

Jesus Was Baptized

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:1-11; Luke 3:21-22;
John 1:19-34

MAIN POINT: John baptized Jesus.

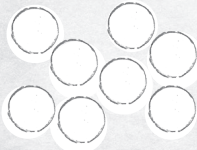
KEY PASSAGE: 1 Timothy 1:15

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What makes Jesus different? Jesus is God's One and Only Son.

SMALL GROUP OPENING

(15-20 MINUTES)

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LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY

(10-15 MINUTES)

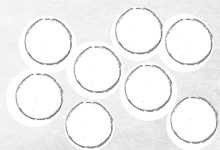
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SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

(20-25 MINUTES)

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Leader BIBLE STUDY

Zechariah's son, John, grew up in the wilderness. John's ministry began when God's word came to him, and he began preaching near the Jordan River. John worked to get the people ready for the coming of Jesus, fulfilling the Old Testament prophecy, "A voice of one crying out: Prepare the way of the Lord in the wilderness" (Isa. 40:3).

John called the people to repent of their sins, and he baptized them in the Jordan River. John also instructed the people on right living. (See Luke 3:10-14.) Some of the people suspected that John might be the Messiah, but John insisted, "One is coming who is more powerful than I" (Luke 3:16).

Jesus came from Galilee to be baptized by John at the Jordan River. Wait a second. John was calling people to a baptism of repentance. We know Jesus never sinned (see Heb. 4:15; 2 Cor. 5:21), so why did Jesus come to be baptized? John was right when he said, “I need to be baptized by You, and yet You come to me?” (Matt. 3:14).

Commentators’ ideas vary about why Jesus was baptized. Perhaps He was affirming John’s work. Maybe He was identifying with sinners or showing them how they would be saved—through His death, burial, and resurrection. Jesus answered John, “Allow it for now, because this is the way for us to fulfill all righteousness” (Matt. 3:15).

As you teach, allow time for preschoolers to ask questions. Emphasize that baptism is not what saves us; baptism is a way we show that we have been saved. Baptism reminds us that when we trust in Jesus, we die to sin and come into a new way of life—a life lived for Jesus. (See Rom. 6:3-4.)



The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use puppets:** Create craft stick puppets using cutouts of a stick figure, John the Baptist, a crowd of people, Jesus, and a dove. You may also allow older preschoolers to hold the puppets and bring them forward at the right time.
- **Use another voice:** Before the session, enlist someone to record the words spoken by the voice from heaven and play them at the appropriate time. You may also invite an off stage voice to speak the words.

Jesus Was Baptized

Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:1-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:19-34

John the Baptist lived in the wilderness—far away from the city. **His clothes were made out of camel’s hair, and his belt was made of leather.** When John was hungry, **he ate locusts and wild honey.**

John began telling the people around him, “Repent and be baptized! God’s kingdom is coming. It is almost here!”

People wondered about John. **“Who are you?” they asked.**

“I am not the Messiah,” John said.

“Who are you, then?” they asked.

Many years before John lived, Isaiah the prophet had said, “There is someone shouting in the wilderness. He says, ‘Get ready for the Lord; make way for Him!’” John was the man Isaiah had talked about! John was born with a very important job. **He was supposed to get people ready for Jesus, the Messiah God promised.**

People listened to John, and they started to repent; they turned away from their sins and asked God to forgive them. Then John baptized them in the Jordan River.

John told them, “Someone more powerful than I will come after me. I am not good enough to even untie His sandals.”

John also said, “I baptize you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

At this time, **Jesus** was in the land of Galilee. He **went to see John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Jesus asked John to baptize Him.**

John was surprised. He didn't think he should baptize Jesus.

John said, "I need You to baptize me. Why do you want me to baptize you?" John only baptized people who were sorry for their sins. Jesus never sinned!

Jesus said, "Let me be baptized. God says this is the right thing to do."

So John baptized Jesus. When Jesus came up from the water, the sky suddenly opened. Jesus saw God's Spirit coming down on Him. The Spirit was like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven. "This is My Son," the voice said. "I love Him, and I am very happy with Him!"

Christ Connection: Jesus never did anything wrong, but He was baptized like sinners are baptized. Baptism reminds us that Jesus died and came back to life. People who know and love Jesus should be baptized too.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD'S WORD?
GET
MORE!**

Invite preschoolers to check out this week's devotionals to discover that Jesus never sinned, but He was baptized like sinners are baptized. Sinners are baptized to show we trust that Jesus is God's Son, our Savior. (Acts 8:37) Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: Jesus Was Baptized

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:1-11; Luke 3:21-22;
John 1:19-34

MAIN POINT: John baptized Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE: 1 Timothy 1:15

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What makes Jesus different? Jesus is God's One and Only Son.

Welcome time

- "What Makes Jesus Different" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the unit theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- "Finish the Dove" activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Help a preschooler trace his or her hand to complete the dove.

SAY • In today's Bible story, God's Spirit came down on Jesus like a dove and a voice from heaven said, "This is My Son. I love Him, and I am very happy with Him!" Listen to our Bible story to hear what happened just before then.

Play with a parachute



- parachute or large bedsheet

Guide children to sit in a circle around a parachute or large bedsheet. Instruct children to hold the edge of the parachute with both hands. Lead children to raise the parachute up and down several times. Call out a characteristic of a child or multiple children (wearing a red

shirt, black hair, wearing glasses) and tell the children who fit that description to go under the parachute and come out the other side. Play until each child has a turn to go under the parachute.

SAY • Today's Bible story is about baptism. When people are baptized, they go underwater and then come back up, sort of like how you went under the parachute and came back out. People are baptized to show that they have turned from their sin and decided to follow Jesus with their life. Listen to today's Bible story to hear more about baptism.

Paint beehives

Print a "Beehive" printable on heavyweight paper for each preschooler. Wrap bubble wrap around rolling pins and secure the bubble wrap with strong tape. Pour washable yellow paint onto a large foam plate. Help the preschoolers roll their bubble wrap through the paint. Warn them to press lightly so they do not pop the bubbles. Assist preschoolers as they roll the paint over their beehive.

SAY • John the Baptist lived in the wilderness, where he ate locusts and wild honey. God gave John the Baptist an important job. He got people ready for Jesus, the Messiah God promised. Listen to today's Bible story to find out how John got people ready for Jesus.

- "Beehive" printable, 1 per child
- heavyweight paper
- rolling pins
- bubble wrap
- packing tape
- washable yellow paint
- foam plate
- smocks

Transition to Bible study

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Instruct the preschoolers to flap their arms like a bird and fly to large group.

- countdown video (optional)

Large Group LEADER

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Introduce the Bible story

- opaque bag
- items representing water (cup, cooking pot, item of clothing, plant or garden tool, water bottle, and so forth)

Place objects that represent uses for water in an opaque bag. Invite children to name different ways we use water. Present objects as they relate to a preschooler's answer.

SAY • God gave us water for all sorts of things: drinking, cooking, washing, tending gardens, exercising, and more. Today we will hear about a very special use for water: baptizing. Has anyone heard of baptism before? [*Invite responses. Gently clarify any misunderstanding.*]

Watch or tell the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- "Jesus Was Baptized" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Place a bookmark at John 1 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • Today's Bible story is found in all four gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John! The gospels tell us about Jesus' time on earth. The word *gospel* means good news. Jesus coming to earth to save sinners is the best news ever!

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling helps. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

Talk about the Bible story

SAY • John the Baptist’s job was to get people ready for Jesus. John was baptizing people in the Jordan River when Jesus came to be baptized. Jesus never sinned, but **John baptized Jesus** because God said it was right.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

1. What did John the Baptist tell people to do? (*repent and be baptized*)
2. Who baptized Jesus? (*John the Baptist*)
3. Why did Jesus get baptized? (*God said it was the right thing to do.*)
4. Whose Spirit came down on Jesus like a dove when He came out of the water? (*God’s*)
5. What did the voice say about Jesus? (*This is My Son. I love Him, and I am very happy with Him!*)

• Main Point Poster
• Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

Learn the big picture question

SAY • John the Baptist did not think that he should baptize Jesus. He knew that Jesus was different from all other people. ***What makes Jesus different? Jesus is God’s One and Only Son.*** John knew Jesus was God’s Son.

• Big Picture Question Poster

Practice the key passage

Open your Bible to 1 Timothy 1:15. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song, “Into the World.”

SAY • Our key passage tells us that Jesus never did anything wrong, but He was baptized like the sinners He came to save. Baptism reminds us that Jesus died and came back to life to rescue people from their sin.

• Key Passage Poster
• “Into the World” song

Transition to small groups

Small Group ACTIVITIES

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• beanbag

Play “repent” hot potato

Invite preschoolers to sit on the floor in a circle. Give a preschooler a beanbag. Play music and invite her to pass the beanbag to the child on her left. That child will pass the beanbag to the child on his left and so forth. Explain that when you stop the music and shout “repent,” whoever has the beanbag must start passing it in the opposite direction before the music begins again. Play as time allows.

SAY • John told people to repent and be baptized. When people repent, they turn away from their sin and start going the opposite direction by obeying God. People are baptized once they repent of sin and trust in Jesus. **John baptized Jesus.** Jesus never did anything wrong, but He was baptized like sinners are baptized. Baptism reminds us that Jesus died and came back to life.

• guest (optional)

Tip: Leave a note for parents and other children's leaders telling them where you are going and when you will return.

Visit the baptistry

Take preschoolers to visit where people are baptized in your church. Get permission to bring your class to the baptistry beforehand and ensure it is not in use. Consider asking a church leader to meet your group at the baptistry to explain

the meaning of baptism and your church's procedure.

Emphasize that baptism is not what saves us; baptism is a way we show that we have been saved.

SAY • People who know and love Jesus should be baptized.

Baptism does not save a person from sin. Only Jesus can do that! But baptism shows the world that a person is trusting in Jesus to save him. People can be baptized in a river, a swimming pool, a pond, a lake, a tub, or a baptistry like ours. **John baptized Jesus** in the Jordan River. Baptism reminds us that Jesus died and came back to life.

Wash items

Lay a towel on a table. Fill a plastic tub with a few inches of water and place it on the towel. Lay some towels on the floor to prevent slipping.

Provide plastic cups, plates, and bowls for the preschoolers to rinse in a small tub of water. While a child rinses an item, remind her that water is often used for making things clean.

SAY • We use water to make things clean. When people turn from sin and trust in Jesus, we say Jesus has cleansed them from their sin. That does not mean that Jesus washed them with water on the outside, but that Jesus has forgiven their sin on the inside. Baptism shows on the outside what Jesus has done on the inside. **John baptized Jesus** even though He never sinned. Baptism reminds us that Jesus died and came back to life.

- towels
- plastic tub
- plastic cups
- plastic plates
- plastic bowls
- small washcloths

Look at books about bugs

Gather picture books about bugs and insects for

- books about insects
- electronic device (optional)

preschoolers to browse. Consider using an electronic device to show preschoolers videos of locusts. Be mindful of ads and images online that may be inappropriate for church. Remind preschoolers that John the Baptist lived in the wilderness and ate locusts.

SAY • Do you think you would like to eat bugs? Yuck! When John the Baptist was hungry, he ate locusts and wild honey. God gave John a special job. **John baptized Jesus.** Jesus never did anything wrong, but He was baptized like sinners are baptized. Baptism reminds us that Jesus died and came back to life.

Lace J's

- heavyweight paper
- marker
- scissors
- hole punch
- clean shoelaces

Draw a *J* on a piece of heavyweight paper and cut out the letter. Use the first *J* as a template to make several more *J*'s. Use a hole punch to punch holes along the length of the letters. Invite a preschooler to use a shoelace to lace along the letter. As preschoolers work, remind them that both Jesus and John's names begin with a *J*.

SAY • John told people, "Someone more powerful than I will come after me. I am not good enough to even untie His sandals." John was talking about Jesus. **John baptized Jesus** even though He never did anything wrong. Baptism reminds us that Jesus died and came back to life. People who know and love Jesus should be baptized too.

Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

Serve honey-flavored O-shaped or honeycomb-shaped cereal for snack. Talk about how John the Baptist lived in the wilderness. When he was hungry, he ate locusts and wild honey. Remind preschoolers that John was surprised when Jesus asked John to baptize him. John only baptized people who were sorry for their sins. Jesus never sinned! ***What makes Jesus different? Jesus is God's One and Only Son.*** God's One and Only Son was baptized like sinners are baptized even though He never did anything wrong.

Transition

When a child finishes his snack, guide him to throw away any trash. He may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of a dove. Remind preschoolers that God's spirit came down on Jesus like a dove. Jesus always obeyed God and everything Jesus did pleased God. Pray for the children.

SAY • God, Jesus always obeyed You. He kept every one of Your commandments, but He took our punishment and died on the cross to rescue us. Help us to turn from our sin and follow Jesus. Amen.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

- books
- puzzles
- play dough
- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers