

Jesus, the One and Only



- Theme:** Jesus is the One and Only Begotten Son. The Baptism of the Lord, Yr. C
- Object:** Two items, one is the genuine article and the other an imitation.
- Scripture:** And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." Luke 3:22b (NIV)

It is a multi-million dollar business -- selling cheap, imitation designer hand bags, sun glasses, and wrist watches on the street corner for just a few dollars. At first glance, an imitation Rolex® wristwatch might seem like a good deal. After all, a genuine Rolex® would cost thousands of dollars and the guy on the street corner is selling them for only \$20! What's the big deal? Who will know the difference? Well, after a few weeks, the imitation Rolex® no longer keeps time. Oh well, it still looks good, you can wear it as a bracelet. But soon then the finish begins to rub off and it isn't very pretty. Suddenly, what seemed like a good deal no longer seems like such a good deal after all!

Buying a cheap imitation wristwatch might not be a great loss. After all, it only cost \$20. But when it comes to your relationship with God, it is important to put your faith in the genuine article. There is a lot more at stake than \$20. There are a lot of false teachers who claim to know the way to heaven, but Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

When John the Baptist was preaching and baptizing, many people began to wonder if he might be the promised Messiah. John set them straight right away! "I baptize you with water," he said. "But one is coming whose sandal straps I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

As John was baptizing the crowds, Jesus himself came to John to be baptized. As Jesus was praying, the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit, descended on him like a dove. A voice from heaven said, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." It was the voice of God, the Father, announcing for all to know, "This is Jesus, my One and Only Son."

People came to John to confess their sins and to repent. Jesus didn't have any sin to confess and had no need to repent. So, why did he come to John to be baptized? He came to John to be baptized to set an example for us. Why do we need to be baptized? To follow his example and to tell the world that we have put our faith and trust in Jesus, the One and Only.

Father, help us to follow the example of Jesus in everything we do. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

FOLLOW MY EXAMPLE: Let the children take turns in leading the group to follow their example—such as hopping or skipping around the room, crawling under the pews, or singing a song.

SIMON SAYS: Choose a leader and play SIMON SAYS to listen carefully to what SIMON says to do, but if SIMON doesn't say to do it, then children will stand still until the next command. Choose different leaders unless the teacher leads the game.

CUT OUT WHAT I DO: Give the children paper and scissors and let them cut as the leader cuts—one snip at a time in following their "example". See if children all come out with the same cut out at the end. Let others have a turn leading the cutting example as time allows.

DRAW WHAT I DRAW: Have one child at a time go to the chalkboard and draw a line to be a part of a picture. The other classmates will try to draw the "example" on a piece of paper. Each child will have a turn adding something to the drawing. When everyone has had a turn, let the children show their drawing and see how closely it matches the drawing on the board.

BIBLE DISPLAY: Give each of the children a piece of black or brown construction paper and a sheet of plain white paper. Draw the shape of an open Bible on the colored and cut it out. Draw and cut out the same shape, except slightly smaller on the white sheet of paper and glue it to the black sheet. On the white sheet, the children will write, JESUS IS THE ONE AND ONLY. Display the art work on the classroom wall.

LETTER HUNT: Hide letters around the room to spell out JESUS IS THE ONE AND ONLY. Let children find the letters and then lay the letters on the classroom table in the correct order and then tape the letters onto a large piece of poster board.

BIBLE VERSE ART: Let the children draw the shape of a cloud on a piece of poster board and glue some cotton around the edges. Write today's Bible verse on the cloud and let them take it home to hang on the wall in their room.

IMITATION OR REAL: Bring some "play money" to class and let the children glue or tape the play money to a piece of construction paper. Write on the construction paper REAL OR IMITATION? DON'T BE FOOLED. JESUS IS THE REAL THING!

GIANT MONEY: Provide a piece of green construction paper to each child and cut in half to make the paper look like money. Let children draw on their pretend "money" to look like a dollar bill. Write around the edges and in the middle, etc... FAITH IN GOD, GOD IS REAL, "I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE," etc.

New Beginnings



Theme: Jesus' baptism marked the beginning of his ministry. Our baptism marks the beginning of our new life in Jesus. 1st Sunday after Epiphany

Object: None is required, but you could use a calendar.

Scripture: When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." Luke 3:21-22 (NIV)

This is an exciting time. It is the beginning of a brand new year. Some people like to make New Year's resolutions or promises to themselves about what they plan to accomplish in the new year. The number one resolution that people make is, "I am going to lose weight." I don't think too many people succeed, since it seems to be the number one resolution year after year. I know that it usually makes my top ten list of things I would like to accomplish in the new year.

Even if you don't make any New Year's resolutions, this is an exciting time. It is a time that we can forget our past mistakes and look forward to new opportunities that lie ahead of us. It is a time of new beginnings.

Jesus experienced times of new beginnings in his life too. One of those times was when he was baptized. There were a couple of very important things that happened when Jesus was baptized. First of all, the Bible tells us that the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove and landed upon him. The second thing was that God spoke and said, "You are my Son. I love you and I am well-pleased with you."

This event marked the beginning of Jesus' ministry here on earth. Up until that time, he had not performed any miracles, but with God's stamp of approval and with the spirit of God upon him, Jesus began to perform great miracles. From this new beginning, many people began to understand that Jesus was truly the Son of God and they began to follow him.

Our own baptism represents a new beginning for us as well. When we are baptized, it shows the world that just as Jesus rose from the dead through the glory of God the Father, we also live a new life in him. (Romans 6:4) God may not always be well-pleased with us, but I think that He looks down with an approving smile when he sees us trying to walk with Jesus.

New beginnings -- God gives us opportunities for new beginnings. Let us make the most of them as we live a new life in Christ through the power of his Holy Spirit.

Dear Father, thank you for new beginnings. Help us to make the most of them -- not through our own strength -- but through the power of the Holy Spirit that dwells within us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Interactive Group Activities
by Carol Williams & Charles Kirkpatrick

Sermon Title: "New Beginnings"

Scripture Reading: Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

HIDE AND SEEK FAMILY: Children will scatter and hide, except one person. As the other team players are found, they are "added to the Family" and will hold hands as they SEEK others for their family. Continue to SEEK until everyone is found and holding hands as a FAMILY.

FOLLOW LEADER: When people want a new beginning with God's family, they FOLLOW JESUS! Let children take turns being the LEADER, and everyone follow the leader around a designated area. Encourage children to go different ways and places and to do various motions for the "family" to follow!

SYMBOLS CIRCLE: Have the children form a large circle. Pass a bag around containing objects that have a "logo" or a "symbol" for something, such as a T shirt or cap with a logo that represents a team or a product. Let children know that Baptism is a SYMBOL that lets other people know that we are followers of Christ and have asked Jesus into our hearts. "Baptism" is a SYMBOL that we are in God's family!

SIGNS OF NEW LIFE CRAFT: Using a paper plate that is divided into several segments, draw pictures or use stickers in each section to signify new beginnings: butterflies, babies, kittens, calves, baptism, etc. Attach a ribbon to hang the plate on a door or wall.

CALENDAR BEGINNINGS: Have a calendar available for each children or a print out from the computer for kids to decorate and draw little pictures or to have stickers to place on their calendars of new beginnings that THEY would like to start.... prayer, Bible reading, more faithful in church attendance, sharing with others, smile stickers, etc.

"LOOK FORWARD" GAME: Have the children line up against the wall and facing the wall. The teacher will say something which represents a MISTAKE that children might make in their lives. After the teacher says each thing, one child will turn around and say, "JESUS SAID TO FORGET THE MISTAKES AND LOOK FORWARD TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES." The teacher will continue until all of the children are facing the front.

HEAVEN AND DOVE ART: Have the children draw a cloud formation and glue on a little bit of cotton for effect. They will then draw a dove coming down to earth and write the words (coming from the clouds), "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased. Luke 3:21-22. If the teacher could find little feathers from a craft store, that could be used in place of the dove.

DOVE NAME TAGS: Have the children cut out a traced dove that the teacher will supply. The children will decorate the dove and write their name on the dove and pin or tape to their shirt.

HAND PRINT WREATH: Each child can be given a large white sheet of paper. Children will use paints or finger paints to color their hands and then children can place their hand prints in a circular pattern to form a "wreath". Cut a small hole in the middle of the hand prints where the heel of the hands all meet. Add a ribbon bow at the top! Children can write, NEW BEGINNING, or NEW LIFE IN CHRIST, etc, at the top of the wreath if desired.

BAPTISM WORD FIND: The teacher can hide words from today's lesson around a designated area for the children to find, discuss each word and then tape to a blue poster board, representing the water of baptism.

NEW LIFE ACROSTIC: On the blue poster board, the teacher can write NEW LIFE down the left side of the board and let children suggest words for each letter, that would explain our lesson today and to make the lesson a little more clearer for the children.

SING A SONG: Let children divide into small groups and make their own music tunes for part of today's Bible verse. Then each group can share their song with the words that they have chosen. Children can make up their own tunes or put a few words to the tune of a song that they already know.