

BAPTISM OF THE LORD

YEAR C

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

God of heaven and earth,
when Jesus was baptized
in the River Jordan,
you sent the Holy Spirit
upon him to show the world
that he was your Son.
Send us the Holy Spirit also,
that we may be the messengers
of your Good News.
We ask you this
through Christ our Lord.

FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

The first reading describes the mission of the servant who is chosen by God to bring justice and truth to the world and to make God known to the people. At his baptism Jesus is anointed with the Spirit. Coupled with our first reading, the Baptism of the Lord also reveals Jesus as the servant described in Isaiah. He is anointed for mission. His mission is to bring justice, to be a light to the nations, to be a healer and a liberator. In this liturgy, the Church holds before us the power and the challenge of our own baptism: we are children of God, anointed with the Spirit, and the mission of Jesus is our mission.

FIRST READING: *Isaiah 42:1, 6-7*

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Our God says,

“This is my servant, my chosen one.
I give him my strength and my spirit
to bring justice to all the people.
And I say to him,

‘I, your God, have called you.
I have taken you by your hand.
I have sent you
as my covenant to the people,
as a light for the world.
I have sent you
to open the eyes of the blind,
to free those in prison,
and to give light to those who live in darkness.’ ”

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSE: *Psalm 146*

RESPONSE:



I praise you, O God, for your faith - ful love. I



praise you, O God, for all that you do.

VERSES: [repeat by singing or clapping rhythm] to Response



1. You free the op-pressed and save the poor.
2. The hun - gry are fed, the blind can see.
3. ♯ Hap - py are all who hope in you.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

A voice from heav-en said, "This is my be-lov-ed Son."
Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-lu-
ia. Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-lu-ia. Al-le-lu-ia.

GOSPEL: *Luke 3:15-16, 21-22*

A reading from the Gospel of Luke.

When John the Baptist was baptizing at the Jordan River, all the people were filled with excitement, and they wondered if he might be the Messiah.

But John said to them,

"I am baptizing you in water, but someone is coming later who is mightier than I am. I am not even worthy to untie his sandal straps. He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit."

Then, after all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized.

While he was praying, the Holy Spirit came to him in the form of a dove, and a voice from heaven said,

"You are my beloved Son with whom I am very pleased."

The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

In reflecting on the Baptism of the Lord with children, we encounter a particular difficulty. The Baptism of Jesus, and indeed the norm in the early church, was an adult experience. While the essential truth of gratuitous grace was certainly recognized, baptism was intimately linked with conversion and a life of service. The Baptism of Jesus is the inauguration of his public life, a life of service. Our baptism, like that of Jesus, calls us to the service described in our reading from Isaiah. This connection is more difficult to see and reflect on in light of infant baptism, which is the case of most of the children with whom we are ministering. And so, we hope in this reflection to plant a seed of this truth which the children will gradually come to understand and live more fully.

After the Gospel, ask the children to recall what they heard. Help them to recall especially "water," "Spirit," "You are my Son." Ask them if they have been present for a baptism or if their parents have told them about their own baptism. Help them to recall what happens at a Christian baptism. Draw from them comments about the following:

1) Water, 2) Spirit ("I baptize you in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit."), 3) We receive the Holy Spirit at our baptism, as Jesus did, 4) We are sons and daughters of God.

Ask the children if they remember what the first reading was about. You may want to read it again. Ask them if they can find things that are alike in this reading and the Baptism of Jesus: Spirit, with whom I am well pleased.

What did God ask the "servant" to do? (bring justice, heal people, free people.)

Did Jesus do these things after his baptism? Can you recall any stories about that?

God said to the servant:

"I have sent you as a light to the people."

Remind the children that we receive a lighted candle when we are baptized. Because we are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit, we are like Jesus. We can be a light for other people. We are like Jesus, we can serve other people.

How can we be a light for people? How can we help people as Jesus did? (As always, it is important that this reflect their age.)

You might conclude by asking the children to ask their parents to share with them pictures and memories of their baptism.

