

**Focus:** God calls us by name

**Materials:**

Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth  
CD: Bible Songs for Kids, Vol. 2  
Bible: The Beginner's Bible  
Bowls (fill with water from font before mass and dispose of under a shrub in Peace Garden off atrium when done)

**Gathering** (children find/sit on a carpet square)

Say: *Good Morning everyone, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. Last week we talked about the Mustard Seed and God's kingdom, just like the mustard seed grows into a big tree, the Kingdom of God grows every time we share God's love with others. Today we are going to talk about baptism, when we become members of God's family.*

**Opening Prayer**

Together we make the Sign of the Cross (do in reverse so children can mirror).

Say: *Now let's put our hands together and bow our heads.*

*Let us pray.*

*Loving God, thank you for reaching out to us with love. Help us to love and follow you.*

*In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.*

**Song/Movement**

*Standin' In the Need of Prayer*, track: 8, from Bible Songs for Kids-Vol. 2

Play music, encourage children to stretch or move to the music (clapping, stamp feet march in place to the beat), turn to each other and shake hands, saying hello, etc. Have children sit on their carpet squares when finished.

It's me, it's me, O Lord  
Standing in the need of prayer;  
It's me, it's me, O Lord  
Standing in the need of prayer.  
Not my father, not my mother, but  
it's me, O Lord  
Standing in the need of prayer.

Not my sister, not my brother. but  
it's me, O Lord  
Standing in the need of prayer.

Repeat both verses 2 more times.

Last time repeat last line: "Standing in the need of prayer."

**Alternate Creative Movement**

Have kids form two equal lines facing each other, or a big circle. To the beat of the music have them take four steps toward each other and clap the hands of the child facing them (or their own), then take four steps back and clap their hands together. Repeat.

### Memory Verse

Say: *Now let's take a moment together to learn a verse from the bible.*

*His name is John*

Have the children repeat the verse after you a couple of times.

Say: *Most people in those days named their children after themselves or a close relative. When Zechariah said his name was John everyone was surprised because they didn't know any one named John. John was the name God chose for the baby before he was born. I wonder if God knows all of our names, even before we are born. God knows all things. He knows us and loves us. There is nothing we can do to make him not love us.*

### Gospel Story

Say: *Today we are reading from the Gospel of Luke.*

Have children make sign of the cross on their forehead, mouth and heart saying. *"Lord, open my mind, my lips and my heart so that I may learn it, speak it and love it."*

**Read:** The Beginner's Bible, pp. pp. 299-303, *The Man Who Could Not Talk*

After the reading say: *The Gospel of the Lord*

Children respond: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*

### Discussion Starters:

- *Who is going to be born?*
- *What happens when Zechariah doesn't believe the angel?*
- *Who wants the child to be named John?*
- *What happens when Zechariah names the baby John?*
- *What does he do once he can talk again?*

### Reflection on Reading:

*The birth of John the Baptist shows how God reaches out to us first. God loves us first. God's gift of love is an invitation to love God back. God calls and waits for us to listen and respond. John the Baptist answers God's call by choice. This shows how God's grace and our choices work together to bring about salvation. God reaches out to us in love. That gift of love invites a response.*

*We believe that grace is the gift of God, freely given to us so that we will become the children of God. In baptism we receive the gift of grace and we become part of God's family. We are born into new life Christ and we receive the gift of the Spirit.*

- *How do you listen to God?*
- *How can you tell others about God's love?*
- *How are you part of God's family?*

### Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

**The importance of a name:**

*When we are baptized, the first question the priest asks your parents is "What name have you given your child?"*

*Your name is very important; it tells everyone you belong to your family. When you are baptized, you become a member of God's family. In the gospel, we heard the story of how John the Baptist got his name. We are going to say a blessing to remind us of our baptism.*

Fill the small bowls with water and let the children come (one at a time/bowl) to the table to dip one finger in the bowl and bless themselves with the Sign of the Cross. If they can't do it themselves, dip your finger in the water and make a cross on their forehead and say "*In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*"

Say: *Each time we bless ourselves with the holy water, we are reminded that we are a child of God.*

Activity 2:

**God calls us each by name:**

Have the children stand in a circle, holding hands and move in a circle around a single player in the center as everyone sings to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell":

*God calls us each by name.*

*God calls us each by name.*

*To bring Good News to all the world,*

*God calls us each by name.*

Then the circle stops, and the child in the center calls one person by saying: "*God calls (name)*" That child joins the one in the center, holding hands and the circle moves and sings again. Play continues as time permits. The last time say: "*God calls everyone!*" and everyone comes to the center of the circle and holds hands and they jump and shout: "*Praise Jesus, Praise Jesus!*"

Complete the weekly bulletin as a group-let the children color them if there is extra time

**Closing Prayer**

(Children respond: "I Believe!")

Ask: *Do you believe in God, who calls us each by name?*

*Do you believe in Jesus, who was baptized by John?*

*Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who is our gift from God in baptism?*

**Sending Forth**

Say: *By our baptism we are members of God's family, when we go back to church we can say a quiet prayer and thank God for his love.*

**Lining Up/Closing Song**

Play "*All Things Bright and Beautiful*" track 16 from Bible Songs for Kids Vol 2 while children put away any materials and lineup. Hand out weekly bulletins. Remind them it is important that they return to their family quietly so that we may all listen and pray together in church.