

## Jesus Was Baptized

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:1-11; Luke 3:21-22;

John 1:19-34

**MAIN POINT:** Jesus obeyed God by being baptized.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Timothy 1:15

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** What makes Jesus different? Jesus is fully God and fully man.

**SMALL GROUP OPENING**

(10–15 MINUTES)

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**LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY**

(25–30 MINUTES)

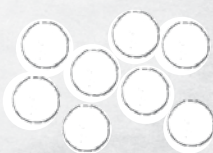
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**SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES**

(25–30 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 kids 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.)



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# The BIBLE STORY

## Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Dress like John:** Ask a small group leader to dress like John as you tell the story. He should dress in a fur robe with a leather belt and wear a beard. Provide a jar of honey for him to hold.
- **Demonstrate baptism:** At the end of the story, use a person figure in a tub of water to show how a person is baptized.

## 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. He wore camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey. **John began telling the people around him, "Repent and be baptized, for God's kingdom is almost here."**

**Some people asked John, "Who are you?"**

**John said, "I am not the Messiah."** John also said he wasn't Elijah, and he wasn't the Prophet that God had promised to send after Moses.

"Who are you, then?" the people asked.

**John said that he was the person Isaiah the prophet was talking about when he said, "There is someone shouting in the wilderness. He says, 'Prepare the way for the Lord; make His paths straight!'"**

**John** was born with a very important job. He was supposed to get people ready for Jesus, God's promised Messiah.

**People started to repent; they turned away from their sins and turned to God for forgiveness. Then John baptized them in the Jordan River.** Baptism was a picture that the people's sins had been washed away.

**John preached: "Someone more powerful than I will come after me. I am not worthy to bend down and untie His sandals." Then John said, "I baptize you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."**

By this time, Jesus was an adult. He was in Galilee, and He left to see John the Baptist at the Jordan River. **When John saw Jesus, he said, "Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"**

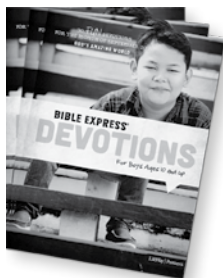
**Jesus told John that He wanted to be baptized. But John didn't think he should baptize Jesus, and he tried to stop Jesus.**

“I need You to baptize me,” John said. “Why do You want me to baptize You?” **John** was confused. He **baptized people who confessed their sins; Jesus never sinned!**

**Jesus said, “Allow Me to be baptized. God says this is right.” So John agreed, and he baptized Jesus.**

Jesus immediately came up out of the water. **Suddenly, the heavens opened for Jesus, and He saw the Holy Spirit coming down on Him. The Spirit was like a dove. And a voice came from heaven. “This is My Son,” the voice said. “I love Him, and I am very pleased with Him!”**

*Christ Connection: Jesus never sinned, but He obeyed God and was baptized like sinners are baptized. Baptism reminds us of Jesus' death and resurrection. It reminds us that when we trust in Jesus, we turn from sin and start a new life—a life lived for Jesus.*



**WANT TO  
DISCOVER  
GOD'S WORD?  
GET  
BIBLE EXPRESS!**

Invite kids 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](http://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:** Jesus obeyed God by being baptized.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 Timothy 1:15

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** What makes Jesus different? Jesus is fully God and fully man.

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## Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Ask kids to share things their parents might ask them to do.

**SAY** • Why do you choose to obey your parents? How do you feel when you obey? How do you think your parents feel?

## Activity page (5 minutes)

- “Baptism Dot-to-Dot” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete the “Baptism Dot-to-Dot” on the activity page. Encourage kids to fill in the blank to complete the sentence. (*Jesus obeyed God by being baptized by John.*)

**SAY** • I wonder why Jesus was baptized by John. Do you know? We are going to find out when we hear today’s Bible story.

## Session starter (10 minutes)

**OPTION 1:** Are you the one?

Choose one volunteer to sit in a chair with his back to the rest of the group. Put a small bird figure under the chair. Instruct the volunteer to close his eyes.



- small bird figure

Guide another player to sneak up and take the bird and hide it behind her back. Then prompt everyone to pat their laps and chant together, “The Spirit came down from above. The Spirit came down like a dove!”

Then the volunteer will turn around and try to guess who has the bird. If he is correct, he may play again. If he guesses incorrectly, the player who had the bird gets a turn to be the volunteer.

**SAY** • Today we are going to hear a Bible story about a time the Holy Spirit came down like a dove. This was a sign that Jesus is the One God promised to send.

**OPTION 2:** Uses for water

Give each kid a piece of paper and a pencil. Consider displaying a large cup of water at the center of each table. Explain that you will set a timer for four minutes. Kids should list as many uses for water as they can think of. When the timer ends, tell kids to put down their pencils.

Call on kids one at a time to read something from their list. Challenge them to name something that no one else has read yet. Continue until kids share all of their uses.

Sample answers: *drinking, preparing food, bathing, washing clothes and dishes, brushing teeth, watering yards and gardens, washing pets or cars*, and so forth.

**SAY** • Did anyone write down *baptism*? Today’s Bible story is about Jesus’ baptism. John the Baptist baptized Jesus in the Jordan River.

- paper
- pencils
- stopwatch or timer
- large cups of water (optional)

## Transition to large group

# Large Group LEADER

**SESSION TITLE:** Jesus Was Baptized

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## Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as large group time begins.

## Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire  
• backpack  
• Bible

*[Large Group Leader enters carrying a backpack and a Bible. Leader sets down the backpack and opens the Bible.]*

**LEADER** • Hello, everyone! I am so glad to see you. I want to share something really neat with you. This is my family's Bible. My parents used it, my grandparents used it, and even my great-grandparents used it! They all recorded important dates in here like births, deaths, marriages, and baptisms.

As I was looking through this, I noticed that it was exactly 55 years ago today that my grandfather was baptized! You know, today's Bible story is also about a baptism—Jesus' baptism!

## Big picture question (1 minute)

**LEADER** • You might remember that our big picture question is, *What makes Jesus different?* The Bible stories we have been hearing about the early years of

Jesus' life on earth teach us many things about who Jesus is and why He came to earth. God the Son has always existed, and when He came to earth, He took on the form of a human. Jesus didn't stop being God the Son when He came to earth. So, *what makes Jesus different? Jesus is fully God and fully man.*

## Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline or big story circle. Point to previous Bible stories as you review.

• Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

**LEADER** • Let's review what we've learned so far. Remember, all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell one big story—the story of how God saves sinners through His Son, Jesus.

First, we heard about the people who were in Jesus' family. By sending Jesus, God kept His promise to people like Abraham and David that the Savior would come into the world through their family. Jesus is God's Son, but **God chose Mary to be Jesus' mother.** Jesus was born in Bethlehem. He came into the world to save sinners. Even at a young age, Jesus knew that He had an important job to do, and He spent time at the temple. Here is today's Bible story, "Jesus Was Baptized."

## Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 3:13-17. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Jesus Was Baptized."

**LEADER** • John the Baptist had been telling everyone who would listen to get ready; the Lord was coming! As people confessed their sins, John baptized them in

• Bibles  
• "Jesus Was Baptized" video  
• Big Picture Question Poster  
• Bible Story Picture Poster



the Jordan River. But when Jesus came to John to be baptized, John didn't understand why. Jesus didn't have any sins that needed to be washed away! But Jesus knew that this was what God wanted Him to do. **Jesus obeyed God by being baptized.**

As soon as Jesus came up out of the water, God spoke from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son. I take delight in Him!" Jesus' obedience pleased God; His people's obedience pleases God too.

Baptism is a symbol of a really important message. Baptism represents what God has done for us by saving us and bringing us from death to life. It also represents turning from sin and beginning a brand-new life with God. This is why John the Baptist was confused when Jesus wanted to be baptized. Jesus had never sinned. He didn't need to turn from anything. Jesus was already living His life in a perfect relationship with God the Father. Why would Jesus want to be baptized?

Jesus was baptized so He could identify with us and set an example for us. Jesus was also baptized as a symbol of what was to come. He went into the water to represent His death and burial. He came back out of the water to represent His resurrection. [*See Rom. 6:3-11.*]

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

## Christ connection

**LEADER** • Today, when we are baptized, we are declaring this message loud and clear: "God saves us through faith in His Son who died and rose again for us." Baptism represents dying to self and sin, living for Jesus, and being party of His family—the Church.

Jesus never sinned, but He obeyed God and was baptized like sinners are baptized. Baptism reminds us of Jesus' death and resurrection. It reminds us that when we trust in Jesus, we turn from sin and start a new life—a life lived for Jesus.

### **Key passage (5 minutes)**

Show the key passage poster. Lead boys and girls to read together 1 Timothy 1:15. Then cover the poster and challenge kids to say the key passage from memory.

**LEADER** • Our Bible story today reminds us that Jesus never sinned. Only a sinless Savior could rescue people from sin. That is why Jesus came into the world. He took our sins upon Himself when He died on the cross. He took the punishment we deserve so that we could live forever with God.

Lead boys and girls to sing “This Saying.”

- Key Passage Poster
- “This Saying” song

### **Discussion starter video (4 minutes)**

**LEADER** • If you've been baptized or want to be baptized, think about why. Remember, baptism isn't how a person is saved from sin. Watch this.

Show the “Unit 19, Session 5” discussion starter video. Lead kids to talk about whether wearing all that pilot gear made the girl a true pilot. Why or why not?

Point out that pilots wear their gear not to become pilots, but to show that they have already become pilots. In a similar way, baptism doesn't save us. Baptism is a way we show that we have been saved by trusting in Jesus.

**LEADER** • **Jesus obeyed God by being baptized.** God wants us to repent and be baptized to show others that we trust in Jesus.

- “Unit 19, Session 5” discussion starter video

• “The Savior We Need”  
song

## **Sing (4 minutes)**

**LEADER** • Let’s take a moment to sing and praise God together. Sing with me.  
Sing together “The Savior We Need.”

## **Pray (2 minutes)**

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

**LEADER** • Dear God, thank You for Your Son, Jesus, who never sinned and who came into the world to save sinners. We confess that we have sinned and need to be made clean. Help us turn away from ourselves and turn to Jesus, who died in our place so that we can be forgiven. We love You. Amen.

## **Dismiss to small groups**

## The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



**God rules.** Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



**We sinned.** Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



**God provided.** Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



**Jesus gives.** Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



**We respond.** Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

# Small Group LEADER

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## Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- chalkboard or dry erase board
- marker or chalk

Show the key passage poster. Call on the girls to read the key passage together. Then call on the boys.

Remove or cover the poster. Write the first letter of each word in 1 Timothy 1:15 on a chalkboard or dry erase board. Let kids verbally complete as many words as they know. Fill in the words as kids say them. If kids master the key passage, erase several words and challenge them to recite 1 Timothy 1:15 from memory.

**SAY** • If you haven't yet memorized our key passage, keep working on it! Next week we will see if you all can say 1 Timothy 1:15 from memory.

## Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster
- large piece of paper
- marker
- tape

Hang a large piece of paper on a focal wall. Draw a Venn diagram by sketching two side-by-side circles that overlap in the middle. Label the first circle *Jesus' baptism* and the second circle *Our baptism*.

Distribute Bibles. Guide kids to find Matthew 3:13-17. Consider retelling or reviewing the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

Prompt kids to compare and contrast Jesus' baptism

with our baptism. List details that describe Jesus' baptism in the first circle. List details that describe our baptism in the second circle.

If a detail describes both Jesus' and our baptism, write it in the area where the circles overlap.

You may ask the following questions to prompt kids as they think about Jesus' baptism and our baptism:

- Who was baptized in the Bible story? (*Jesus, who never sinned*)
- What kind of people are baptized today? (*repentant sinners*)
- Where was Jesus baptized? (*in the Jordan River*)
- Where are people baptized today? (*in water, like in a baptistry*)
- Why was Jesus baptized? (*to obey God, to set an example for us*)
- Why are people baptized today? (*to follow Jesus' example, to show others that we have trusted in Jesus*)
- Who baptized Jesus? (*John*)
- Who baptizes us? (*a pastor or church leader*)
- Whose baptism is pleasing to God? (*Jesus' and ours*)

**SAY • Jesus obeyed God by being baptized.** We can follow Jesus' example by being baptized as a sign that we trust in Jesus and want to live for Him.

Remember, baptism is a way we show that we have been saved by Jesus. Baptism is not what saves us from sin; faith in Jesus saves us.

## Activity choice (10 minutes)

### OPTION 1: Baptism Q&A

Before small groups, arrange for the pastor or another church leader to visit your classroom and answer questions



Option: Tour the church's baptistry with the church leader. Ask the leader questions about the baptism process.

kids have about baptism.

Allow kids to ask their own questions, but consider addressing these questions as well:

- Why do people get baptized?
- What happens when a person is baptized?
- Who should be baptized?
- When should I be baptized?

**SAY** • Thank you, [*pastor's name*] for answering our questions today. Today we learned that **Jesus obeyed God by being baptized**. Baptism reminds us that when we trust in Jesus, we turn from sin and start a new life—a life lived for Jesus.

### OPTION 2: Paper plate dove

Give each kid a white paper plate. Guide boys and girls to follow these instructions:

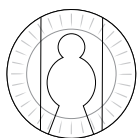
1. Cut the paper plate into thirds. The two outer strips will be the dove's wings.
2. On the center third, draw the body of a dove: a small circle head on top of a large oval body (like a snowman). Extend the bottom of the body outward to form a tail.
3. Cut out the body shape. Tape the wings to the body.
4. Use crayons or markers to add feet, a beak, and eyes.

As kids work, talk about the Bible story.

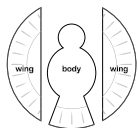
**SAY** • John the Baptist's job was to get people ready for the Messiah. God told John that he would know who the Messiah was because the Holy Spirit would come down and rest on Him. [*See John 1:33.*]

In today's Bible story, **Jesus obeyed God by being baptized**. When Jesus came out of the water, the Holy Spirit came down like a dove and rested on

- white paper plates, 1 per kid
- pencils
- scissors
- tape
- string or ribbon
- crayons or markers



1



2



3

Him. Jesus never sinned, but He obeyed God and was baptized like sinners are baptized. Baptism reminds us of Jesus' death and resurrection. It reminds us that when we trust in Jesus, we turn from sin and start a new life—a life lived for Jesus.

## Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Instruct kids to imagine someone who has never heard of baptism before. Encourage them to write how they would describe baptism and what it means.

**SAY • Jesus obeyed God by being baptized.** His baptism was an example for us, but it also pointed to what He was going to do. Jesus died on the cross for our sins. On the third day, He rose from the dead! When we are baptized, we show that we have trusted in Jesus—dying to ourselves and our sinful ways and being raised up to live a new life for Him. Let's pray.

Dear God, thank You for giving us baptism so we have a way to show the world the beauty of Your salvation. Thank You, Jesus, for identifying with us and being baptized even though You didn't have to. Most importantly, thank You for what baptism represents. You rescue us from sin and death and raise us up to new life. We love You. Amen.

As time allows, lead kids to complete the "Key Word Crossword Puzzle" on the activity page. Encourage kids to use their Bibles to match key words with the clues to fill in the puzzle. (*Across: 2. John, 3. repent, 6. Jordan River, 8. dove, 9. baptism, 10. sinned; Down: 1. Holy Spirit, 4. Lamb of God, 5. Messiah, 7. water*)

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- "Key Word Crossword Puzzle" activity page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.