

**Liturgy of the Word with Children**  
**Baptism of the Lord, Year A**  
**8 January, 2023**  
**Matthew 3:13-17**

### **Catechist Background**

John the Baptist preached in the wilderness and offered baptism as a symbolic repentance. It was a way to wash away transgressions previously committed, offering people a new start. It is curious that Jesus, who had nothing to repent of, participated in this act. Matthew's Gospel is alone in explaining why this occurs: to 'do all that righteousness demands.' In accepting baptism, Jesus shows that he takes on our sinful brokenness, which will culminate with his crucifixion and death.

### **Setting the Scene**

For the activity below, you will need some of the symbols associated with baptism.

Although we have only just celebrated the birth of Christ, tell the children that we are fast-forwarding about 30 years in Jesus' life. He is now an adult. We do not know much about what happened in his early life, although with the customs of the time, he probably grew up to be an artisan like Joseph. Today's gospel reading features John the Baptist again. Ask the children what they remember hearing about John the Baptist in Advent.

### **We Say Sorry**

Leader: You invite us to follow you, Lord have mercy.

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

Leader: You are present among us in each other, Christ have mercy.

**All: Christ, have mercy.**

Leader: You are the giver of all good gifts, Lord have mercy.

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

### **Gloria**

### **We Pray (1)**

God, your only Son became one of us. Help us to be faithful to how you have made us to be, by living like Him. Amen.

### **Gospel Acclamation**

**Gospel:** Matthew 3:13-17

### **Reflecting on the Reading with Children**

- Why was John the Baptist baptising in the Jordan River?
- Why did John the Baptist think he should not baptise Jesus?
- What did the voice from heaven say? What do you think that means?

### **Response**

Jesus was baptised by John at a time of big change in his life, when he began his public ministry. We were baptised at a time of big change in our lives too,

when we officially became part of the Church, the Body of Christ, and received the Holy Spirit. If any of the children in your group can remember their baptism, or the baptism of anyone else, allow them to share what they remember.

Show some of the symbols used baptism and allow the children to help explain what they mean. For instance,

- **Water.** Water is necessary for all life to survive. In addition to drinking it, water keeps us clean. It can be very powerful in nature. In baptism it symbolises the washing away of our old sinful lives so we can have a fresh start in living our lives for Jesus.
- **White garment.** In an age before washing machines and plentiful supplies of water, white clothes were a powerful sign of newness, and new life in Christ.
- **Candle.** The flame is lit from the Easter candle, which has been dipped in the baptismal water at the Easter Vigil. It shows that Christ has made us able to see clearly and now we are now the Light of Christ, and we are to light the world with love.

Allow the children to handle the symbols as they are discussed.

Remind the children that we have been baptised into a new life just like Jesus was, even though most of us were too young to remember it. God has saved us through Jesus life, death, and resurrection, and we should live our whole lives like him.

### **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 made the world and all that is?
- Do you believe in Jesus, the Son of God, who became one of us to lead us back to heaven?
- Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who was with Jesus at his baptism and is with us even today?

### **We Pray (2)**

Again, try to relate the bidding prayers to the reading by saying, 'We know you listen to all your children and so we now pray...'

Leader: We pray for the Church. We especially pray for all those who have been baptised in the last year, that they may be full of faith. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for world leaders, that at the beginning of this new year that they may be renewed in their efforts toward a peaceful world. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for the people in our parish. We especially pray for those who are feeling a bit lonely at the beginning of this year. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: We pray for all people who do not have a home to sleep in. Lord in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

Leader: Lord, thank you for loving us. Help us to live out our baptism to make a good difference in the world around us. We make all our prayers through Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

