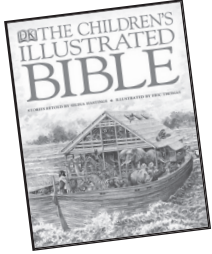


First Sunday after Epiphany

Ordinary Time



The Children's Illustrated Bible
pages 202-203

Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan River to be baptized. But John said, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me?" Jesus smiled and answered, "It's okay. This is God's way." And when Jesus was baptized, as he came up out of the water, suddenly the heavens were opened and the Spirit of God flew down like a dove onto him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, with whom I am well pleased."

—Matthew 3:13-17 adapted

☐ Jesus Is Baptized

Sacrament of Baptism

Decorate a classroom wall as the Jordan River with the bottom half of the wall being the water, using blue construction paper or streamers. Invite kids to the "water's edge" to hear the story of Jesus' baptism from *The Children's Illustrated Bible*, pages 202-203, and Matthew 3:13-17. Have kids find the location on the map on page 180-181. Invite newly baptized members to join your class to help and share their stories of baptism.

John the Baptist was a prophet who told people to get ready for Jesus' coming. Jesus followed John the Baptist until his ministry began. When Jesus was baptized by John, it showed us that we could be baptized, too! Baptism allows a person to make a new beginning by following Jesus. Baptism is a sacrament (a sacred event) of the church.

Act out the story. Kids may take the parts of Jesus and John, the crowd, the dove, and the "voice of God." A blue sheet (resembling the water) can be laid over Jesus as John baptizes him, then pulled off as he stands up. Play water- or river-theme music.

1. How did you feel (or will you feel) when you were (are) baptized?
2. Why did Jesus want to be baptized by John?
3. What does "be immersed" mean? (to be completely covered in a liquid, to be underwater, to be baptized, or to be totally into something, such as immersed in reading a book)
4. What does it mean to be "immersed in Christ"? (to be totally into Jesus, learning about Jesus and, trying to be like him)

Add to the water mural. Kids may use paints or markers to create a picture of themselves being baptized (whether they have been yet or not).

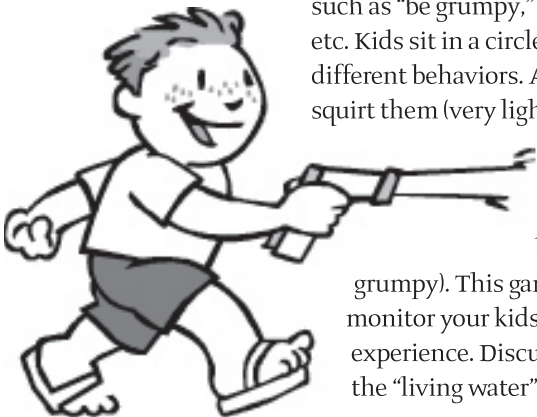
☐ Water Can Change Us

This is a game of being changed by Jesus, just as Jesus was changed by God when he was baptized.

Give kids slips of paper where directions are printed such as "be grumpy," "don't share," or "ignore others," etc. Kids sit in a circle and take turns acting out the different behaviors. As they act out bad behaviors, squirt them (very lightly) with the "living water" of a

squirt bottle. When the kid is squirted, they must change their acting to the opposite behavior, (e.g. friendly instead of

grumpy). This game can become wild quickly, so monitor your kids so everyone has a fun learning experience. Discuss: How were you changed by the "living water"?



☐ Rainstick Rap

Create rainsticks from pieces of cane or bamboo. Tape one end closed, and pour beads, rice, or gravel inside. Carefully hammer small nails into the rainsticks at intervals to create resistance for the beads or rice inside. This is what makes the rain sound authentic! Kids may decorate the outside of their rainsticks with markers, feathers, or leather string taped or tied to one end. Have kids practice making rain sounds, then write a baptism rap or repeat together the rap on the KidsPage.

Draw a dove on Jesus' shoulder.



When Jesus was baptized,
suddenly the heavens opened
and the Spirit of God flew down
like a dove onto him.

—Matthew 3:16 adapted

Rainstick Rap

Make a rainstick, then
practice making rain sounds.
Write your own baptism rap,
or repeat this rap together:

Jesus and the river
Jordan River
Jesus and the river
And John and God.

Jesus was baptized
In the Jordan River.
Jesus was baptized
By John and God.

How can you be immersed in Jesus? Make a plan:

I will read and study

I will listen to

I will ask questions about

I will do these things:

**Tell or draw a picture about your baptism or what
you think it will be like when you are baptized.**