

First Sunday after Epiphany – year C

The Baptism of the Lord

Preparation

Read [Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22](#) 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/yearc/baptismc.htm>

http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/lessonPlans/109452_115775_ENG_HTM.htm :

scroll down to find the lesson for the day

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

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

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

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/new-beginnings.html>

<http://www.word-sunday.com/Files/Seasonal/Baptism/K-Baptism-c.html>

Gathering

Materials needed

- Small table or end of one table
- Candle
- Candle lighter
- Bible and bookmark
- Green cloth
- Newsprint and markers

Print up the prayer on the newsprint so that the readers can say the prayer with you.

With the children place the cloth on the table. Have them help you place the Bible on the cloth.

Light the candle. Pray the following prayer together:

Gracious God, bless our time together.

Loving Jesus, bless our learning together.

Faithful Spirit, bless our work together. Amen.

Blow out the candles. Take some time to check in with the children. Did they have a good Christmas holiday? Is it good to be back on a regular schedule? Ask the children whose birthday we just celebrated? Affirm their responses. Explain that Jesus grew up with his family in a town called Nazareth. When he was older he heard about his cousin John and what he was doing at the Jordan river. In today's story the children will hear about what happened when Jesus went to hear his cousin.

Story Time

Materials needed

- Bowl with some water in it
Set the bowl nearby, but out of reach of children.

There were crowds and crowds of people along the Jordan river. So many had come to hear what John the Baptist was saying about God. There were many in the crowd who wondered if John was the messiah, the promised one of God. They were full of expectations, possibilities and hope, about who John was and what it might mean for God's people.

One of the people in the crowd was Jesus. Jesus knew that the time was coming for him to live out the promises of God to the people. Jesus knew that he had to listen to what John was saying to the people.

John knew what they were thinking and gave them this answer to their questions.

John told them, "You know that I baptize you with water.

(Bring the bowl of water over and have the children dip their fingers into the water.)

There is someone who is coming who is more powerful than I am. I am not good enough to untie his shoes. The one who is coming, the messiah, will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

Many of the people listening to John were moved by what he had to say. They came down to the River Jordan with him and were baptized. *(Let the children dip their fingers into the water again.)* They wanted to be ready for the coming of the messiah.

Jesus went down into the river with the other people. He knew that it was time for him to show the people God's promise for the world.

John baptized Jesus. *(Let the children dip their fingers into the water again.)*

Jesus stood there praying when a most amazing thing happened.

The heavens opened up. The Holy Spirit came down on Jesus in the form of a dove.

Then even more amazing a voice from heaven spoke. The voice said,

"You are my Son, the beloved. I am well pleased with you."

Move the water away from the children and move into the response time.

Response

Project Idea 1: Beloved Head Bands

When children or adults are baptized one of the things that happens in Anglican tradition is that the clergy person marks the newly baptized with the sign of the cross. This response will be a way to help make this concrete for the children in your group.

Materials needed

- poster board
- scissors
- stapler & staples
- markers
- stickers
- tissue paper
- any other craft material that you think might be used

Instructions

Cut the poster board along the vertical into 10 cm (4 in) wide strips. Make a strip for each child. Print in large outlined letters “**Beloved of God**” across the middle of the strip. Give each child a prepared strip and read them the words across the head band. Explain that when we are baptized we have a cross marked on us in water or oil to show that we are one of God’s children. Now we don’t always remember that this is there. So today they are going to make head bands that reminds them and others that they are beloved of God because of their baptism. Have them put their head bands on their heads and mark where you will need to staple once they are done (this will help to show you and them where they shouldn’t decorate beyond). Invite the children to use the markers and other craft materials to decorate their head bands and the words in the middle of the head band. When they are done, staple the ends together so that they fit snugly on their heads. Enjoy wearing them and showing them off to family and friends.

Project Idea 2: Sponge Painting

This will be a fun and creative response to do, especially with younger children, as it will engage their imaginations and get them to think about what happened when Jesus was baptized.

Materials needed

- sponges
- scissors
- blue tempera paint
- newspaper
- newsprint or large pieces of drawing paper
- marker
- small containers
- water

Instructions

Cut the sponges up into interesting shapes of different sizes. Cover the work area with newspaper. Give each child a piece of newsprint or drawing paper. Place some paint in the small containers and place water in the rest. Put a paint and water container near each child. Put the sponge pieces on the work area where all the children can get at them. Have the children print,

or print for them, the following on the bottom of their paper “**My Beloved, I am Pleased With You**”. Invite the children to get their sponges damp with the water and then dip into the blue paint. Have them use the sponges and paint to express how the story of Jesus’ baptism made them feel and what they imagine happened that day. When the children are done and you have time let them tell each other about their paintings. Encourage them to share this experience with their families.

Project Idea 3: Baptism Cards

This response will help the children to make the connection between the baptisms that happen in church and Jesus’ own baptism and allows the children to respond directly with love to the families who are participating in baptism.

Materials needed

- card stock
- dove image at end of lesson
- blue tissue paper
- scissors
- glue sticks
- fine line markers

Instructions

Copy the dove image and cut it out – make enough so that each child has one. Fold the card stock in half. Give each child a folded card and a copy of the dove image. Explain that they are going to make cards to be given to families when someone in their family is baptized. Invite them to print inside the card “**Welcome, beloved child of God**” with the fine line markers. When they are done that have them glue the dove onto the front of the card and then scrunching up smaller bits of tissue paper glue them onto the dove shape. Give the finished cards to the person in the church who will make sure that they get given to families at the time of baptism. Another option, if there is baptism this Sunday is to have the children sign their cards and give them to families today (if you have more cards than needed then save the others for another occasion).

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:

**For the coming of Jesus into the world, thank you God.
For the gift of the Holy Spirit, thank you God.
For the faith to serve, thank you God.
Amen.**

Dove Image

