

Jesus' Baptism-Matt 3:11-17 (Sunday School Lesson)

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Title: Jesus' Baptism

Scripture: Matt 3:11-17; John 1:29-34

Target Age Group: 3rd-5th grade

Main Point: People are baptized to show they are turning away from sin.)

Supplies: Bibles, marker board, markers, pictures of signs (stop sign, deer crossing, railroad crossing, and someone being baptized)

Optional: Download the [Jesus Baptism coloring page](#) free from our website.

Lesson Opening

- **Ask:** What are some ways that we use water at home or school? What about at church?
- **Say:** Today we will be learning about baptism.
- **Ask:** Does anyone know what baptism is? Have you ever seen someone get baptized?
- **Say:** People are baptized to show they are turning away from sin. Baptism is an outward demonstration of an internal decision to follow Jesus. Being baptized doesn't save a person, only Jesus can do that. But baptism is a way for someone to publically declare that they are a follower of Jesus.
- **Say:** In today's lesson we'll learn about Jesus' baptism and how he calls us to be baptized as well.

Tell the Story

Hold up pictures of the various signs (stop sign, railroad crossing, etc.) Have the kids tell you what the various signs mean.

Say: We see lots of signs every day that give us information. Here's a picture of another type of sign. *Show the picture of the person being baptized.*

Ask: Does anyone know what's happening in this picture?

Say: Today we're going to learn about another kind of sign called baptism. **People are baptized to show they are turning away from sin.**

Ask: Has anyone ever seen someone get baptized?

Say: Baptism is a way for someone to show that they are unified with Jesus. Everything about baptism is symbolic. The water represents God's judgment of sin. Going under the water represents God's punishment for sin that Jesus took for us. Coming out of the water symbolizes the new life that they have in Christ.

Say: Our story today comes from the books Matthew and John. These are two of the four gospels. Let's name all four gospels together. (*Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.*) Remember, the gospels are the first four books in the New Testament that tell about Jesus' life on earth.

Say: Last week we learned about a man named John the Baptist. John was a messenger who lived in the wilderness and preached to the people who came out to see him. Does anyone remember what he taught the people about?

Say: John taught that they must prepare their hearts for Jesus by repenting of their sin. John also baptized people in the Jordan River. Why were the people baptized? **People are baptized to show they are turning away from sin.** John told them that he baptized them with water, but someone would come after him who would baptize them with the Holy Spirit! Who do you think he was talking about? (*Jesus*)

Tell the Story: At that time Jesus had not yet started his ministry. He had been working as a carpenter in the town of Nazareth. The people were still waiting for the Messiah to be revealed: they didn't know it was Jesus! Even John didn't know who it was, but God had given John a special sign to look for. God told John that he would see God's Spirit descend on someone, and that man would be the promised Messiah.

One day Jesus came to see John as he was preaching to the people. Let's read from God's Word to hear what happened.

Read John 1:29-31 *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.'"*

Ask: What did John call Jesus? (*The Lamb of God.*)

Say: That might sound really strange to us, but being referred to as the Lamb of God was actually really important. You see lambs were sacrificed in the temple for the people's sins. The people had to offer lambs over and over again because an animal couldn't truly take away their sin. Only God's perfect Son could do that. By calling Jesus the Lamb of God John was saying that Jesus was the Messiah who would die for the sins of all the people, and that anyone who believed in Him would be forgiven.

Tell the Story: Jesus came to John asking to be baptized. John was shocked by this and said, "You're the one who should be baptizing me and you're asking *me* to baptize *you*!?" Jesus replied, "You should baptize me because this is part of how I will fulfill all righteousness." John

agreed and baptized Jesus right there in the Jordan River. As Jesus came up out of the water John saw something incredible. He saw the Holy Spirit descend on Jesus in the form of a dove. Then he heard the voice of God saying, *“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”* Then John knew without a doubt that Jesus was the Messiah whom God had promised from long ago.

Ask: If **People are baptized to show they are turning away from sin**, why do you think it was important for Jesus to be baptized? He was absolutely perfect so there was no sin in His life for him to turn away from!

Say: Jesus was baptized in order to identify with the sinful people He came to save and to give us a model for obedience to God. Jesus came to “fulfill all righteousness” and part of that includes being baptized!

Ask: Just because someone is baptized, does that mean they are saved and their sins are forgiven? (No)

Say: Baptism by itself doesn’t save us. In **Romans 10:9** it says that, *“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”* Our sins are forgiven only when we trust in Jesus as our Savior, and our baptism is a sign that we have decided to follow Him.

Say: When people are baptized they have an opportunity to tell their story of how they came to know and love Jesus. This is always such an encouraging time for everyone in the church!

People are baptized to show they are turning away from sin. Baptism is always a celebration! Baptism is a sweet reminder of God’s great love for us and is a special way to share your faith with the rest of the world.

Pray *Dear God thank you for the gift of baptism as a way to show that we are connected to Christ. We thank you for what an encouraging celebration it is to witness someone being baptized. We also thank you for sending your Son Jesus to die for our sins so we could be united with Him and be welcomed into your kingdom. Amen.*

Review Questions

- **What was the main point from our lesson?** (People are baptized to show they are turning away from sin.)
- **What two books of the Bible did our story come from?** (Matthew, John)
- **What is the purpose of baptism?** (It’s an outward demonstration of our choice to follow Jesus)
- **John said he would baptize with _____ and Jesus would baptize with _____. (Water, Spirit)**
- **What type of bird did John see come down from Heaven?** (Dove)
- **How are the three members of the Trinity represented in this story?** (Jesus is baptized, the Holy Spirit descends like a dove, and God the Father speaks from heaven.)

Learning Activity 1: Act Out That Verse!

Supplies: Bibles

- Let the kids work in groups of 3-4 and pass out Bibles to each kid/group.
- **Read Romans 6:3-4.**
- **Explain** that baptism is a symbol. It is an outward sign of an inward reality that we have decided to follow Christ. Going into the water represents being buried with Christ. Our old (sinful) self is dead. Coming up out of the water represents being made alive in Christ. When we trust in Christ we are freed from the bondage of sin. While we do still sin this side of eternity, we trust and know that we are forgiven because Christ died for us.
- You (the teacher) may want to share the story of how you were baptized and how you came to make the decision to be baptized.
- Give the kids a chance to ask questions about baptism.
- Encourage the kids to work in their groups to come up with a way to act out the verse. Talk through some of the key words in the verse and (if they need it) help them think of actions that might go along with those words.

Learning Activity 2: Hangman

Supplies: Marker board and markers

- Play a few rounds of Hangman on the marker board using words or phrases from today's lesson (ex: Baptism, Unified with Christ, Jordan River, etc.)
- Use this time to review the key words and phrases and give the kids an opportunity to ask questions.