

Jesus's Baptism and Significance (Matthew 3:1-17) Sunday School Lesson

 ministry-to-children.com/jesus-baptism-and-significance

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Whether as an infant, adult, or in between, baptism is something that is practiced and viewed differently by some, but is always significant. Why should we bother with it, and what does it mean? Well, for one thing, Jesus was baptized at the start of His ministry, and His example sets a standard for us and for the symbol of what baptism represents. This lesson highlights that as well as the importance of being set apart by God.

Lesson focus: The baptism of Christ was a statement and preparation; our own baptism represents cleansing as well as that same statement of faith.

Passage: Matthew 3:1-17

Target Audience: Kindergarten-6th Grade (adaptable older or younger)

Materials Needed: Water, coffee filters, cone cups or papers, string, sponges or “miracle grow” creatures; coffee filters; wet wipes; messy items; water colors; paper plates.

Lesson Opening: Start off the lesson by getting a little messy. Have a bowl of something “icky” prepared: this could be shaving cream, whipped cream, pudding, dirt, Jell-O, noodles... whatever works. Hide something representing the lesson within the bowl. For younger audiences, this might be a simple toy or Bible verse...older students can use something more abstract, like a wrapped “Three Musketeers” bar for the Trinity in the story.

Have students dig around to find the items, and allow them to sit a minute with dirty hands. After a while, provide wet wipes and ask if those are sufficient to clean up all of the goop (probably not). They might need more. Explain that in today's lesson we will talk about how to make ourselves clean on the *inside*. Water is not enough to do that!

- Compare our [Sunday School Lesson on John the Baptist \(Matthew 3:1-12\)](#)
- Download [carton illustrations & coloring page of John the Baptist](#)

Bible Lesson:

What is baptism? Start by asking students what they know and understand about this sacrament, and why (or even if) they think it is important. Does baptism itself take away our sins? What does it mean? Ask students if they know that Jesus was baptized. We know that Jesus never sinned...why and how, then, was He baptized? Introduce the character of John the Baptist:

In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”³ This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

“A voice of one calling in the wilderness,

‘Prepare the way for the Lord,

make straight paths for him.’”^[a]

⁴ John’s clothes were made of camel’s hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. ⁶ Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. -Matthew 3:1-6

Well, this is clearly a strange guy. Camel hair clothes? Eating bugs and honey? Many people thought he was a little out there, but John had followers and disciples of His own. In fact, some people asked if He was the Savior, but he emphasized that his job was to point to Jesus:

“I baptize you with^[b] water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with^[c] the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” -Matthew 3:11-12

John was about the same age as Jesus, and in fact a cousin (remind children of Mary visiting Elizabeth when she first learned of pregnancy, if appropriate). But he knew that Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah to take away the sin of the world. When Jesus came to John, he hesitated at first, but Jesus insisted:

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?”

¹⁵ Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented.

¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

Emphasize what is going on here: What is the trinity? Remind children of the three parts, and point out that all of them are present here (Jesus the son, God the Father, and Holy Spirit).

Discuss again why we baptize: now that Christ has come, our baptism symbolizes dying to sin and coming again to life with Jesus. We remember how He died and rose again for us. In John's day, people were baptized to show that they were genuinely sorry for wrong doing and that they wanted to change their lives. Now, obviously Jesus was not sinful. But He sets an example for us here...

Provide a further illustration: have a piece of paper with a writing or drawing in white crayon. This should be invisible to the naked eye of kids...take some water color and paint over the paper, watching as the crayon becomes noticeable. Now, point out that the crayon was always there. The water did not make it there, but revealed what it was. Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah. In being baptized, He pleased God the father and publicly declared who He was, revealing that special nature and preparing Him for His ministry. It allowed communion with the Holy Spirit and symbolized His being. Our baptism symbolizes our communion with God, commitment to Him, and internal cleansing through God's grace.

Craft:

Dangling Dove...help students cut paper plates in the shape of bird bodies (or have them cut ahead of time for younger audiences). Add color and decoration, if desired. Put a slit and hole punch in the bird and slide coffee filter "wings" in the center and a ribbon to hang the birds. Remind students of the Holy Spirit appearing as a dove in the story. Add a caption for the craft with the verse (Matthew 3:17).

Close with prayer and reminder of God's work in our lives. Thank God for the cleansing of the Holy Spirit and ask for help as we walk in His ways.

[Total: 1 Average: 5/5]



THANK YOU
GOD
for
EVERYDAY
HEROES!



Mandy Groce '11

ministry-to-children.com

I Was Baptized

I was baptized on

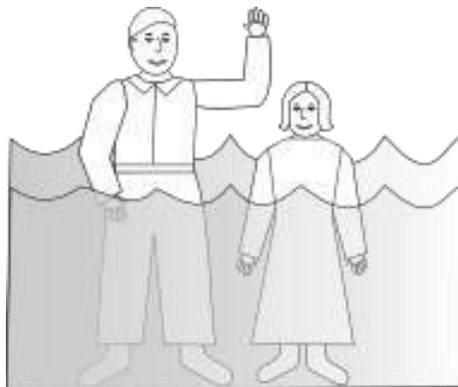
(write date here)

at

(place)

by

(name of pastor)



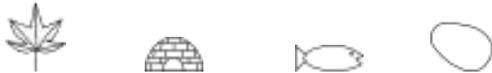
What Does My Baptism Show?

Baptism shows that Jesus _____



on the cross, was buried, and came back to

_____.



Baptism shows that I _____ to sin



(turned away from my sin) and started a new

_____ following Jesus.



Code:



D E F I L

Word Review

Find each word in the puzzle and think about why it is important.

BAPTISM
BIBLE
CHRISTIAN
CHURCH
FELLOWSHIP

GROWING
JESUS
GOD
LEARNING
LORD'S SUPPER
MINISTRY

PEOPLE
PRAYER
PREACHING
SINGING
WORSHIP

M I N I S T R Y D H G N G F
F U O R E Y Q Q P E O P L E
R H Z A J E S U S R D I W L
I C H R I S T I A N U H I L
P R E A C H I N G T D S P O
R U C N S O M N C I E R V W
A H G R O W I N G L E O M S
Y C C L B N B L B U E W L H
E W A S R T K I N M K S F I
R J O A P G B A P T I S M P
T J E X G N I G N I S Z A H
Y L O R D S S U P P E R V X

Baptism Blessings!

Craft ideas related to the Baptist of Jesus

These Bible crafts teach kids about the Holy Spirit and Identity in Christ. Try these Baptism crafts! They will help teach about the Baptism of Jesus in your Kids' Sunday School class. See more Bible crafts, activities, and coloring pages on our website.

There are bound to be questions and even some confusions when it comes to the baptism of Jesus, or baptism in general. These crafts serve as a reminder of the baptism of Jesus, representing the story of the Holy Spirit's presence as well as the blessings found in salvation.

Baptism of Jesus teaching ideas

- [Video example of this craft](#)
- [Jesus Baptism Sunday School Lesson](#)
- [Matthew 3:13-17 children's sermon](#)
- [Jesus Baptism Coloring Page](#)
- See more [Sunday School Crafts](#)



Verses or Captions to Consider...

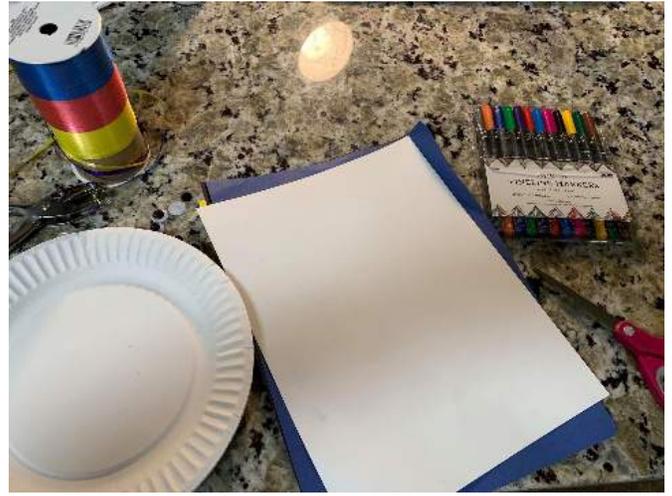
- *And behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."* -Matthew 3:17
- *Jesus is God...and He came for you and me!*
- *I am a new creation in Christ....God washed my sins away!*
- *Jesus was baptized...and so am I. God makes me clean and new.*



Craft one: “Holy Spirit Dove”

Craft supplies you will need:

- Pipe Cleaners or string
- Scissors
- Paper plates
- Markers or decorating materials
- Google eyes
- Paper or coffee filters



Craft directions procedure:

1. Cut or fold the paper plate into a bird-like shape.
2. Decorate the bird with color (if desired), a “beak”, and eyes.
3. Cut a slit into the side of the bird.
4. Carefully place a coffee filter or paper “wings” into the slit to serve as wings.
5. Attach a string if you would like to hang your dove, and a verse caption on the side.



Craft Two: “Jesus is Baptized”

Craft supplies you will need:

- Paper or Styrofoam cups
- Tape or glue
- Scissors
- Decorative materials (markers, fabric paint)
- Construction paper
- Popsicle sticks or clothespins



Craft directions:

1. Decorate your cup with “river waves” or a sunshine scene.
2. Add verse caption, if desired.
3. Carefully stick popsicle stick through the bottom of the cup.
4. Color a Jesus figure (pre-printed or hand-drawn) and cut out.
5. Attach the “Jesus” onto the popsicle stick.
6. Make another stick with a dove figure, or attach the dove separately.
7. Watch the dove and “Jesus” go down into the cup (water) and come from above.



“Blessing of Baptism”

Children’s Sermon Object Lesson on Matthew 3:13-17



Children’s Message: Blessings of Baptism

A Cleansing Reminder and Godly Example

Main Objective: Baptism has varied significance, practice, and detail across different denominations. However, it is done, though, it is important to note its importance in reminding us of our salvation. This lesson communicates that to kids, and emphasizes that Jesus was baptized as well, in order to demonstrate for us and to affirm who He was.

Law/Gospel Theme: Baptism reminds us of who we are in Christ. We have “died” with Him and been made new creations. It is a blessing and privilege to remember that God has washed away our sins and given us transformation. Because of Jesus, we can draw near to God.

Object Lesson Props: Water (water bottle, cup, or pitcher), soap, dove/bird ornament

Bible Passage: Matthew 3:13-17

Baptism of Jesus teaching ideas

- [Jesus Baptism crafts](#)
- [Jesus Baptism Sunday School Lesson](#)
- [Jesus Baptism Coloring Page](#)

Message: Note: As with most messages, the details of how you choose to communicate this are adaptable and should cater to timing as well as to your audience and student needs. If your church has a baptismal font or tub, it might be helpful to incorporate it within your object lesson.



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Children's Sermon on Jesus Baptism

Greet the children, and ask a few questions...

Hello, children of God! Do you see what I have here? What is this? (*Hold up a glass, pitcher, or bottle of water.*) That's right, this is water! Now, what does water do? What can we do with water? (*Encourage kids to come up with a variety of water uses, such as drinking, swimming, cooking, and bathing.*)

So water is powerful and important stuff. And did you know that your body is made up largely of water? That's why it is essential that you drink it and stay hydrated. But water also makes me think of baptism. Do you know what baptism is??

Baptism helps us remember that God has saved us and washed our sins away! Some people do baptism in different ways... some sprinkle water onto people (*feel free to demonstrate with a small toy and your water*); some people dip all the way into the water; some baptize people when they are little babies; some when they are older...there are a lot of ways to do it. But it is a wonderful and important thing to be baptized because it shows us that we are new in Christ!

We are born sinful, and will likely do a lot of bad things in our lives, whether we mean to or not. But we can rest assured that God will forgive us. He sent Jesus to take our place and die so that we can live with God. He loves us no matter what we do!

And did you know that Jesus was baptized, too? Now, that might seem strange, because we know that Jesus never sinned...so why would He need to be baptized?

Well, John asked that same question. Remember John, the camel hair-wearing, locust-eating guy? He baptized people in a river. Jesus came to him one day asking to be baptized, and John tried to send Him away. But Jesus insisted, saying He needed to do it. This lets us know that baptism is a blessing and a great thing. And when Jesus was baptized, something remarkable happened. Heaven opened up,



and the Holy Spirit came down like a dove (*hold picture of dove or toy*), and the voice of God was heard, saying “This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased.”

So all parts of the Trinity were present at once. And God was announcing who Jesus was, His beloved Son. We can take heart that Jesus was and is who He proclaimed. That is a comforting reminder. He lived and died so that we might have eternal life, and be made clean and new in Him.

This is something that we should help us to live joyfully every day. We are made in God’s image and we can live in His presence. We were sinful, but can be cleansed in Christ. So the next time you wash your hands or take a bath, remember how God has washed away our sins. Why don’t we Thank Him for that right now?

Children’s Prayer Moment

(Have kids repeat each line)

Dear God,

Thank you for baptism

Thank you for washing our sins and making us clean

Help us remember that, and live in your presence

Thank you for your son Jesus

Thank you for your love

We love you, God!

In Jesus’s name, Amen!



Matthew 3:13-17 (NIV)

The Baptism of Jesus

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?”

¹⁵ Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented.

¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

[-Matthew 3:13-17](#)



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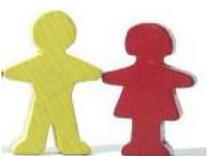
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