

Focus: We are blessed by the Holy Spirit

Materials:

Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
CD-America's 25 Favorite Praise and Worship
Bible: Beginner's Bible
Blue tape and dove props for skit
Red/green cards

Gathering (have children sit on the floor-“Criss-Cross Applesauce”)

Say: Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about the wise men coming to visit the baby Jesus and how we can bring God's light to others. This week we are going to talk about when Jesus was baptized and how the Holy Spirit blesses us all.

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.
Dear God, thank you for sharing your life with us at Baptism.
Help us to always live as your children.
In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.
Amen.*

Song/Movement

This Little Light of Mine, track: 15, from America's 25 Favorite Praise and Worship

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.

This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine.
This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine.

Hide it under a bushel - NO!
I'm gonna let it shine.
Hide it under a bushel - NO!
I'm gonna let it shine, Let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine.

Don't let Satan blow it out.
I'm gonna let it shine.
Don't let Satan blow it out.
I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine.

Let it shine til Jesus comes.
I'm gonna let it shine.
Let it shine til Jesus comes.
I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine,
let it shine, let it shine.

Memory Verse

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

You are my Son

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

Say: *This is the first time God the Father in heaven tells the people of Israel that Jesus is special. Jesus is special because he is God's Son. We are special because we are the children of God by our baptism. Our baptism connects us to Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

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. 310-315, *In the Jordan River*

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

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

Discussion Starters:

- *How is Jesus baptized?*
- *Why does John baptize Jesus?*
- *What happens when Jesus is baptized?*

Reflection on Reading:

Today the Church celebrates the Baptism of the Lord. The baptism of Jesus shows his that is a human person, just like us!. We hear about how God took human form throughout the Christmas season. During Advent you might have heard a song about “Emmanuel”. This song is about waiting for the coming of God. Emmanuel means “God with us”. He’s no longer just in heaven, Jesus came to be with us always.

The celebration of the baptism of Jesus marks the end of the Christmas season. In the Bible we hear about Jesus’ birth, a short story about when he was lost in the temple as a child, the wise men’s visit and then his baptism. We don’t have much information about his life growing up, but we do have many stories about Jesus after his baptism. After Jesus is baptized, he begins telling the people about the love and grace of God the Father. Today’s gospel helps us to remember that God loves us because we are his children and not because of anything we have done or not done. God loves us first and everything we do is because we want to show our love for him.

In today’s Gospel story, Luke tells the story of the baptism of Jesus. Jesus comes to John the Baptist to be baptized. John questions Jesus at first because doesn’t understand . Jesus tells John to baptize him in order to complete what he has come to do. When Jesus comes up from the water, the heavens open and Jesus is revealed as God’s Son, the loved one of God.

Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

Act It Out!

Today's Gospel story shows us how important Jesus thought baptism is. We receive the power of the Holy Spirit when we are baptized. We are blessed in the name of The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We remember our baptism every time when make the Sign of the Cross. --Show them and have them mirror you-- When we enter church we bless ourselves with the holy water to remind us that we are children of God.

Can anyone remember seeing a baptism in church? What do you think it would be like to have been baptized in the Jordan River?

Discussion: (Accept all answers and reflect back. It is important that the children are allowed to use their own words to express the exchange between John the Baptist and Jesus rather than repeat back quotes from the passage.)

Close your eyes and imagine that you were there at the edge of the Jordan River the day that Jesus was baptized. (Pause and allow the children time to think).

- *What sounds do you hear? (people talking, water splashing, birds singing, etc.)*
- *What did John the Baptist say to Jesus?*
- *What did Jesus say to John?*
- *Describe what you saw when Jesus was baptized. Tell us what you heard.*

Let's act out the Baptism of Jesus.

Use the blue tape to mark out the "River"

(Select children both boys and girls to act the parts of Jesus, John, God's voice, the dove (have them hold cut out to show dove) and the people who had gathered to be baptized. Guide the children as needed to make up the dialogue.)

Activity 2:

This gospel story tells us about the three parts of the Holy Trinity. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When we are baptized we are blessed with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit helps us make good choices.

Red Light-Green Light

(Use the colored paper squares) Have children raise Red for a bad idea (STOP), Green for a good idea (GO). These are just a few examples. Please make up some more of your own. (Can also use Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down)

- You see a friend crying so you just walk right by.
- You hear your parents talking so you wait patiently before asking a question.
- It is very late and you are tired, so you cry loudly and complain about everything.
- You don't really like peas, but you eat two more bites for mom.
- Time for bed, so you stomp your feet and say, "NO!"
- It is morning and everyone is waking up. You still feel tired, but you give a big smile and a hug good morning to your mom and dad.
- You give your unused toys to the homeless shelter
- A friend asks to play with your new game and you won't share.
- You help your mom and dad deliver food to the food bank
- A child at the playground makes a mistake and you make fun of them.

- There is a new kid at school and you ask him to play with you on the playground.
- You throw a temper tantrum when you don't get what you want
- Before you go home from a play date you help clean up
- Listen to your parent when they tell you it's time to clean up your room
- You don't pay attention at the grocery store and you hit someone with a shopping cart
- You run or skate around inside a store
- Visit someone in a nursing home
- Make a card for a sick friend
- You get mad and hit your brother or sister
- You help a friend who is hurt on the playground
- Join with others to pick up trash in the community.

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 sent Jesus to open our hearts and give light to the world?*
Do you believe in Jesus, who is the Servant of God, the beloved Son with whom God is very pleased?
Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us be good servants of God?

Sending Forth

Say: *Remember to rely on the Holy Spirit to help you make good choices this week.*

Lining Up/Closing Song

Play "*I Have Decided to Follow Jesus*" track 9 from America's 25 Favorite Praise and Worship 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.