

Liturgy of the Word with Children
Baptism of the Lord, Year A
11 January, 2026
Matthew 3:13-17

Catechist Background

John the Baptist preached in the wild and offered baptism as a symbolic repentance. Baptism comes from the Greek word 'baptizo' which means 'to immerse in water' and it was a practice used by Jews before Jesus as a way to wash away sins committed and mark a new start. It is curious that Jesus, who was sinless, chose to be baptised. Only Matthew's Gospel explains why: to 'do all that righteousness demands.' By being baptised, Jesus set us an example and showed that he took on our sinfulness, which led in the end to his death and resurrection.

Setting the Scene

Tell the children: although we have only just celebrated Jesus' birth, we are fast-forwarding about 30 years in Jesus' life. He is now an adult. We do not know much about his early life, but he probably trained as a carpenter like Joseph and may have trained as a rabbi (Jewish teacher). Today's Gospel reading features John the Baptist. Ask the children what they know about him from Advent. (Elizabeth's son who said that the Lord was coming, told people to turn back to God)

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

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 be faithful to you and to live like Him. Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel: Matthew 3:13-17

Reflecting on the Reading with Children

- Why was John baptising in the Jordan River? [to bring people back to God, wash away their sins (wrong things that they had chosen to do) and to start a new time in their lives];
- Why did John the Baptist think he should not baptise Jesus? [John said that he needed to be baptised by Jesus, not the other way round. He knew that Jesus was God's Son];
- What did the voice from heaven say? ['This is my beloved Son, with whom I am pleased'];
- What do you think that means?

Response

Jesus was baptised by John at the start of what we call Jesus' 'public ministry' (when Jesus taught and talked to the people around him and healed them, which resulted in him being arrested.)

When we were baptised, this is a big change in our lives too:

- Baptism is the moment when we became part of the Church and received the Holy Spirit.

Do you remember your baptism or have you been to someone else's baptism? What happened?

- Show and explain key symbols used in baptism and encourage the children to touch them.
- Ask the children what each item is and what it means when used in Baptism. For instance:

Water:

- Water is necessary for all life: we need to drink it for our bodies to work;
- It keeps us clean (and therefore helps us be healthy);
- It can be very powerful (it can drive water wheels and too much of it can destroy and kill);
- In baptism water is poured over the person's head or they are put into the water;
 - This washes away our sins, and God blesses us so we can re-start living for Jesus.

Name: *[perhaps show a name tag or a name written on a piece of card]*

- Your name is very important to you – it tells people who you are;
- When a person is baptised, their name is said aloud, so that everyone knows who they are;
- When Jesus was baptised, God's voice told everyone who Jesus was: 'This is my Son'.

White garment:

- In places/times without washing machines or much water, white clothes symbolise newness;
- For Christians, white is a sign of new life in Christ. In church white means 'Jesus is here',
 - that is why people are wrapped in a white blanket just after they have been baptised.

Baptismal Candle.

- Just after the person is baptised, the Baptismal Candle is lit from the Easter Candle;
- The lit Baptismal Candle is given to the person who has been baptised (or their godparents);
- The lit Candle reminds us that Jesus is the Light of the World,
 - the baptised person is now wrapped in Jesus so they can light the world with love too.

Remind the children that:

- we have been baptised into new life like Jesus was, even though we might not remember it;
- God has saved us through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, so we can live like Jesus.

We Believe

Relate the Creed to what you have shared with the children by asking these questions and inviting 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 today?

We Pray (2)

Again, relate the Prayer of the Faithful to the Gospel reading by saying 'God, we know you listen to all your children and so we now pray...'

Leader: We pray for the Church. We pray especially for 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 strengthened 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 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 safe home. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord, thank you for loving us. Help us to live out our baptism and shine God's light to the world. We make our prayers through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

