

Liturgy of the Word with Children
The Baptism of the Lord, Year C
13 January, 2019
Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

Catechist Background

Other charismatic religious leaders had arisen around the time of Christ, some of them charlatans falsely claiming to be the Messiah. A sense of expectancy had arisen that the Messiah would be coming soon, but John the Baptist was quick to emphasise that he was not the one they sought.

With infant baptism being the usual experience in the Church today, we sometimes have a more difficult time linking baptism with a conversion event leading us further in to a life of service. The first reading for today's Mass reminds us that stemming from our baptism, we are called to 'open the eyes of the blind, free those in prison, and give light to those who live in darkness.'

The liturgical colour for today is white.

Setting the Scene

It may be helpful to have symbols of baptism (water, white garment, candle) as part of a centrepiece and to refer to later on.

We Say Sorry

Lord Jesus, you are mighty God and Prince of Peace, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: You are Son of God and Son of Mary, Christ have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: You came to gather us all together, Lord have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

We Pray (1)

Lord, help us to live in the way you have created us to live, so that your love can shine in all shadowy places in our world. Amen.

Gospel Intro

Remind the children who John the Baptist was and his relationship with Jesus. Some children may be unfamiliar with a baptism; explain this as well. Alternatively, ask the children to explain what they know about John the Baptist and baptism.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- Why was John baptising people? Try to draw out answers that emphasise the fact that he was trying to get others to lead better lives, to get ready for the Saviour.
- What does it feel like when you have been very, very messy—maybe with paints or dirt or a particularly messy food—and then have a bath? This clean feeling mirrors what goes on inside a person's soul in baptism.

- Perhaps some of the children can remember their own baptism, or the baptism of a brother or sister or someone in your parish; invite them to share their experiences of baptism.
- When Jesus was baptised, a voice from heaven—his Father’s voice—said ‘You are my beloved Son, with whom I am very pleased.’ How does it feel when somebody tells you they are pleased with you? How would it feel if you heard *God’s voice* say that you were *God’s* beloved child and that *God* was very pleased with you?
- What kind of things can we do that make God happy?

Response

We are invited to follow in Jesus’ footsteps and bring his love to the world around us. We are also God’s children, and when we live like Jesus, God is pleased with us. Give each child a piece of paper that represents water (perhaps with wavy lines on it, or light blue paper cut in a flowing shape), and have each child write or draw something they do that makes God happy. When they are finished, invite the children to come up individually and put their paper at the centrepiece, stating what they have written/drawn to everyone. The leader can then respond, ‘I am very pleased with you.’

We Believe

Relating to the creed what you have shared with the children, ask this series of questions and invite the children to reply, ‘I do.’

- Do you believe in God, the loving Father who sent his Son to us?
- Do you believe that Jesus Christ, Son of the Father, came to lead the way for us to live?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us to follow in Jesus’ footsteps?

We Pray (2)

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the reading by saying, ‘Jesus came to lead the way to the Father, and we trust his goodness as we pray...’

Leader: We pray that the Church may act in a true way that brings people to God.
Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray that our leaders that will be good examples of how to live well. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for all people in the world who are hurting in any way. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for us and for our families. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, help us to live out our baptism, by always choosing for goodness. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

