

LESSON 5

The Baptism of Jesus

MATTHEW 3



— BIBLE TRUTH —

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS MARKS THE BEGINNING OF HIS ROAD TO THE CROSS

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Matthew 3 from the Scriptures or read story 83, “The Baptism of Jesus,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 15 MIN

The Prophecies of John

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper and pencils
- ✓ Bibles—one for each student

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN

The Sacrifice of Isaac

BIBLE

- ✓ simple costumes for Abraham and Isaac, such as a few sheets and rope
- ✓ props, such as a bundle of sticks and a toy knife

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 15 MIN

The Trinity

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ white paper
- ✓ colored pencils
- ✓ markers
- ✓ dove outline—one copy for each student
- ✓ scissors

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 15 MIN

Dissect an Egg

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ two hard-boiled eggs

TOTAL 80 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Jesus was baptized—Jesus had no need of baptism because he had no sin. He humbled himself for our sake and was baptized by John. Jesus identified with us. Jesus was a man. He walked with man, ate with man, and was baptized by a man. At first, John refused to baptize Jesus. He knew that he was the sinner, not Jesus. Jesus, however, insisted that he must be baptized to fulfill all righteousness. Paul tells us that though Jesus had no sin, God made him to be sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus' baptism was not for his sake but for ours.

God revealed himself in the Trinity at Jesus' baptism—Each person in the Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) made his presence known at the baptism of Jesus. The doctrine of the Trinity teaches what is evident in Scripture: God is three persons in one God. This is a concept we cannot fully comprehend. We know that God is one (Malachi 2:10), and yet we know that the Godhead has three persons. All three persons of the Trinity made themselves known at Jesus' baptism—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

John the Baptist dedicated his life to truth—God called John to a ministry of truth. John's words set the stage for men to realize they needed a Savior. His ministry paved the way for Jesus. John spoke against Herod's sinful marriage to Herodias. (Herod had stolen his brother's wife.) Though Herod was attracted to the message of John, to please Herodias he threw John in prison. Then, manipulated again by his wife, Herod executed John by beheading him (Matthew 14:10).

John the Baptist, the prophet who announced the ministry of our Savior, paid the ultimate price for proclaiming the truth. Yet, John went straight to heaven rejoicing because his ministry was complete. John's life pointed forward to Jesus, the greater prophet, who would in a few short years also be killed for what he proclaimed. But unlike John, Jesus, the Son of God, would conquer death and rise again!

A LITTLE BIT MORE

The Dove

The Spirit of God, coming in the form of a dove, is reminiscent of the Spirit's work in the creation of the world. Genesis 1:2 tells us that the Spirit of God "was hovering" over the unformed waters of the deep.

Where Is the Gospel? _____

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

At some point when John saw Jesus, he realized that Jesus was the promised Messiah. John proclaimed that Jesus is the Lamb of God, the one who will take away the sin of the world (John 1:29). Long before John's ministry, Abraham told his son Isaac that God himself would provide a lamb for the sacrifice. That day, God did not allow Abraham to sacrifice his son but provided a ram. Here John tells us God has provided a sacrifice for sins—Jesus, the Lamb of God. Abraham's ram was a foreshadowing of Jesus, the Lamb of God.

By his baptism, Jesus instituted a new sacrament for believers. Our baptism is a symbol of Christ's burial in the tomb (when we go under the water) and a symbol of the resurrection (when we come up out of the water).

Paul writes, "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

Jesus identified with sinful man when he was baptized. That is why he said, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15, see also 2 Corinthians 5:21). Now today when we are baptized, we identify with Jesus' death and resurrection.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Matthew 3 from the Scriptures or read story 83, "The Baptism of Jesus," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 15 MIN

The Prophecies of John

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper and pencils
- ✓ Bibles—one for each student

Divide the class into four groups. Have them look up the account of Jesus’ baptism in all four Gospels: Matthew 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–13; Luke 3:21–22; John 1:29–34. Have them write down prophecies that John the Baptist spoke about Jesus, listing the references. Here are a few prophecies to make sure they see:

- Jesus would be greater than John, who was unfit to even touch his sandal (*Matthew 3:11*).
- Jesus would baptize people with the Holy Spirit (*Matthew 3:11*).
- Jesus will separate the wheat from the chaff (*Matthew 3:12*).
- Jesus will judge the wicked and burn them like chaff (*Matthew 3:12*).
- Jesus was the Lamb of God (*John 1:29*).
- Jesus would take away the sin of the world (*John 1:29*).
- Jesus was before John, even though John was older than Jesus (*John 1:30*).

TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN

The Sacrifice of Isaac

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ Bible
- ✓ simple costumes for Abraham and Isaac, such as a few sheets and rope
- ✓ props, such as a bundle of sticks and a toy knife

Recruit three volunteers to reenact the story of the sacrifice of Abraham and Isaac from memory. (The third child can play the part of the ram caught in the thicket.) Assign the parts and then have the kids quickly put on the costumes and immediately jump into doing the skit. Don't give them much time to think; just quickly say, "Lights, camera, and action. Your skit begins now."

Ask the class to open up their Bibles to Genesis 22:1–19 to critique the skit. If time allows, perform the skit again with three different actors.

Discuss the following question: Knowing that Jesus is called the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29), how does the story of Abraham sacrificing his son point forward to Jesus? (Isaac asked his father, "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb." Make the connection to Jesus being our Lamb and help the children bridge the gap from the Old Testament to the New Testament.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 15 MIN

The Trinity

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ white paper
- ✓ colored pencils
- ✓ markers
- ✓ dove outline—one copy for each student
- ✓ scissors

Tell the class you are going to create a symbol for the Trinity—God in three persons—from this story.

Have the children draw eyes and a beak on one side of the dove indicating the top. Then have them write the words of God the Father on the top across the wings ("This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" [Matthew 3:17]).

Then have them suggest something to write on the underside of the dove from the story. If they need an idea, suggest using John's words, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

As they work, ask the following questions:

- What word do we use to describe one God in three persons?
(Trinity)

- Can we fully understand how God can be one and three at the same time?
(No, we cannot fully understand how this is so. We have faith that God says he is one and that God shows himself as three persons. Each person of the Trinity is fully God. Sometimes we see them together at the same time, as we do here at Jesus' baptism, so we know that God doesn't simply show up three different ways. There really is one God in three distinct persons, each one fully God! That is impossible to fully explain or understand, given the limits of our minds.)

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 15 MIN

Dissect an Egg

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ two hard-boiled eggs

Biblical scholars have been trying to come up with a way to describe the Trinity for ages but all seem to fall short in one dimension or another. The egg illustration is one such analogy.

Leaving the shell on the egg, break the egg in half. Pass out paper and pencil to each of your students. Have them write why they think the egg is or is not a good illustration of the Trinity, one God in three persons.

(The egg is a good illustration because it has three critical parts, but there is only one egg. The egg is a bad illustration because all the parts are not equally egg. If all you had was the shell and you asked someone if it were an egg, they are likely to say that the shell is only part of

an egg. If, however, you ask someone if Jesus were God, they would not say he is only part of God—Jesus is fully God.)

Ask the class if they can think of a better way to illustrate one God in three persons.

Beware of deficiencies in their illustrations—such as modalism, which states that there is one God who shows himself in three different modes. An example of this is the ice cube illustration. Water can be liquid, solid, or gas, but only one at a time.

