

**Jesus' Baptism**

(based on Mark 1:1-15)

John led an unusual life. He lived out in the wilderness and wore clothes made from camel's hair. When he felt hungry, he ate locusts and wild honey.

John didn't mind. He was a prophet from God. So every day, he went down to the River Jordan to pass on God's messages.

"Turn to God!" John shouted. "Change your lives. Come and be baptized!"

The word went out that a prophet from God was teaching at the river.

Many people came out into the wilderness to hear John. One by one, they decided to turn back to God and change their lives. And one by one, they waded out into the water of the Jordan River and stood before John. John said a prayer and gently dipped each person under the water.

John knew that someone very special was coming. He wanted to help the people get ready.

"Turn to God!" John called. "Get ready for the one who is coming to show us God's love and God's way. Come into the water and I will baptize you."

Then, one day, Jesus came to the river where John was baptizing.

Jesus walked out into the water and stood before John. Once again, John said a prayer, helped Jesus dip under the water, and lifted Jesus up again.

As Jesus came out of the water, something amazing happened. The heavens opened up and the Holy Spirit came down on him like a dove.

Then Jesus heard a voice that echoed all around, "You are my beloved Son," God said. "I am so pleased with you."

After this, Jesus went off to a quiet place to get ready to tell people about God's love. It was going to be a huge job. But Jesus knew God would be with him every step of the way.



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story together—imagine and wonder.
- Baptism is a sign of new life in Christ. Talk together about baptism. Talk about their baptisms. Perhaps they were baptized as infants, a sign that God acts on our behalf before we can respond. If they haven't been baptized, let them know that they will have an opportunity for this in the future. If you have been baptized, tell them if you were baptized as an infant, at confirmation, or as an adult.



Responding to God's Grace

- Symbols guessing game: What bird is a symbol of the Holy Spirit and peace? Answer: the dove.
- Do a search for origami doves. Make one or an entire flock. Display them as a reminder of the Holy Spirit.
- Look at the symbols found in the Presbyterian seal at bit.ly/PresbyterianSealSymbols. Find the descending dove and the baptismal font in the seal. Note: A *baptismal font* is the bowl holding the water used for baptism.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Watch the YouTube video "I Was There to Hear Your Borning Cry" (bit.ly/BorningCrySong, 3:00). Play again and sing along.
- Pray this prayer:

God, we thank you for making us part of your family. We give you thanks for baptism as a sign of our welcome, and we pray you will guide us to fulfill our baptismal vows. Amen.

Note: bit.ly web addresses are case sensitive.