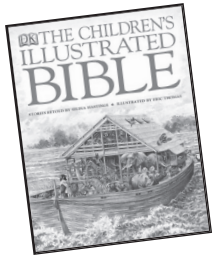


Second Sunday after Epiphany

Ordinary Time



The Children's Illustrated Bible
pages 202-203

And John testified, "I saw the Spirit fly down from heaven like a dove onto Jesus. I didn't know him, but God, who sent me to baptize with water, said to me, 'The one you see the Holy Spirit fly down on is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' I have seen and testify that this is the Son of God."

—John 1:32-34 adapted

I told the good news of being saved to my great congregation. Lord, you know I haven't kept quiet. I told about your love and grace.

—Psalm 40:1-11 adapted

John's Testimony

Today's story is of John's testimony that Jesus is the son of God, from John 1:32-34 and from *The Children's Illustrated Bible*, pages 202-203. Have kids find the Jordan River on the map on pages 180-181.

John the Baptist was a prophet who told people to get ready for Jesus' coming. Because John baptized Jesus, he was able to share a testimony of this special experience.

Invite kids to stand and pretend they are John the Baptist, telling the story of the baptism of Jesus. Have an animal-skin (fake fur!) vest and walking stick, even a furry wig and beard if possible, for props to help kids "get into character." Encourage kids to share John's other messages of praying to God, repenting, listening to the Spirit, and coming into the waters to be baptized.

Afterwards, share a snack of "locusts and honey," the food John survived on in the wilderness. You may do this with honey-roasted nuts, crunchy cereal dipped in honey, etc.

Racial Justice

God hears the cry of those who are hurting, bullied, or treated badly. When people suffer injustice, God hears their pain. Do we hear the pain of others?

This Sunday is part of a U.S. holiday celebrating Martin Luther King Jr., an African-American minister who worked in the civil rights movement. (Black Americans used their churches as a base to achieve justice by nonviolent means). Racial justice means to be fair and loving to all people no matter what race they are.

Share the book *Bein' with You This Way* by W. Nikola-Lisa (see Resources page III).

Discuss differences that can separate people and what behaviors that can bring people together.



The Great Congregation

Psalm 40 is about sharing testimonies of God's goodness with the "great congregation." Discuss:

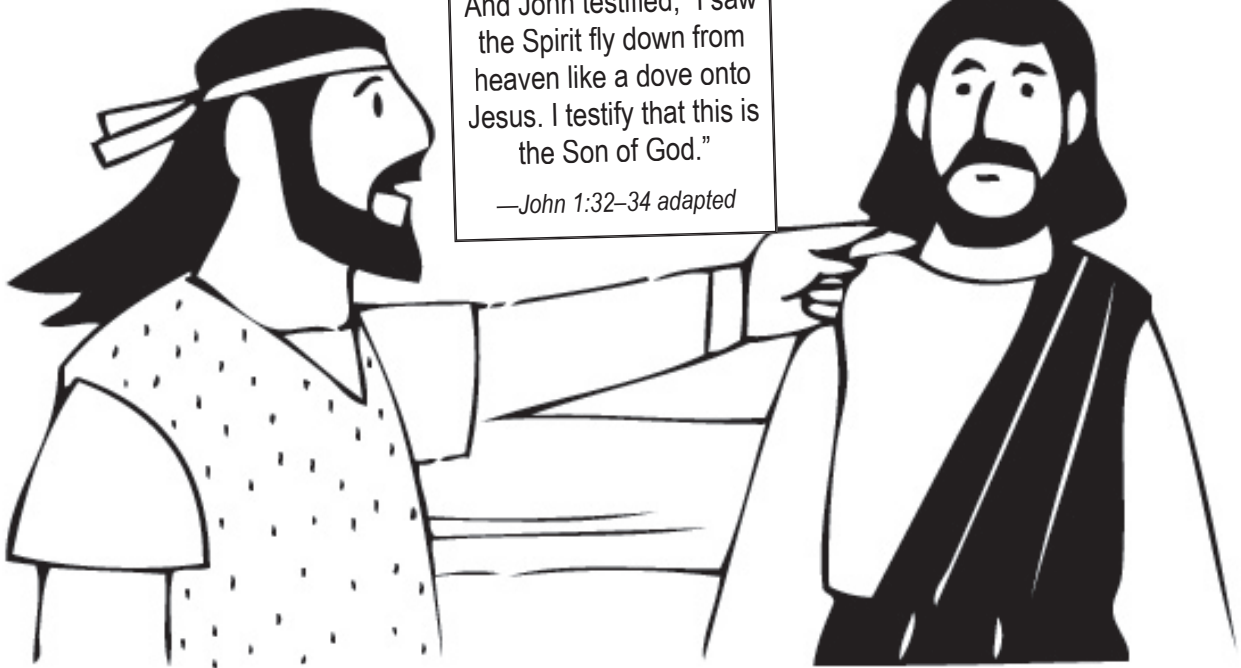
1. What is a testimony? (It is a story of good news about God: a prayer answered, a blessing for you, a new idea you had from God.)
2. Where have you heard testimonies?

Share a short testimony yourself, something that kids know about that may have happened in church activities. Then, invite each kid to share a testimony. They may first use the testimony starters on the KidsPage to get their ideas going. If possible, invite them to share their testimonies with others outside of class.

KidsPage

And John testified, "I saw the Spirit fly down from heaven like a dove onto Jesus. I testify that this is the Son of God."

—John 1:32–34 adapted



Testimony Starters

I felt Jesus near to me when

God answered my prayer when

One time after I prayed

John Dot-to-Dot

What did John the Baptist wear?

What did he eat?

