

"You are my Son, whom I dearly love; in you I find happiness." (Luke 3:22)

Jesus' Baptism – Luke 3:1-22

Prepare to Wonder

Faith Word: JOURNEY

It has been several weeks since we read about the birth of Elizabeth and Zechariah's son, John. Thirty years later, John is in the wilderness baptizing people in the River Jordan and exhorting people to acknowledge their sin and accept God's forgiveness. John encouraged people to be baptized to show they had changed their hearts.

Some people questioned whether John was the Christ, but John told them that one more powerful than him was coming. John was speaking of Jesus, whom John claimed was so much greater than he that John was not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. Untying sandals was a servant's job.

Though each of the four Gospels tell of Jesus' baptism, each Gospel writer treats it differently. In Luke, the actual baptism of Jesus is only referred to, not described. Luke spends the first twenty verses of the third chapter talking about John the Baptizer and his ministry. It is only after describing John's arrest that Luke takes two verses to mention Jesus' baptism: "When everyone was being baptized, Jesus also was baptized" (Luke 3:21).

In Matthew and Mark, the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, descends on Jesus as he emerges from the water. In Luke, the Spirit, as a dove, descends on Jesus while he was praying. Accompanying the Spirit, a voice from heaven declares, "You are my Son, whom I dearly love." This week's lesson provides an opportunity to remind the children in your class that God has chosen them, just as God chose Jesus.

Spiritual Practice for Adults

Water is a very important symbol in Christianity. It is a symbol of life and God's divine power. Sit next to a body of water or hold a cup of water. Touch the water. How does it feel? Pray this prayer: Dear Creator of Life, you parted the waters from the land. You parted the water for Moses and the Israelites. You came to us in the waters of a womb. You declare your love for us through the sprinkling of water. Thank you for your love. Thank you for your presence. Amen.

Come Together

Come Together

Supplies: *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, green cloth, battery-operated candle, seashell*

Prepare Ahead: *Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a green cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 2 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 12 & 13) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4). Place the seashell inside the Wonder Box.*

- Point to the Unit 2 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4), and invite the children to wonder about what the word *journey* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

SAY: This month we are talking about stories from Jesus' life. Our story today is about Jesus being baptized by John the Baptizer.

- In this curriculum, we recommend reading stories from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary-age child to read the story, "Jesus' Baptism" (pp. 206–7), from the storybook.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for showing Jesus that he was loved by you. Thank you for loving us as your children too. Amen

Jesus' Baptism – Preschool

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons*

Prepare Ahead: *Photocopy "Jesus' Baptism" (Reproducible 6A) for each child.*

- Invite the preschoolers to use crayons to color the picture.

SAY: Jesus went to the Jordan River to be baptized. While he was there, he was baptized. He heard a voice say, "I love you dearly."

Mindful Coloring – Younger Elementary

Supplies: *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons or markers*

Prepare: *Photocopy "Mindful Coloring" (Reproducible 6B) for each child.*

SAY: In today's Bible story, Jesus was baptized by John the Baptizer in the river. Color the waves on the page using colored pencils. Use only "cool" colors. Cool colors include shades of green, blue, and purple.

- Invite the kids to color the page using cool colors.

ASK: How does the pattern on this page remind you of water?

SAY: Water plays an important part in today's Bible story.

John the Baptist's Words – Older Elementary

Supplies: CEB Bible Reproducible Kids' Book, pencils or markers

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "John the Baptist's Words" (Reproducible 6C) for each child.

- Hand out a copy of "John the Baptist's Words" to each child.

SAY: In today's Bible story, John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River. Before Jesus was baptized, some people thought John was the Messiah (the Savior). Decode the message to see what John said to the people.

- Invite the kids to use the code on the page.
- Have the kids share the answer they found.

Bible Verse Stones – All Ages

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book; nine small, flat stones; permanent markers; large, shallow, plastic tub; drop cloth or tarp; water; optional: small water toys

Prepare Ahead: Make photocopies of Reproducible 6E. Put the drop cloth or tarp down on the table or floor of your classroom. Fill the shallow, plastic tub with water and place it on the drop cloth or tarp. Place the nine stones and permanent markers on the drop cloth or tarp next to the water tub.

SAY: In this week's Bible story, Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River. Today we are going to make Bible verse stones and play in the water.

- Invite the kids to select one stone. Have them refer to Reproducible 6E.
- Direct them to each choose one word from this month's Bible verse: "You are my Son, whom I dearly love." (Luke 3:22a)
- Have each kid use a permanent marker to write their one word from the Bible verse onto one of the stones. Be sure to have one kid write the Bible reference on a stone. Help preschoolers to write their words as necessary.
- Allow the permanent ink to dry (less than a minute). Then invite the kids to place their stones in the tub of water.
- Invite the kids to push the stones around in the tub until the stones are in the correct order to read the Bible verse.
- Allow the kids to play in the water using the optional water toys. Remind the kids that the water should stay inside the tub as much as possible.

Wonder Time

Interactive Bible Story

Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Jesus' Baptism" (Reproducible 6F) for each child.

- Invite several readers to take turns reading the story one section at a time.

ASK: What is your favorite part of today's story?

Share a Story

Supplies: Celebrate Wonder DVD, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, TV, DVD player

- Invite the children to join you, sitting in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 6 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

Wonder with Me

Supplies: Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors

Prepare Ahead: Lay out the Wonder Story Mat for Unit 2 (Class Pack—pp. 8 & 17).

Cut out the four remaining Bible story figures (Class Pack—p. 19), if not done already.

- Place the Wonder Box on the Unit 2 Wonder Story Mat.
- Show the children the Unit 2 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 4).

SAY: The definition for *journey* is to faithfully follow where God leads. We are following Jesus' journey this month as he grows and follows where God leads him.

- Point to the Wonder Story Mat.

WONDER together:

- Why do you think part of Jesus' journey included the Jordan River?
- How does it feel to be God's child?
- Place the figure of the dove on the Wonder Story Mat at the Jordan River.
- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the seashell.

WONDER: What does this seashell make you think of?

Experience Wonder

Water Experiments

Supplies: several cups and glasses, a supply of water, a roll of paper towels, food coloring (two colors), ice, a kettle with hot water, drinking straws

- Prepare to show a few properties of water using a few simple science demonstrations:
 - **Capillary Action:** Place two cups of water side by side. Take a few sheets of paper towel (connected) and twist them into a long shape. Drop some food coloring (any color) into one water cup. Drop food coloring (a different color) into the other cup. Place the ends of the twisted paper towel into each cup. What happens? The water will be absorbed, and the paper towel will turn colors!
 - **States of Matter:** Bring liquid water, ice, and a kettle with hot water to the table. Talk about how water can exist in three different forms: as a solid (ice), liquid, and gas (steam).
 - **Sticky Molecules:** Dip a drinking straw into a glass of water. Put your finger over the hole at the top of the straw. Pull the straw out of the water and place it in an empty glass. Remove your finger. The water will go into the empty glass. Water molecules are very “sticky.” They will stick to your skin. (Think about when you get out of a pool and how the droplets of water stick to you.)

SAY: Water is an important resource. It helps us to clean our houses and our bodies. We drink water to stay alive. Water is important in today’s Bible story too.

Examine the Bible Verse

SAY: Our Unit 2 Bible verse is Luke 3:22. Find it in your Bibles.

ASK: Is the Book of Luke in the Old or New Testament? (*New*) Where is Luke located in the New Testament? (*third book*) In what chapter of Luke is our verse located? (*3*) What is the verse number? (*22*)

SAY: Our Bible verse tells us how God felt about Jesus.

- Gather the kids around the Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 12 & 13)
Read it together.

Peaceful Place

Supplies: Leader Guide—p. 114, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, book: “A Bucket of Blessings” by Kabir Sehgal & Surishtha Sehgal, paper, water in a tub

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy the Unit 2 Faith Word coloring sheet (Leader Guide—p. 114) for each child.

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Invite the children to play gently in the water.

Tip: All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.

Go in Peace

Spiritual Practice—Exploring Jesus’ Journey Through Scripture

SAY: Spiritual practice is something we do to help us connect to God. This month we are learning about journey, following where God leads us. We are hearing stories about Jesus’ journey. Today he went to the river to be baptized. He heard the voice of God say, “You are my Son. You make me so happy!”

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice:
 - Invite the children to close their eyes and join you in a prayer meditation.
 - **SAY:** Imagine a flowing river. The sun is shining on your face. You hear the sounds of water moving lazily along. You put your feet in the river. You feel the cool water moving around your toes. A friend walks up beside you. Who is it? Your friend sits down beside you. You’re happy your friend came to be with you today.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for the people who are with me on my journey, like John and Jesus. Thank you for my friends and family. Amen.

- Bless the children before they leave. Touch each child as you say this blessing: “May you feel God’s presence as you journey through the day.”

Family Spiritual Practice

Supplies: Reproducible Kids’ Book; Leader Guide—pp. 111, 112

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy Reproducibles 6F–6G for each child. Photocopy “Celebration Chart” (p. 111) and “Family Letter” (p. 112) for any child who does not have these.

SAY: Let's take a look at your Take-Home Pages (*Reproducibles 6F–6G*). Ask your family to read the Bible story and participate in this week's spiritual practice with you. There's an extra activity for you to do sometime this week.

- Send home a copy of the Take-Home Pages, a copy of the Family Letter, and a copy of the Celebration Chart with each child.

Supplemental Activities

Preschoolers – Dove Relay

Supplies: painters' tape, optional: white crepe paper

Prepare Ahead: Using painters' tape, create a start line and a turn-around line. Cut four pieces of crepe paper, each about two feet in length.

- Divide the children into two teams, and line each team up behind the start line. Give the first person in each line two pieces of crepe paper, one for each hand.
- When you say, "Go," the first person in line will flap their arms, pretending to fly, all the way to the turn-around line and back. This child will pass the pieces of crepe paper to the next child in his or her line.
- Keep going until everyone has pretended to be a flying dove.

SAY: In today's story, Jesus saw the Spirit of God, and it looked like a dove.

ASK: How else may God's Spirit look?

Early Elementary – Friendship Bracelets

Supplies: yarn, pony beads

Prepare Ahead: Cut yarn into one-foot pieces. Each child will need two pieces of yarn. Tie a knot at the end of each piece of yarn.

SAY: John is an important person in Jesus' story. Jesus and John both had different journeys, but they came together at the Jordan River. John baptized Jesus there.

ASK: Is there someone in your life who is important to you? Who?

SAY: We're going to make friendship bracelets for these important people and one for ourselves to remind us we are always connected to the people we love.

- Invite the children to string pony beads onto yarn to create bracelets.
- Help the children tie a knot at the other end of the string when they are finished stringing beads.
- Tie one of the bracelets on the child.
- Remind the children to give one of the bracelets to their important person.

Older Elementary – Name Art

Supplies: paper, colored pencils

SAY: Jesus heard God say, “You are my Son. I find happiness in you.” We are also children of God. When people are baptized, the pastor will say the first and middle name of the person being baptized. The pastor doesn’t use the person’s last name because that person is a part of the family of God.

ASK: Have you ever seen a baptism or have you been baptized? What do you remember about that?

SAY: We’re going to make name art to help us remember we are children of God, and God calls us each by name.

- Invite each child to write her or his name in the middle of a sheet of paper.
- Encourage them to outline the letters with colored pencils. Have them continue outlining until the whole page is covered in color.

Intergenerational Activity – Baptism Art

Supplies: Reproducible Kids’ Book, watercolor paints, cups of water, paintbrushes, paper towels, additional sheets of white card stock, optional: salt, painting smocks

Prepare Ahead: Photocopy “Jesus’ Baptism” (Reproducible 6A) onto white card stock for each participant.

- Have the participants choose to paint the picture from Reproducible 6A or to make their own original creation on white card stock.
- Make the watercolor paints, cups of water, paintbrushes, and paper towels available to the participants.

SAY: We learned that Jesus was baptized in today’s Bible story.

ASK: What did Jesus hear when he was baptized?

- Invite the kids to share what they learned in the story with the youth and adults. A voice (God) told Jesus he was dearly loved by God. Jesus understood he was God’s own child.
- Invite the participants to paint the picture of Jesus being baptized or to paint their own picture in response to the Bible story we heard today.
- To add an interesting effect, salt can be sprinkled on wet watercolor paint to make a pattern.

ASK: Why are we baptized?

- Invite the participants to help clean up after the paintings are finished.