

First Sunday after Epiphany – year B

The Baptism of the Lord

Preparation

Read the Gospel [Mark 1:4-11](#) over. 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/yearb/baptismb.htm>

http://www.episcopalchurch.org/lessonPlans/109452_115890_ENG_HTML.htm

http://www.sermons4kids.com/fresh_start.htm

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

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

<http://www.efree.mb.ca/lectionarypuzzles/in-bwji.htm#ep01>

<http://www.sundayschoolsources.com/lessons/baptize.htm>

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

<http://children.cccm.com/NTSupportCurriculumPDF/214JohnBaptizesJesus.pdf>

Gathering

Materials needed

- Small table or end of one table
- Candle
- Candle lighter
- Bible and bookmark
- White cloth
- Newsprint and markers
- Jug with water and plastic cups

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:

Light of the world, shine on us, *(point to the candle)*
Water of the world, refresh us, *(point to the water)*
Word of the world, teach us, *(point to the Bible)*
Loving God, be with us in all that we do. Amen.

Blow out the candle. Place the jug of water where the children can see it. Pour some into one cup. Ask the children to name all the different things that they do with water. Some possible responses might be: for cleaning, for drinking, for cooking, watering plants and others. Ask the children if they think they could live without water. Explain that people can live a long time without food, but not as long without water. Pour the water into the cups and invite the children to have a sip. Explain that in today's story they will hear about a special way that God used water to announce the beginning of Jesus' ministry.

Story Time

Materials needed

- A comfortable place to tell the story –around a table or on the floor with cushions
- The jug of water and cups from earlier in the lesson

Instructions

Before starting the story ask the children what they remember about John the Baptist from the stories before Christmas. Remind the children that he was preparing the way for Jesus and encouraging the people to change their lives.

John had told the people many things about the coming of Jesus into the world. He told them to get ready by saying sorry to God for the things that they had done wrong. John told them to come to him at the river Jordan.

(Have the children dip their fingers into their water.)

In the river the Jordan John baptised the people. They came out of the river feeling like the wrong things they had done were washed away down the river. They felt that God was giving them a fresh start.

(Have the children dip their fingers into their water.)

John told the people, “There is one coming after me who is greater than me. I am not important enough even to untie his shoes for him. I have baptised you with water. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.”

(Have the children dip their fingers into their water.)

Jesus knew John was preaching to the people. Jesus knew John was baptising the people. Jesus knew that he had to leave Nazareth in Galilee and go to the Jordan river where John was.

(Have the children dip their fingers into their water.)

Jesus went down to the river.
John baptised Jesus in the river.

(Have the children dip their fingers into their water.)

As Jesus came up out of the river the heavens opened up. Jesus saw the Holy Spirit coming down upon like a dove.

Then a voice from heaven spoke. It said, “You are my son. You are my beloved. I am well pleased with you.”

(Have the children dip their fingers into their water.)

One by one take some water on your fingertips and put it on the children’s foreheads. As you do so say, “You are God’s beloved child. God is pleased with you.” Take a few moments to take in the story before moving onto the next part of the lesson.

Response

Project Idea 1: Dove Picture

This picture will be an aid for the children in sharing the story of Jesus' baptism with their families.

Materials needed

- dove picture at the end of the lesson
- card stock
- pencil
- light construction paper
- white crayons
- blue tempera paint
- paintbrushes
- water
- bowls and newspaper

Instructions

Copy the dove picture and cut it out. Trace the dove onto the cardstock, doing one for each child. Cut out the dove shapes. Put some of the blue tempera paint in the bowls. Water it down until it is quite thin. Lay out the newspaper over the work area to save on clean up later. Give each child a piece of the construction paper, a dove shape and a white crayon. Have the children use the crayon to trace as many doves on the construction paper as they want. Once they are done get them to brush the watered down blue paint over the doves (the white crayon will stand out from the blue wash and look lovely). As the children are drawing their doves and painting over them encourage them to think about Jesus' baptism and how they will share that story with their families. Admire their pictures when they are finished.

Project Idea 2: Dove Mobile

Materials needed

- dove picture at the end of lesson
- card stock
- yarn cut into lengths from 20 to 40 cm (10 – 20 in)
- hole punch
- scissors
- hangers
- markers

Instructions

Copy the dove shape and cut it out. Trace onto the card stock so that each child has four or five doves. With older children have them cut out the doves themselves. With younger children cut out the doves for them. Have the children print "**Beloved**" on their doves. Help them to punch a hole in the top wing of the dove. Help them to tie the yarn onto their doves and then to tie the yarn onto the bottom part of the hanger. Encourage the children to hang up their mobiles at home where they can be reminded that Jesus is the beloved one of God who came to share the message of God's care and love for the world with all of us.

Project Idea 3: Prayer Wall

This will be an ongoing activity for the season after Epiphany. Each week the children will add new prayers to the walls using a symbol from the story that will be identified for you. This activity will be a good way to reinforce the learning from the stories that they will participate in.

Materials needed

- newsprint or butcher paper
- strong tape or sticky tack
- scissors
- blue construction paper
- glue sticks
- markers

Instructions

Along the biggest wall available to you put up a long sheet of newsprint or butcher paper – long enough that prayer symbols will be able to be added to each week. Across the top print in large letters “**Jesus’ Disciples Pray to God**”. Hand the children each a piece of blue construction paper. Have them draw a teardrop shape on the paper (help those younger ones who might need assistance) – get them to cut out their shapes. Explain to the children that each week they will get a new symbol to put a prayer on during this season after Epiphany. Have them look at their symbol for today – a water teardrop – have them think about people or situations related to water that they might want to pray about it. If the children can write have them write their prayers. If they are not writers encourage the children to draw their prayers on the teardrop shape. When they are done have them attach their prayers onto the prayer wall with the glue sticks. Suggest to the children that remember their prayers each day during their own prayer time.

Closing

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

**As we leave this place, God be with us,
As we leave this place, Jesus be with us,
As we leave this place, Spirit be with us.
Amen.**

Dove Picture

