue dove. Explain to the children that they are going to make cards to give to people who are being baptized in the church family. Have them print inside the card **'Welcome child of God to the family of God!'** with a marker. Invite the children to glue the dove onto the front of the card – let them decorate the dove with the glitter and markers. If there are baptisms in church today make sure each person being baptized gets a card and keep the others on hand for the next time there is a baptism.

Project Idea 3: Baptism Reminder Candles

Remembering our own baptisms is a way to connect with the baptism of Jesus.

Materials needed

- small glass jars
- tea light or votive candles
- small bowls
- glitter (lots of it)
- white glue
- water
- paint brushes

Instructions

Put some white glue into a bowl and water it down until fairly thin, but not too thin. Put the glitter into a couple of other small bowls – just large enough for the small jars to fit into. Have an empty bowl ready as well. Give each child a small glass jar and a paint brush. Have them brush glue on to the outside of the jar. When they have them covered with glue have the children roll the outside of the jar in one of the bowls with the glitter in it. When they are content with the amount of glitter on their jars have them shake off the excess glitter into the empty bowl (this glitter can be reused later). Give each child a candle to put in their jar. Explain that when we baptize someone in church they are given a candle to remind them to follow in Jesus' way of light and love. These candle holders they have made will remind them to pray for those who have been baptized and those getting ready to be baptized. Remind the children that they should only have the candles lit when they are with an adult.

Closing

Gather with the children around the worship table again. Relight the candle. Say the prayer line by line and encourage the children to repeat it after you:

**Thank you God for being with us;
Thank you Jesus for loving us;
Thank you Spirit for leading us. Amen.**

Illustration of a dove

