

Read

Isaiah 55:1-11

Isaiah 12:2-3, 4bcd, 5-6

1 John 5:1-9

Mark 1:7-11

LIVING THE WORD

Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

January 10, 2021



REFLECTION

Today's Gospel account of the Jesus' baptism reminds us that the Christian life is about relationship. The relationship of the Trinity—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—is made visible to those who came to be baptized by John. This Trinitarian relationship is an important part of Jesus' ministry because Jesus never acts alone; it is always God, Three in One, acting through the person of Christ. Our Baptism also reminds us of this relationship because we are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Baptism is also our entrance into the Christian community. Through our Baptism, we become members of the Body of Christ. A relationship with Christ necessitates a relationship with others. As Christians we must be especially mindful about communicating this reality in a world that seems to prioritize individualism over community.

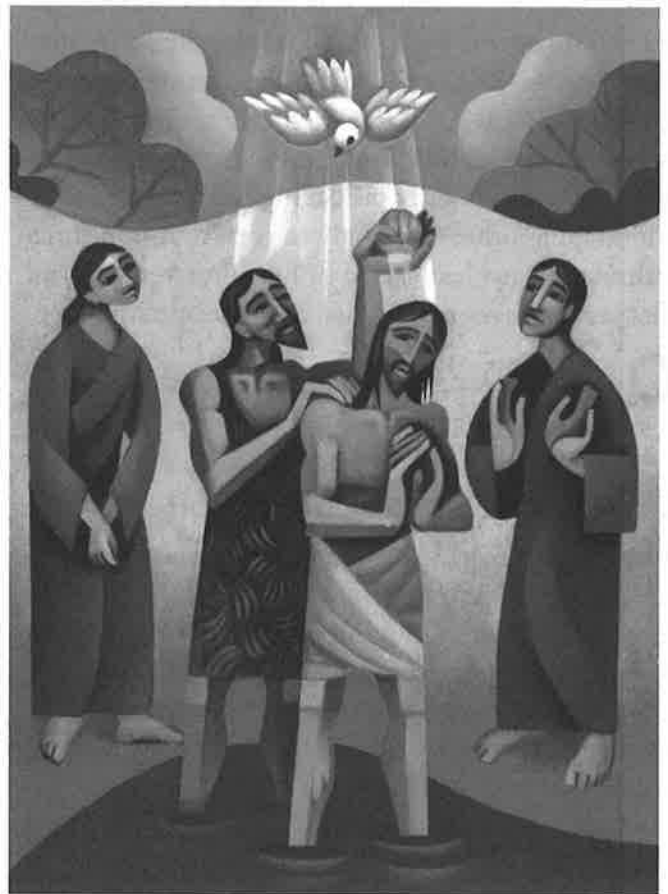
? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What does the Sacrament of Baptism mean to you?
- ❖ What role do you play as a member of the Christian community?



ACTION

Think about the relationships in your life. How do these relationships support and sustain your relationship with God? Take some time this week to intentionally cultivate one of your relationships. Grab some coffee with a friend. Visit a grandparent or other family member. Call someone you have not spoken to in a while. Thank God for these relationships and the many ways they help you grow closer to God.





January 10, 2021

FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

LECTIONARY #21B

Isaiah 55:1-11 or Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

Isaiah 12:2-3, 4bcd, 5-6 or

Psalm 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10

1 John 5:1-9 or Acts 10:34-38

Mark 1:7-11

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

Although Jesus does not need to be baptized because he is without sin and is the Son of God, he accepts John's baptism of water. It is a sign to others that Jesus' ministry is beginning and that he is, in fact, the Messiah. Today marks the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry. After this event, we see John's ministry decrease, while Jesus' ministry begins. John knows that he is only preparing the way for Jesus and helping others be ready to receive him. John's attitude toward Jesus, one of humility, reminds us that Jesus was more than just another human being.

Q FOCUS: *Jesus is revealed to the world as the Son of God.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

Today's feast marks the end of Christmas Time. As we begin Ordinary Time, we are reminded that Jesus' life was anything but ordinary. As evidenced by today's Gospel reading, Jesus is the Son of God. Over the next several weeks, we will hear about Jesus' ministry and how he called others to follow his way of love and forgiveness.

Church Teaching Connection

"Jesus shows his solidarity with us. . . . And Jesus' solidarity is not, as it were, a mere exercise of mind and will. Jesus truly immersed himself in our human condition, lived it to the end, in all things save sin, and was able to understand our weakness and frailty. For this reason he was moved to compassion, he chose to 'suffer with' men and women, to become a penitent with us. This is God's work which Jesus wanted to carry out . . . to take upon himself the sin of the world" (Pope Benedict XVI, Homily, January 13, 2013).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Mark 1:7-11

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

This is what John the Baptist proclaimed: "One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

It happened in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John. On coming up out of the water he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him. And a voice came from the

heavens, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

► Have you ever met anyone famous or someone you really look up to? How did you feel when you were in their presence?

John might seem a bit melodramatic in his proclamation about how unworthy he was in comparison to Jesus. However, the urgency he speaks with and the awe he inspires in those who hear him shows that he understands Jesus' significance. John knows that Jesus, the Son of God, will soon begin his ministry and reveal himself to those who will listen. John is trying to help others understand that Jesus is not another prophet, but the long-awaited Messiah that God has sent to save the world from sin. John reinforces this idea by claiming that he isn't even worthy to act as a servant to Jesus.

► Why was John baptizing people? (You may want to read Mark 1:1-6.) Why would he keep doing this even though he knew that the baptism Jesus would give to people would be of even greater significance?

The baptism that John gave people was a sign to help them remember their need to be cleansed from their sins, to repent and turn back to God. Water is a powerful sign. It is something we cannot live without it, but it is also dangerous and can inflict all kinds of havoc and threaten life with its potential. It is a good sign to use to help remind people to be free from the stain of sin. It is also something that was an important part of the Jewish history. We see the importance of water at creation, in the story of

Noah, in God's power over the waters as he parted the sea for Moses and the Israelites. There are also many instances of Jesus' use of water and his control over it as a created element.

John says that the baptism that Jesus gives will be done with the Holy Spirit. We see that in our own experience of Baptism as a sacrament. We are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Through this sacrament, God draws us into his very life. John could not do this, but Jesus can because he was both human and divine. He offered himself up to death for our sake so that we might rise to life along with him in his Resurrection. He bridges the gap between humanity and God. He is the way that cleanses us from our sins.

► Jesus was human and divine. Why would he need to be baptized with water by John?

Jesus did not need to be baptized. He was the Son of God and was without sin. John's baptism to help people repent from their sin and turn to God would not be necessary for Jesus. Rather, Jesus allows himself to be baptized as a sign to inaugurate his public ministry. All those gathered would have seen the heavens open, the Spirit descend, and heard God's voice. This, more than anything John could have said about Jesus, demonstrates Jesus' identity as the Son of God.

► How would you react to this event? What does this tell you about Jesus? What does it tell you about the Trinity?

God is revealed to the world in a concrete way through the Incarnation, in the person of Jesus. All of Jesus' actions are the actions of the Godhead. We cannot say that one person of the Trinity works independent of the others. Through the Sacrament of Baptism, we are introduced to the Trinity. We become adopted sons and daughters of God. We encounter the love of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We are called to live in that love and share it with others.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 110.

Our Baptism incorporates us into the Body of Christ.

God is close to each of us in the Holy Spirit and in the gift of Jesus our Savior.

We must be faithful in following Christ and living out our baptismal promises.

Act on the Word

Baptism Brings Us Closer to God

You will need to invite a recently baptized adult to speak with the teens. Read the activity ahead of time so that you can prepare the speaker. You will also need a video of a Baptism—it could be one from your parish, maybe of the guest speaker you have invited, or a Catholic one you find online. If any of the teens would like to show a video of their own Baptism, that could also be an option, just be sure to have their permission.

Begin the activity by having the young people watch the video of a Baptism. As the teens watch the video, encourage them to look for the signs and symbols of our Baptism. What do they notice? What is said? Who is there? How is the community involved? What symbols are used? Talk about the similarities and differences of the video with what we heard in today's Gospel. What is God's role in the Sacrament of Baptism?

After this discussion, then invite the newly baptized Catholic to share his or her faith story and journey to Baptism as an adult. Many of the teens

were most likely baptized as infants, so the speaker will bring a unique perspective of someone who remembers their Baptism. Some things the speaker might want to address is how they first encountered God, what led them to seek out Baptism in the Catholic Church, and their perspective on today's Gospel reading. Make sure the speaker is open to answering questions that the teens may have. Help to guide the discussion. Finish the discussion by having everyone discuss some concrete ways they can live out their Christian identity as people baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Closing Prayer

*Father in heaven,
in the waters of the River Jordan,
you made known your Son.
In these same waters,
We are reborn as your chosen adopted
sons and daughters.
May we learn to renew our Baptism daily,
so as to serve you in the image and likeness
of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity
of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.*

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.