

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

MATTHEW 3:1-17

GOAL

- ▶ To teach students the story of Jesus' baptism and the importance of being baptized themselves.

WORDS TO KNOW

- ▶ **Repentance:** showing sincere regret for wrongdoing and a commitment to not repeat the behavior.

MEMORY VERSES

- ▶ **Matthew 3:17:** And behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

Acts 22:16: "And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name."

OVERVIEW

- ▶ **Read Matthew 3:1-17:** John the Baptist started a ministry in the wilderness, preaching repentance and baptism. Many people ventured out to the Jordan River to be baptized by John the Baptist. As word spread about his ministry, the religious leaders came out as well, but they came out for show, not because they were truly repentant. John the Baptist warned the Pharisees that a man would come after him who would baptize in the Holy Spirit and fire. He continued his warnings saying that God would not be fooled by their act. Many who witnessed this wondered who John the Baptist was talking about. One day, as John the Baptist was in the Jordan River baptizing those who had come out to see him, a man from the town of Galilee appeared. John immediately knew who this man was: He was Jesus, the promised Messiah. Confused, John asked Jesus why He would ask him to perform His baptism, when John should be asking Jesus to baptize him. Jesus responded that it is right to do all that God requires. John the Baptist baptized Jesus, and as soon as he emerged from the water, the Heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove and came to rest on Jesus. Then, the Father's booming voice was heard from Heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."



SUGGESTIONS

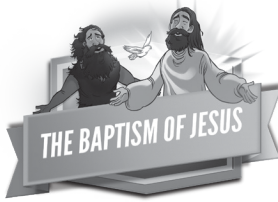
Even though Jesus was perfect and sinless, His baptism was still a significant act. Jesus was baptized to identify with us, show humility, and lead us to become part of God's family.

- **Identify with us:** Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life, which is something we cannot do. This can make Jesus difficult to relate to when we are facing difficult times in life. Jesus understood this, and He took steps to make sure that He experienced everything we might encounter in life. Jesus can relate to the perils and sadness of life that we face and He has done all that God requires of us.
- **Show humility:** Baptism is something we do to show repentance for our sins in obedience to God. Because Jesus was God in human form, Jesus' baptism was unnecessary. Jesus left His throne in Heaven, humbling himself to come live as a man who could be seen as an example for everyone. Being a good example for humanity meant further humbling himself to be baptized.
- **Lead us to God's family:** When Jesus emerged from the water, the Holy Spirit descended on Him, and God announced that Jesus is His Son and that He is pleased with Him. When we are baptized, the same thing happens to us: we are filled with the Holy Spirit, and God calls us His sons and daughters.

PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY

Ages 5-7 | **Spirit Dove** | **Supplies:** construction paper, white paper, pencils, scissors, glue, markers, crayons, colored pencils, decorating supplies

Give each student a piece of construction paper and piece of white paper. On the piece of white paper, have the students trace the shape of the hand they don't use to write. Instruct the students to cut out the outline of their hands and glue them to the piece of construction paper. On the thumb, have the students add a dot for an eye. Let them cut out small triangles from a piece of yellow construction paper to make a beak that they can glue on as well. Allow the students to decorate the rest of their paper however they want.



Ages 5-10 **Fluffy Doves** | **Supplies:** *cut out shapes or printouts of outline of dove, cotton balls, glue, markers, crayons, colored, pencils, decorating supplies*

Give each student a dove shape or a printout with a dove drawn on it and a handful of cotton balls. Instruct the students to glue the cotton balls to the dove.

Ages 8-10 **Doves in Flight** | **Supplies:** *8x11-inch white paper, scissors*

Give each student a piece of paper and have them fold it in half lengthwise. Have them draw the side-view of a dove with its wing raised, with the belly of the dove on the crease of the folded paper. Cut out the dove shape. Fold each wing down to make an airplane shape. Let the students fly their doves around the room.

**MEMORY
VERSE
MEANING**



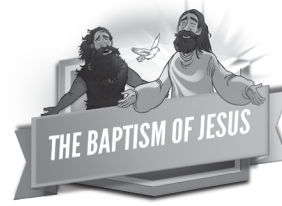
Matthew 3:17: At this moment, God announced Jesus' identity and His support for His Son's mission on Earth.

Acts 22:16: Every Christian should be baptized in the name of Jesus. It is a simple way of showing our faith and obedience to the Lord.

**POST-LESSON
ACTIVITY**



Ages 5-7 **Crossing the Jordan** | Divide the class into two teams and have them stand side-by-side, holding hands in a line facing the other team. Choose a student, and call out, "God is well pleased with His son/daughter, (student's name)." That student should run from his/her side of the room and try to run through the other line of students. If the student is unable to break through the line, that student joins the opposite team. Continue until all students have been called.



Ages 8-10 **Go Under!** | **Supplies:** long, thin stick, such as a broom handle, tape, blue streamers, music

Tape blue streamers to the stick so that when held horizontally to the ground, the streamers hang down. Hold one side of the stick and choose a student to hold the other side. Turn on the music, and have the students, one at a time, walk under the stick. Once all students have had a chance to go under the stick at the first height, lower the stick. Students cannot touch the stick or the floor when going under the stick. Continue until only one student is able to go under the stick. Make sure to select someone else to hold the stick so the student originally chosen can participate at each height.

Ages 5-10 **Baptism Beach Party** | **Supplies:** two beach towels and a beach ball

Divide the class into teams. Give each team a beach towel. Instruct the teams to hold their beach towels taut. Bounce the beach ball off one of the beach towels and the other team should try to catch the ball with their towel. They should then use their beach ball to toss the beach ball to the other team. Teams should try to catch and toss the ball without dropping it. If a team drops the ball, the other team gets a point.

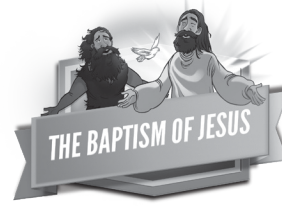


**TAKE
HOME**



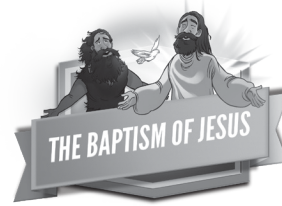
Jesus was baptized to identify with us, show humility, and lead us to become part of God's family.

- **Identify with us:** No matter what challenges or trials we face in our lives, Jesus can understand what we're going through. He came to Earth to live like we do. When we are in times of trouble, we can look to Jesus for answers and help.
- **Show humility:** Instead of coming to Earth and being a king who demanded respect because of His position, Jesus came as a regular man. He humbled Himself so we would be able to identify with Him and use His life as an example to follow. He humbled Himself because He loves us.
- **Lead us to God's family:** Those who follow Jesus' example and get baptized become a part of God's family. We can identify ourselves as the beloved sons or daughters of the Most High God!





SLIDE 1



QUESTION & ANSWER



Q1a: What message did John the Baptist preach?

A1: John the Baptist preached about repentance and baptism.

Q1b: What is baptism?

Teacher Notes: Let students explain their ideas of what baptism is. Explain that baptism is when followers of Jesus make a public declaration of their faith in Jesus Christ as their savior. To be baptized means that a person is fully submerged (dunked) in water or sprinkled with water on his or her head. The act of baptism is symbolic of Jesus' death and resurrection. Think of being underwater as being under ground in a grave and coming back up to the surface as Jesus rising from the grave. When we are baptized, we share in Jesus' death and resurrection.

SLIDE 2



Q2a: What were the religious leaders who came to the Jordan River to be seen by the people called?

A2: The religious leaders who came to the Jordan River to be seen by the people were called Pharisees.

Q2b: Why is baptism important?

Teacher Notes: Let students explain their ideas of why baptism is important. First, baptism is important because being a Christian means to follow Jesus. Jesus was baptized, so we should be as well. Second, Jesus told us to be baptized and to baptize others in His name; therefore, being baptized is an act of obedience. Third, baptism is an outward expression of our faith, love, and commitment to Jesus. After salvation, baptism is the next step.



SLIDE 3



QUESTION & ANSWER



Q3a: What of the Messiah's would John the Baptist not be worthy to touch?

A3: John the Baptist would not be worthy to touch the Messiah's sandals.

Q3b: What is the best way to clean something: soap and water or fire?

Teacher Notes: Well, it depends on the material that needs to be cleaned. In any case, to clean something means to remove dirt or other impurities. If something is flammable, soap and water is a better choice, as fire would burn and ruin the item rather than clean it. Fire cleans by killing off any impurities present through the extreme heat of the flame. Baptism in water cleanses people by symbolically washing away their sins. Baptism with the Holy Spirit immerses believers in the Spirit of God rather than water, which cleanses our minds of worldly thinking and finely tunes our hearts and souls to hear the Lord speak to us. In the final days, Jesus will cleanse the world through a baptism of fire that cleanses the world of non-believers.

SLIDE 4



Q4a: What town did Jesus come from?

A4: Jesus came from the town of Galilee

Q4b: What would you do if you went out for dinner and the chef asked you to cook for him?

Teacher Notes: That is a confusing situation! The chef would do a much better job of cooking dinner for you and himself than if we were to do it for him! This is the same kind of situation John the Baptist experienced when the Messiah, the savior of the world, came to him and asked to be baptized. John felt that their roles were reversed and that he was unworthy and unqualified for task.



SLIDE 5



QUESTION & ANSWER



Q5a: What answer did Jesus give John about needing to be baptized?

A5: Jesus told John, "It is right to do all that God requires."

Q5b: If you get 100% on a test, should you have to retake it?

Teacher Notes: No, that sounds like a waste of time. Jesus was fully God in the form of a man. He was perfect and committed no sins during His life, which makes baptism sound like a huge waste of time and effort. But nothing Jesus ever did was a waste or unnecessary. Jesus was baptized because He lived His life as an example for us to follow. We are to be baptized, so Jesus was baptized. His baptism was an action that helped Him to identify with us and all that we are required to do and may face in life.

SLIDE 6



Q6a: Jesus entered into what when He was baptized?

A6: Jesus entered into the pain and sin of all people when He was baptized.

Q6b: If you dip your big toe into a pool, can you say you went swimming?

Teacher Notes: Putting just our big toe in the water is hardly going for a swim. And yet, if people were merely sprinkled with water, they can say that they have been baptized. Every account of baptism in the Bible indicates that baptisms involved full submersion; however, there are many churches that sprinkle water instead. This does not mean that churches that sprinkle water to baptize are wrong, they are just doing it differently. The idea and intent behind both methods of baptism is the same—an outward commitment to one's faith in Jesus—and that is what matters most. The fact that baptisms are being performed is more important ensuring everyone does it in the same way.



SLIDE 7



QUESTION & ANSWER

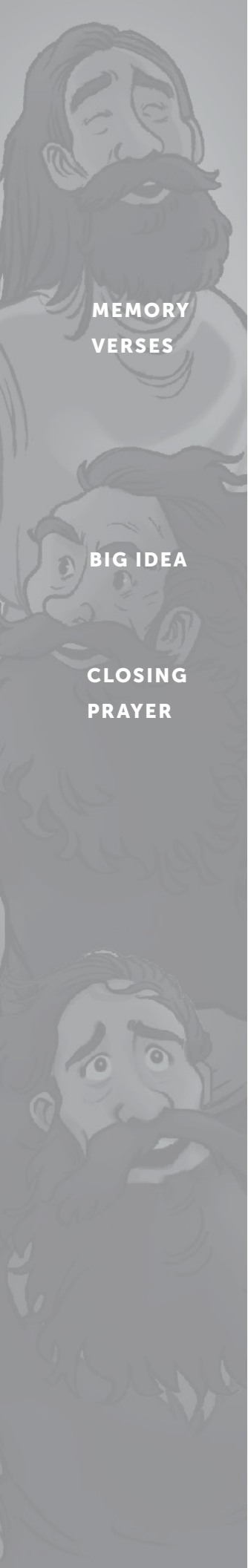


Q7a: In what form did the Holy Spirit appear?

A7: The Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove.

Q7b: Who should breathe air?

Teacher Notes: It's necessary for human beings to breathe air to survive, so the answer to this question is: everyone! For Christians to live according to the example Jesus set, they must be baptized. Every Christian should be baptized.



**MEMORY
VERSES**

▷ **Matthew 3:17:** And behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

Acts 22:16: "And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name."

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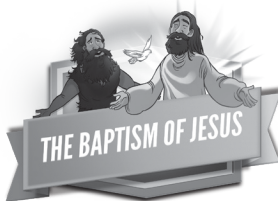
BIG IDEA

▷ Through baptism, Jesus entered into the world He came to save.

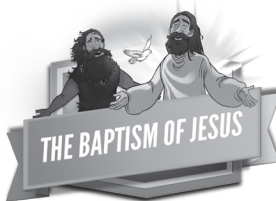
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**CLOSING
PRAYER**

▷ Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for accepting us into Your family through baptism. Thank You for sending Your Son to live as an example for us. Help us to live as closely to Jesus' example as possible. We ask these things in Jesus' name, Amen.



QUESTION & ANSWER



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 1



In the days prior to Jesus' ministry on earth, a man who wore strange clothing and ate strange food was preaching a powerful message in the wilderness. His name was John, and he told crowds of people that the Kingdom of Heaven was about to appear and that they should turn from their sins and wash themselves clean through the baptism. His emphasis on baptism earned him the name John the Baptist.

SLIDE 2



As word of John the Baptist's message spread, crowds of people traveled to the Jordan River to confess their sins and be baptized. While many of these people were genuinely sorry for their sins, there were those who came only for show. These religious leaders, called Pharisees, came to be seen by the people, not because they wanted to be closer to God. John the Baptist warned them that God would not be fooled by imposters and that only those with genuine faith would be received.

SLIDE 3



John's warning to the Pharisees continued as he began to describe a very special man who would come after him. This man would be so great that John wouldn't even be worthy to touch his sandals. This man would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. This great man John described would be the promised Messiah!



SLIDE 4



As John the Baptist continued to baptize people in the Jordan River, many wondered about the man he had spoken of to the Pharisees. One day, a man from the town of Galilee came to be baptized. John the Baptist immediately knew who this man was: He was Jesus, the promised Messiah that John had told the Pharisees about! John was filled with awe and a bit of confusion.

SLIDE 5



As Jesus approached, John the Baptist couldn't believe that Jesus would wade into the water with him. John, filled with confusion, asked Jesus, "Why are you doing this? I am the one who needs to be baptized by you, and yet you want me to baptize you?" Jesus reassured John by saying, "It is right to do all that God requires."

SLIDE 6



In obedience to the Father, Jesus was baptized by John. This was an incredible moment in which Jesus, the perfect, sinless Son of God, identified with those He came to save. As Jesus was baptized, He entered into the pain and sin of all people. While Jesus had no sins to confess and be cleansed of, His baptism was an act of faith and obedience.

SLIDE 7



As Jesus rose up out of the water, the Heavens opened above Him, and the Holy Spirit descended from Heaven in the form of a dove that came to rest upon Jesus. This amazing sight was followed by the booming sound of the Father's voice saying, "This is my dearly loved son who brings me great joy!" Jesus' baptism serves as an example for us to follow.

LESSON TRANSCRIPT

