

Read

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

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

Acts 10:34-38

Matthew 3:13-17

Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

January 11, 2026



REFLECTION

On the Second Sunday of Advent, we read that people had different motivations for seeking to be baptized by John (Mt 3:1-12). The ones who were motivated by the right reasons truly repented and wanted to turn back to God; John's baptism was a way to mark their repentance. But while Jesus was tempted, he never sinned—what business did he have being baptized? Jesus had no sins to repent of!

When the Son became incarnate and entered into humanity, he did so in part because we needed a model to follow. Jesus often did things in such a way that it was obvious to those watching him what he was doing: praying out loud to the Father, narrating what was happening during a healing, asking the disciples to collect leftover scraps as he prepared to multiply the loaves and fishes.

Jesus' baptism by John works this same way. He is showing us that repentance is a key practice for those who desire closeness with God. He also humbles himself to be served by John, who in turn recognizes his own inadequacy but serves anyway because it is what Jesus asks of him.



ACTION

Did you know that you can (and should!) repent of your own sins, but that you can *also* pray and offer up suffering in reparation for the sins of others? Our example and prayer affect more than our own relationship with God! People hear us say we are Christian, but if our actions don't match our words, then they might have doubts about their own faith. Be intentional about your actions this week. At the end of each day, spend time in prayer reflecting on how your choices did or did not give witness to your faith. Ask God to give you the grace to share his love with others.



Learn about redemptive suffering by watching this short video, "Why Do We Offer Up Suffering?"

<https://youtu.be/vMzi6KA-M54>

QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Does your conduct faithfully show others how a Catholic disciple of Jesus should act?
- ❖ Are you willing to humbly serve and be served, like John and Jesus?



January 11, 2026

FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

LECTIONARY #21A

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

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

Acts 10:34-38

Matthew 3:13-17

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

The feast of the Baptism of the Lord concludes our Christmas season. The infant Jesus who was given to us at Christmas is now ready to begin his ministry. Today's Gospel reading recounts Jesus' baptism by John, which precedes Jesus' public ministry. Jesus does not need to participate in John's baptism of repentance because he does not have any sin. However, this action signals several things: It signifies Jesus' identity as the Messiah. It demonstrates the Trinitarian nature of God. It gives us a path to follow in our own participation in baptism and the sacramental life of the Church. It shows us that we are called to live out our baptismal mission in our life as followers of Christ.

Q FOCUS: *Jesus' baptism begins his public ministry, just as our baptism begins our life of discipleship.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

The Baptism of the Lord closes out the Christmas season and tomorrow will begin the first week of Ordinary Time. Ordinary Time refers to the fact that the weeks are ordered by number, not that this season is not special. This week, the Church honors the life of St. Hilary of Poitiers on January 13. He was a bishop in France in the fourth century. During this period, a heresy called Arianism was very prevalent. It denied that Christ was fully divine. Hilary

fought against this heresy, so much so that he was sent into exile by those who supported it. He was eventually returned to his diocese in France. Because of his work to preserve the orthodox faith of the Church and his theological writings, he is considered a Doctor of the Church.

Church Teaching Connection

Jesus' baptism "was his first public manifestation after approximately 30 years of hidden life at Nazareth. Besides the Baptist, eyewitnesses of the singular event were the Baptist's disciples, some of whom then became Christ's followers (cf. Jn 1:35-40). It is both a christophany and a theophany: first of all, Jesus manifests himself as the *Christ*, a Greek translation of the Hebrew *Messiah*, which means "anointed". He was not anointed with oil as were Israel's kings and high priests, but rather with the Holy Spirit. At the same time, together with the Son of God appeared signs of the Holy Spirit and the heavenly Father" (Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus Message, January 13, 2008).

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

Matthew 3:13-17

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

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to prevent him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?" Jesus said to him in reply, "Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed him. After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened for him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom 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:

When Jesus approaches John the Baptist about being baptized, John recognizes that he does not need baptism. Because Jesus is without sin, he does not need the baptism John was offering—one that symbolized repentance from sin so that people could prepare themselves to welcome the Messiah. John sees that Jesus is, in fact, the Messiah, the one, he says, who is mightier than him and who will baptize "with the holy Spirit and fire" (Mt 3:11). The time has now come for what John had been preaching about to take place. In the Gospel accounts, the baptism of Jesus signals the beginning of his public ministry. For us too, the sacrament of baptism is the beginning of our journey of life in Christ and in the Church.

► **Even though Jesus did not need baptism, why do you think he asked John to baptize him?**

When John protests that he is not worthy to baptize Jesus, Jesus says that he must do it "to fulfill all righteousness." This statement can point to the way that Jesus fulfills what has been prophesied about the Messiah throughout the centuries. It also refers to the way that Jesus' actions follow God's plan for

accomplishing the work of salvation. Jesus, though without sin, identifies with sinners because they are the ones who are in need of salvation.

We are the ones who Jesus came to save; we are sinners in need of the salvation only God can offer. In the sacrament of baptism, God offers us this salvation through tangible symbols and the grace of his presence. Baptism washes away our sin and makes us adopted sons and daughters of God. It draws us closer to God by uniting us with Christ's death and resurrection and giving us the grace of the Holy Spirit.

► **Do you ever think about your baptism or baptisms that you have witnessed at church? What comes to mind when you think about this sacrament?**

Many of us are baptized as infants, so we might not have memories of our own baptism. But when we witness a baptism at church, it is a powerful reminder that all baptized people are members of God's family and have their own unique role in this family. Before baptism, the person to be baptized (or the infant's parents and godparents answering on his or her behalf) renounces sin and professes faith in the Trinity. These renunciations and professions illustrate the faith of the Church and outline how we are to live our life, rejecting sin and believing in God. Then the person is baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In today's Gospel reading, we see that the Trinity was also present at Jesus' baptism: Jesus himself, the "Spirit of God descending like a dove," and the voice of the Father in heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son."

► **In what ways have you seen the Father present in your life? The Son? The Holy Spirit?**

Our journey of faith begins in baptism. Throughout our lives, we are sustained by the grace of this sacrament and the grace of all the other sacraments we receive. This grace helps us to live out our baptismal faith, to reject sin and to act in a way that demonstrates our belief in God and our identity as sons and daughters of God.

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 114.

Jesus is the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation.

Jesus' baptism signals the beginning of his ministry; our baptism is the beginning of our life of discipleship.

The Trinity is present at Jesus' baptism and our baptism as well.

Act on the Word

Living My Baptismal Promises

For this activity, you will need a whiteboard and markers.

Share with the teens that at baptism, the person being baptized, or the parents and godparents of the infant, is asked a series of questions before baptism occurs. Three questions are asked about renouncing sin and three questions are asked affirming belief in God. The response "I do" is given after each question. Write the following questions on the board and leave space under each question for a list of actions that will be developed later. These questions are taken from the *Order of Baptism of Children*, 94–95:

- * "Do you renounce sin,
so as to live in the freedom of the children of God?"
- * "Do you renounce the lure of evil,
so that sin may have no mastery over you?"
- * "Do you renounce Satan,
the author and prince of sin?"
- * "Do you believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth?"
- * "Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son,
our Lord,
who was born of the Virgin Mary,

suffered death and was buried,
rose again from the dead
and is seated at the right hand of the Father?"

- * "Do you believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting?"

Give the teens a few minutes to read over the questions. Then, facilitate a large group discussion about how young people can live out these baptismal promises each day. Under each question, develop a list of practical ideas and tips for putting these into action. For example, under the second question, the teens might suggest things that would be good to stay away from or ways they can better avoid the temptation to sin. Compile a list for each question and encourage the teens to take photos of the board so that they can reflect on the suggestions during the week and apply them to their lives.

Closing Prayer

God of life,
in the waters of baptism,
you have made us your adopted children
and opened for us the gates of heaven.
Continue to guide us in the ways of your Son,
whose spirit we embrace
and whose love we celebrate as we
journey in faith.
Through Christ our Lord.
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.