

Youth Worship Lesson – January 10, 2021

CELEBRATING BAPTISM

Youth issue:
How important
is Baptism?

Focus Scripture: Mark 1:4-11

Purpose: To hear the story of Jesus' baptism and celebrate baptism as a symbol of belonging to Christ's church

Preparation

Worship Table – **green** cloth

Pictures for Bible story and activity materials at the end of the lesson.

Lighting of the Christ Candle: We light this candle to remember that God is always with us.

Opening Prayer

Thanks, God, for calling us your people

and for letting us show our love for you through baptism.

Help us to always remember that we are a part of your loving family.

Amen.

Introducing the Theme - Baptism Stories

Today we are talking about baptism. I know that some of you talked about your baptism with your parents during the week, and you might have brought something from that day to talk about. If you have not been baptized, it is important to know that this does not make you less in God's eyes. I invite any of you who are unbaptized to share how it feels to have been given the responsibility to make that choice yourself. Let's all share. I'll start. **(Give each student a chance to share.)**

Exploring the Theme - Dramatization of Jesus' Baptism

In advance: Make copies of the "Dramatization – Jesus' Baptism" resource sheet.

Let's act out the story. **(Hand out copies of the resource sheet.)** If you want to work together to plan some stage movements, you can do that.

(After the drama) Let's talk about the story.

- What special moment did Jesus experience at his baptism? **(he saw heaven open up and God spoke to him)**
- What new life was beginning for Jesus? **(he was starting his ministry)**
- How do you think his baptism experience made him feel about his decision to leave his family and his work as a carpenter to become a traveling rabbi/teacher? **(reassured that God was with him)**

- How was Jesus' baptism similar or different to your baptism?
- How important do you think baptism is? (**Encourage them to think deeply about this and share their thoughts.**)

Baptism Review

In our church, most parents bring their children to be baptized soon after they are born. This is to symbolize that the child is part of the Christian family and will gradually, as they grow, show their love of God and serve others. When children are old enough to express this in words for themselves, we ask them to come before the congregation again and say so in a ceremony called "**confirmation.**" It is a time when they declare that they will now take on the promises and responsibility for their spiritual growth that their parents made on their behalf when they were a baby.

Some other churches practice "believer's baptism." In that tradition, people are baptized when they are older –teens or adults. Those churches often have a service of dedication for babies, in which the baby's family and the congregation promise to teach the child about the Christian faith.

Ask your children if they have thought about or look forward to confirmation or "Affirmation of Baptismal Faith." If confirmation classes are held regularly in your church, tell them about the classes.

Memory Verse: *"I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."* Mark 1:8

Integrating the Theme – "Jesus' Baptism – Our Baptism" Activity Sheet

Materials: Pen/pencil Copies of the activity sheet "Jesus' Baptism – Our Baptism."

Instructions: Review the "***Symbols of Baptism***" sheet.

Let's do an activity sheet. We'll do the first three questions together. Back in December, we talked about symbols of Advent and Christmas. The first question is about symbols of baptism. (**Refer to the answer key on page 3.**) Next, write your answers for questions 2 and 3 and in a few minutes we'll take them up and discuss them. (**Give time, then go over the answers for question two and discuss their responses to question 3.**) The last part is a puzzle.

Answer Sheet:

1. jug of water, evergreen bough, candle.
2. John, God, John, Isaiah.



Closing Prayer

May the road rise up to meet you.

May the wind be always at your back.

May the sun shine warm upon your face, and the rains fall soft upon your fields.

Until we meet again my friend, may God hold you in the palm of his hand.

Amen.

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Dramatization: Jesus' Baptism

Fit to width (Ctrl+W)

SCENE: Almost 2000 years ago, in a valley with rugged hills, bushes, and grass. A broad, muddy river winds slowly along the floor of the valley. The sun is high and hot; there is a warm breeze blowing. **NARRATORS:** Jesus, his cousin John the baptizer, a traveler, four people from Jerusalem.

a dusty dirt road which follows the riverbank.)

TRAVELER: I'm tired of walking. It's so hot! I think I'll put my sack down and sit for a while here in the shade. *(sits)* There sure are a lot of people on this road today. I wonder what's going on.

(The four from Jerusalem come by, talking together.)

TRAVELER: *(standing up)* Excuse me. There seems to be some excitement today. Do you know where everyone is going?

PERSON 1: We're all going out to hear the preacher.

PERSON 4: Yeah, you know, John the baptizer. The guy who washes people in the river.

PERSON 2: They say he looks like a wild man but speaks like a prophet.

PERSON 3: Have you heard him? I heard him once. He doesn't speak like a prophet at all. He's just a wendo.

TRAVELER: Sounds interesting. I'm not in any hurry. Would you mind if I came along with you?

PERSON 1: Sure. It's just down the road a bit.

(All five walk along together.)

PERSON 4: They say his mother, Elizabeth, was really old when he was born – way too old to have a baby. And his father, Zechariah the priest, had a vision that his son would be a prophet. Zechariah didn't believe it at first, and so he couldn't speak a word until after John was born.

PERSON 3: This is all so strange. What does he live on way out here? There's nothing but bush all around.

PERSON 2: They say he eats nothing but locusts and wild honey. What a gourmet treat, eh? *(They all laugh.)*

PERSON 2: Look! There he is!

TRAVELER: That man standing in the river? Is that John? He's pretty young.

I thought prophets were supposed to be old.

JOHN: *(shouting)* Make a straight path for God! Turn from your sins and be washed clean!

PERSON 4: The scriptures say that Elijah will come back before the Messiah comes. Could this be Elijah?

PERSON 1: Don't be silly.

(Person 4 goes over to John and talks with him.)

JOHN: *(to the whole crowd)* There is One coming after me – the savior of the world! I am not fit to be his shoes. When he comes, you will see the hand of God among the people!

(Jesus enters.)

JOHN: This is the One! Behold the Lamb of God!

(John sinks to his knees. Jesus walks over to John.)

JESUS: *(touching down to John)* I have come to be baptized, John.

JOHN: *(shaking his head)* I ought to be baptized by you, and yet you have come to me!

JESUS: *(raising John up)* Let it be this way for now. We are doing what God wants.

JOHN: So be it. *(John baptizes Jesus by kneeling him under the water and raising him up again. Jesus stands still in the river, praying.)*

PERSON 4: *(amazed)* Look! The Spirit of God has come down on Jesus! *(John and Jesus hug then Jesus climbs out of the river and goes along the road, past the traveler and the people from Jerusalem. He looks at them, then goes on.)*

TRAVELER: Did you see the way he looked at me? What just happened?

PERSON 3: God only knows.

Jesus' Baptism – Our Baptism

1. Which of these are symbols of Baptism?



2. Who said it? See Mark 1:1-11

- I baptize you with water but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. _____
- You are my own dear son. I am pleased with you. _____
- Turn away from your sins and be baptized. _____
- Someone is shouting in the desert. Get the road ready for the Lord. _____

3. What part of a service of Baptism is most special to you?

4. Crossword Puzzle (based on Mark 1:1-11)



Down:

- People came from this city to hear John.
- What the person shouting in the desert was called.
- What John said he was not good enough to do for the one coming after him.
- What John did in the Jordan River.
- What Isaiah was, John too.
- Repent means "_____away."

Across:

- The river where Jesus was baptized.
- Where John appeared preaching.
- What came on Jesus at his Baptism.
- Went out to hear John preach.
- What God will do. (vs. 4)
- The gospel we are studying this year.
- The kind of path that was being prepared for the one who was coming.

Baptism

Symbols of Baptism

Water: The water of baptism has many symbolic meanings. It symbolizes the womb, and birth to new life in the Christian family.

It symbolizes forgiveness – the assurance that when we stray from God’s way, God still loves us and will cleanse us, washing away our sin.

Immersion baptism in particular symbolizes death to an old way of life and rising to a new life, following in Christ’s way. Water is poured just before the baptism to show it as running or living water.



Font: The font or fountain holds the water for baptism. It is often placed centrally for baptism, though in some Christian churches it is near the door of the church to symbolize entry into the family of the church, and as a weekly reminder as one enters worship. The font usually occupies a prominent position in the place of worship, as a constant reminder of God’s grace.



Candle: The Paschal (Easter) candle is burning during a baptism, to link baptism with resurrection. A second candle may be lit from this large candle and given to the newly baptized. It is a sign of new life in Jesus Christ, the light of the world. It also signifies the ministry to which each of us is called, even from a very young age – to be light in our world. (Matt. 5:14–16)



Oil: Oil, sometimes called “chrism,” is applied to the forehead of the newly baptized, with the sign of the cross. This marks the baptized as belonging to Christ. Oil is used in scripture for anointing. “Christ” means “anointed one.” Our baptism links us to the Christ. The oil anoints us to our Christian ministry.



White robe: An initiation often involves putting on special clothes or insignia. A change in clothing can be a symbol of important changes in our lives. In some churches, candidates for baptism wear special robes. The white robe symbolizes the putting on of the new life in Christ. Some congregations present a white stole as a symbol of our ministry and mission as Christians.



Evergreen Bough: The evergreen bough is a traditional symbol of eternal life. It is sometimes used in an act of renewal of baptismal faith for the whole congregation. With the words “Remember your baptism and be thankful,” the presider dips the bough in the water and lightly sprinkles the congregation. This sprinkling ritual, known as “asperges,” has long been connected with baptism as a sign of a renewal of grace.



Infant Baptism, Confirmation and Communion

From the days of the early church, the children of believing parents have been baptized and nurtured in the family of Christ’s followers. This acknowledges that children are part of the covenant relationship with God and that God’s love is freely given and does not rely on any act of ours – even our penitence. Infant baptism emphasizes God’s grace and the faith both of parents and of the church. Parents and congregation assume a solemn responsibility at the baptism of a child, including encouraging that child to seek confirmation at a later age.

Orthodox churches have a single rite of initiation which includes Baptism, Confirmation, and First Communion for both infants and adults. Other churches separate these rites. Because a bishop was the celebrant of Confirmation, the rites became separated when the church became more widespread and the bishop could no longer preside at every baptism. So arose the sequence of infant baptism and adolescent Confirmation, followed by admission to Holy Communion.

Recently, the view of baptism as a rite of Christian initiation has given encouragement to the admission of young children to the Eucharist. Confirmation, no longer seen as a requirement for the Eucharist, may now be seen as taking on adult responsibilities within the church. ■