

1

Remembering Baptism

MARK 1:1-11



GOAL

Hearing the story of Jesus' baptism, children hear how God claimed Jesus as God's Son, experience the symbols of baptism, and claim the name "child of God."

- A** Art
- AM** Active/Movement
- C** Conversation
- D** Drama
- F** Food
- G** Game
- M** Music
- NS** Nature/Science
- QC** Quiet/Contemplative
- S** Service
- T** Technology
- X** Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



PRAYER

Lord, thank you for claiming me as your child through baptism. Help me show others that they are children of God too. Amen.

THIS SESSION

This session begins the unit on the faith practice of baptism. Here we look at Jesus' baptism in the naming of Jesus as God's Son and as the beginning of Jesus' ministry. This gives the foundational understanding of the Sacrament of Baptism and our ministry "to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." Children come to understand that, as God named and claimed Jesus as God's own beloved child, God claims and names us, too, as children of God.

THE BIBLE STORY

John was baptizing people, calling for them to change their ways and return to following God's way of living. He knew he was playing his part, but that "one more powerful" than he would baptize with the Holy Spirit and gather us into a community of faith. John baptized Jesus and Jesus was claimed as God's own beloved by a voice from heaven.

CONNECTIONS WITH CHILDREN

Young children engage in the faith practice of baptism by remembering Jesus' baptism and their own. They learn that through baptism they are claimed and sealed as a beloved child of God.

SESSION PREPARATION

- "In Baptism, God Cleans Me and Names Me" (p. 8): Gather supplies and set up two centers, a washing-hands area and a name-tag area.

Depending on the options you choose:

- "Understanding Baptism" (p. 10): Obtain *Today Is a Baptism Day* by Anna V. Ostenso Moore (Church Publishing, 2018) or use the YouTube video "'Today Is a Baptism Day' Read by the Author, Anna V. Ostenso Moore" (bit.ly/FMBaptismDay, 3:38).
- "Understanding Your Practice of Baptism" (p. 10): Invite a pastor, church leader, or person who can speak with children about baptism. Encourage them to use concepts appropriate to young children and share any special practices or traditions your church uses in a baptism.
- "Remembering Baptism Banners" (p. 10): Cut 8" x 10" pieces of cotton muslin fabric with pinking shears. Draw a light line across the 8" width, 1 inch down from the top. Use a fabric marker to write "Welcome to God's Family" on each piece, at least an inch below the line. Across the bottom of each piece, write one of the following: "Jesus loves you, and we do too!" or "You are a child of God!" Cut dowel rods into 12" lengths.
- "Water, Water, Everywhere!" (p. 11): Make copies of baptism pictures from your church or an internet image search for "baptism pictures" and print at least one picture for each child to use in a collage.



GETTING STARTED

- ☐ Washing-hands center with sink or basin of water, soap, towels
- ☐ Name-tag center with name tags cut from card-stock copies of Resource Page 1 and hole punched, crayons, markers, 30" pieces of yarn



If you are using a basin of water instead of a sink, the area could become wet. Place towels or a plastic tablecloth on the floor.

- ☐ Bowl of water (preferably a clear bowl)
- ☐ Small table

IN BAPTISM, GOD CLEANS ME AND NAMES ME



As the children enter, greet them by name, and welcome them into the space. Invite them to visit both of the centers you have set up in the room.

At the washing-hands center, invite the children to wash their hands. Have them sing the following song to the tune of “Happy Birthday” as they take turns washing their hands, naming the person washing.

God’s blessings to you, God’s blessings to you,
God’s blessings to (*Name*), God’s blessings to you.

Engage them in conversation about how water cleans. Wonder with them how God cleans us with the water of baptism.

At the name-tag center, invite children to make a name tag using one of the tags cut from card-stock copies of Resource Page 1. Have the children choose a name tag, color it, and write their name on it. Assist with writing names as needed. Provide yarn pieces and have the children thread the yarn through the hole. Tie the ends together and place the name tag on each child, saying their name as you do.

WATERS OF BAPTISM

Place a bowl of water on a small table where the children can sit in a circle or semicircle around it. Gather the children by chanting:

I have some good news, good news.
I have some good news. Come sit with me.

As each child comes to the area, invite them to dip their fingers in the water. As they do, say to each child, “(*Name*), through the waters of baptism, God loves you and calls you God’s own beloved child.”



INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

IF YOUR NAME IS . . .



Tell the children that, in baptism, a person gets a new name—Child of God—and is called to live into that identity. Explain that they still have their regular name, but they also have a new, special way of being known. In baptism they are known as God’s child. Wonder together what it means to live as a child of God and what things they might do as a child of God.

Sing the following song to the tune of “If You’re Happy and You Know It,” taking turns singing to each child by name. You may also chant the song. You will need to fit the children’s names in the song.

If your name is (*Name*), then stand up.
If your name is (*Name*), then stand up.
If your name is (*Name*), and you want us all to know it,
If your name is (*Name*), then stand up.

When all children are standing, sing or chant to each child again using the phrase, “. . . then sit down.” Invite the children to sing or chant along with you as you add new verses. For these verses, all the children should stand when they hear the name “Child of God.” Make up appropriate activities and movements as you wish, inviting the children to follow your motions. Some ideas might be:

If you're a child of God, then praise God . . . (*wave arms*)

If you're a child of God, say a prayer . . . (*fold hands*)

If you're a child of God, high-five a friend . . . (*wave*)

FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

The practice of baptism comes from the account of Jesus' baptism found in Mark 1:1–11 (see also Matthew 3:13–17 and Luke 3:21–22). All three Synoptic accounts include water, the Holy Spirit as a dove, the declaration of sonship, and the presence of witnesses. The triune God in action is seen as God the Father's voice resounds from heaven, as Jesus is claimed as the Son of God, and as the Holy Spirit descends in the form of the dove. These form our practices for the Sacrament of Baptism: water is used, the words “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” are proclaimed, and the sacrament is carried out in the presence of community or God's family.

LETTING THE STORY FLOW OVER YOU



Resource Page 2

Invite children to get comfortable lying flat on their backs on the floor and closing their eyes. Ask them to take three deep breaths, letting each out slowly. Say, “Listen, and let the story come to you.” Read the adapted Bible story from Mark 1:1–11 on Resource Page 2.

IMMERSING YOURSELF IN THE STORY








- Dove cut from Resource Page 3
- Blue cloth (chiffon, bed sheet, or blanket)
- Vest for John (cut from a brown paper grocery bag or pillowcase)
- Tunic (cut from a pillowcase or sheet) or robe for Jesus

Using the gathered props and costumes, invite the children to reenact the story. Parts and costumes or props are: Jesus (tunic), John (vest), Holy Spirit (dove), Voice of God, two children for water (blue cloth), and people on the riverbank. Adjust parts to the number of children present. Some parts could be doubled up, if necessary.

Have the children act out the story using their own words, prompting them when needed. Or read the story again from Resource Page 2 while the children act it out.

Following the reenactment of the story, wonder together:

-  How do you think John felt when Jesus came to him?
-  How did the water feel?
-  Do you think Jesus felt different after the baptism?
-  Do you think John felt different after he baptized Jesus?
-  Do you think the people watching were changed?



FINDING THE PRACTICE ALL AROUND US

While the elements of water, words, and community are always present in Christian baptism, they are implemented in slightly different ways in different Christian communities and denominations. Some practice immersion and some sprinkling. Some emphasize infant baptism, and others believer's baptism. But all are being baptized into the one family of God when water is used "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" in the presence of the community.

Choose one or both options.

- Today Is a Baptism Day* by Anna V. Ostenso Moore (Church Publishing, 2018) or an internet-connected device



Note that, at the end of the book (2:57 on the video), the book mentions oil and candles. These are special items used in the author's setting, an Episcopal church. Some churches may or may not use these items.

- Invited guest
- Bowl of water (optional)

UNDERSTANDING BAPTISM



Read *Today Is a Baptism Day* by Anna V. Ostenso Moore or show the YouTube video "Today Is a Baptism Day' Read by the Author, Anna V. Ostenso Moore" (bit.ly/FMBaptismDay, 3:38). Wonder what the children's favorite part of the story is. Ask the children what kind of day they heard a baptism day is. Words like hope, unity, love, community, and more are used. Ask the children what being baptized says we will do. Actions such as learning, eating, praying, turning back to God, and more are described. Tell the children that baptism in all Christian churches has three things: water, words, and community. Wonder together where these three things are found in baptism.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR PRACTICE OF BAPTISM



If possible, take the children on a trip to your sanctuary; otherwise, set a bowl of water in the midst of them. Show the children the baptismal font or bowl of water and invite them to touch and feel the water gently. Introduce your invited guest and have them talk with the children about the practice of baptism in your church. Encourage them to share information about any special practices your congregation does, such as ask a question to the children of the church, give the baptized person something to remember their baptism, introduce the baptized person to the congregation, display any special visual reminders of baptism, sing any special music for baptism, and so forth.



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Children may practice the practice and help others remember their baptism when they see, touch, and experience water.

Choose one or both options.

- Prepared muslin fabric pieces
- Dowel rods, cut to 12" lengths
- Fabric markers, fabric glue, yarn, scissors

REMEMBERING BAPTISM BANNERS



Tell the children that they will make baptism banners to give people who get baptized in your congregation so that person may remember their special day.

- Give each child a prepared rectangle of muslin fabric and read the words that you have written on the fabric.

- Tell the children that they will trace their hands in the center of the fabric and add some pictures that are about water. Wonder together what some pictures about water might be. Possible ideas could be a water drop, a river or lake, a shell, or a rainbow. Have the children look at their name tags to see water drop and shell shapes.
- Assist the children in tracing their hands.
- Provide fabric markers and invite the children to decorate the hands and add the water pictures. Tell them to draw below the pencil line.
- Place a line of fabric glue along the back of the banner about $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the top. Help the children fold over the top inch of their banner along the pencil line to the back of the banner. Have the children press and hold the glued pieces together.
- Give the children a dowel rod and have them slide it in the dowel pocket.
- Tie both ends of a piece of yarn to the extended ends of the dowel rod.

Tell the children that their banners will be given to the pastor to present to people who are baptized.

WATER, WATER, EVERYWHERE!



Tell the children that they can remember baptism each and every day whenever they encounter water in their lives. Wonder together all the different ways we see, use, hear, touch, smell, and taste water. Suggest that, when we encounter water during our day, we can think about the water used in baptism, water that marks us as a child of God and part of God's family.

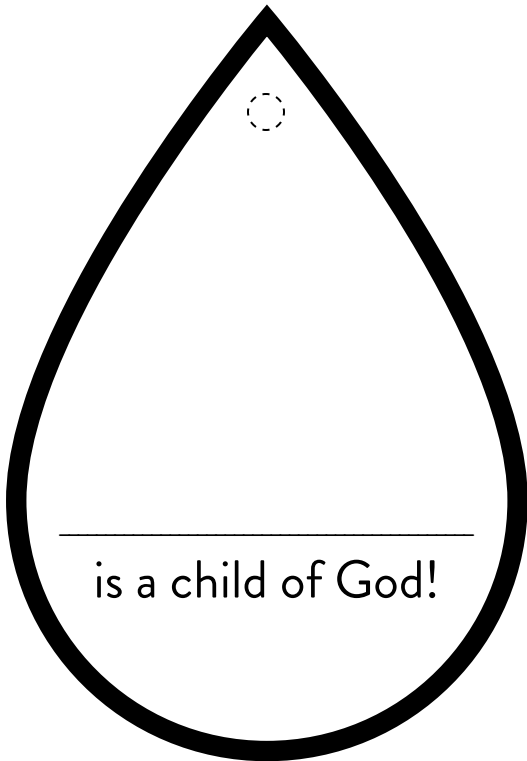
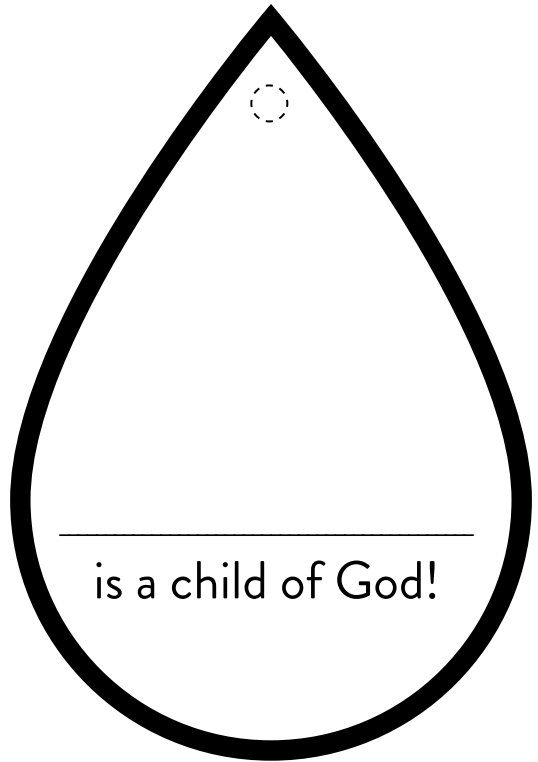
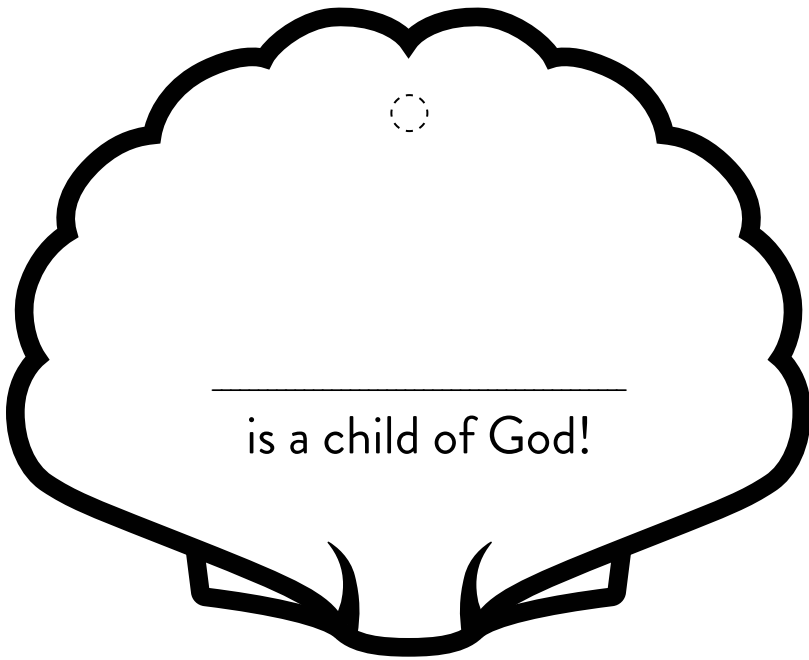
Write the word *WATER* on a sheet of newsprint for all to see. Provide magazines, card stock, glue sticks, and scissors. Invite the children to make a collage of pictures and the letters *W*, *A*, *T*, *E*, and *R*. They may cut or tear pictures of water from the magazines and glue them to their paper. Encourage them to find the letters in the magazines as well and add them to their collage. If you gathered baptism pictures, give each child one to include in their collage. Suggest that the children take their water pictures home and put them somewhere they will see them so they can remember that water is an important part of baptism.

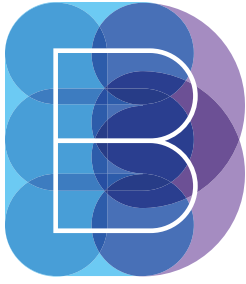
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- Magazines
 - Baptism pictures
 - Card stock
 - Glue sticks
 - Scissors



FOLLOWING JESUS

As the group gets ready to leave to follow Jesus in their daily lives, gather in a circle. Invite the children to bless one another by following your example. Turn to the child on your left and take their hand, saying, “(Name), you are a child of God. Go and follow God’s ways.” Tell the children that it is their choice to hold a hand, place a hand on a shoulder, do an elbow bump, or have a high-five as they offer the blessing. Have the children take turns going around the circle until the blessing comes back to you and you say, “And all God’s children say. . . .” Pause, and have the children say “Amen” with you.





BIBLE STORY

BASED ON MARK 1:1–11

Long ago, there was a man named John. He was known as John the Baptist, because he was baptizing people in the Jordan River. John called the people to *repent*, meaning to turn away from doing wrong and to follow God’s ways of living. Many people came to hear John and be baptized. They would get in the water, and when they got out, they felt all clean and new.

John was kind of different from other people who talked about God. He wore simple clothes and ate what he could find, sometimes even locusts and wild honey. John listened to God and told people that someone much greater than he would come and that this man would baptize with not only water but also the Holy Spirit.

One day, Jesus came from his hometown to where John was preaching by the river. There were many other people there listening to John talk about God too. Jesus asked to be baptized. John was surprised because he knew this was the man he had been waiting for, the one who would show people how to follow God’s ways.

John and Jesus went into the river and Jesus went under the water. Just as he was coming up, the Holy Spirit, like a dove, came down, and a voice from heaven said, “You are my son, my beloved child, and I love you.”



