

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.

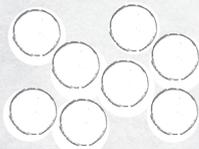
KEY PASSAGE: 1 Timothy 1:15

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

SMALL GROUP OPENING

(10–15 MINUTES)

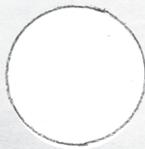
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LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY

(25–30 MINUTES)

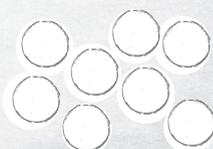
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SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

(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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Additional resources for each session are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

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!"**

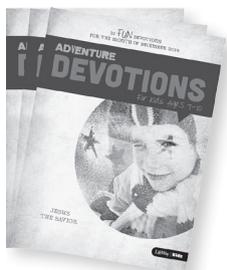
Jesus told John that He wanted to be baptized. But John didn't think he should baptize Jesus, and he tried to stop Jesus.

“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
ADVENTURE!**

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.

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.

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. As kids arrive, ask them if they know what *baptism* means. Ask if they have been baptized.

SAY • Baptism is a special event in the life of a believer.

Today we will learn about a baptism that was different from all other baptisms. Who do you think might have an extra special baptism?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- “Dip and Dunk” activity page, 1 per kid
- crayons or markers

Invite kids to complete the “Dip and Dunk” activity page. Kids will use crayons or markers to draw water in each of the pictures that should have water.

SAY • Baptism uses water as a symbol, or picture, of the new life Christians receive through Christ. In our story today, we will hear about the time Jesus was baptized. Jesus lived a perfectly obedient life. Why do you think Jesus was baptized?

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Announcements!

Before class, come up with a series of silly announcements. You may wish to write them down. Invite the class to line up, and whisper an announcement to the first kid in line. Invite him to say it in a booming or regal voice. Then he will sit, and the next kid in line will announce what you whisper to her.

Suggested announcements:

- Attention: All ice cream will be spinach-flavored from now on!
- Attention: The only acceptable walking will be crab walking from now on!
- Attention: Pig snorts will replace the word *yes*.

SAY • Those were some really silly announcements. In our story today, we will learn about a very important announcement that God made about Jesus. What do you think He announced?

OPTION 2: Water play

Fill a few shallow tubs with water. Provide water-friendly toys and allow the kids to play in the water. Keep towels close by to wipe up spills and dry kids' hands.

SAY • We use water in baptism to show the world that Jesus has saved us and given us new life. Although our shallow tubs are for playing in the water, baptism is not a game. Baptism is a serious event where believers show the world an outward sign of the change God has brought to their lives. We'll learn more about baptism soon.



- paper (optional)
- pen (optional)

- shallow tubs
- water
- water-friendly toys
- towels

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

[Large Group Leader enters wearing a cardigan, gray wig, and thick glasses. He or she sits in the chair on stage.]

LEADER • Hello again, children. As always, it is a pleasure to have you join me here today. I was just talking to my daughter about baptism. Her son, my grandson, has recently trusted Jesus, and now he is getting ready to be baptized. My daughter and I were laughing about the time her younger brother tried to baptize the family cat after seeing her baptism. Goodness, I can't believe that was almost 30 years ago!

Anyway, it got me thinking about the story of Jesus' baptism. I'd like to share it with you all today.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Remember our big picture question, *What makes Jesus different?* We know the answer is that *Jesus is fully God and fully man.* We have been

looking at many stories from Jesus' life to see the ways that is proven true in God's Word.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

LEADER • Last week we talked about Jesus as a boy who stayed behind at the temple. We learned that **Jesus came to earth to do His Father's plan.** The week before that, we talked about Jesus' birth and the miraculous way God announced it with angels and a bright star. We learned that **Jesus was born to be God's promised Savior.** Who can remember back three weeks? We learned that **God chose Mary to be Jesus' mother,** but His Father is God. The very first week we met, I told you all about Jesus' family line. We learned that **Jesus' family included Abraham, David, and others.** Jesus was the fulfillment of God's Old Testament promises. This week, our story is called "Jesus Was Baptized."

• Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 3:13-17. Tell the Bible story using the Bible Storytelling Tips on the Bible story page, or show the Bible story video "Jesus Was Baptized."

LEADER • We talked about Mary's cousin Elizabeth.

Who remembers what her son was named? [*Allow responses.*] That's right, his name was John. That little boy grew up to be John the Baptist, who spent his time telling the people to prepare for Jesus. When people confessed and turned away from sin, John would dip them into water—an event we call baptism—to symbolize God washing away their sin. When Jesus showed up and asked John to baptize

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

Him, John did not understand. He knew that Jesus was perfect and had no sins to repent of! John even thought that Jesus should baptize him instead! But God’s plan included Jesus being baptized, and **Jesus obeyed God by being baptized.**

After Jesus was baptized, something amazing happened. God made a special announcement from heaven. He said, “This is My Son, and I love Him.” Then the Holy Spirit came down from heaven and rested on Jesus! No baptism before then or since has been like that one! *What makes Jesus different? Jesus is fully God and fully man.* Jesus didn’t need to be baptized to show that He was turning away from sin because Jesus never sinned! Instead, God wanted Jesus to be baptized to show the world that Jesus is God’s Son and that we should follow Jesus’ example.

Christ connection

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

LEADER • You see, baptism is a symbol of the gospel.

Baptism is a way God wants believers to show the world what Jesus did for us by dying on the cross, being buried, and rising again three days later.

When a believer goes into the water, it represents the old version of him or her—the version that is dead because of sin—being buried. When the person is raised back out of the water, it represents the way Jesus brings us to life when we have faith in Him. Because Jesus died for our sins and was raised again, we can die to sin and receive new life through Jesus.

Jesus never did anything wrong, but He was baptized like sinners are baptized. Baptism reminds

us that Jesus died and came back to life. People who know and love Jesus should be baptized too, to show that we have come back to life with Jesus.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead boys and girls to read together 1 Timothy 1:15. Cover the poster and call on volunteers to say the verse from memory. Then sing “This Saying” song.

- Key Passage Poster
- “This Saying” song

LEADER • Jesus never sinned. His baptism was not a symbol that He turned away from sin, but that He would die and be raised to life to pay for sin. Our key passage helps us remember that Jesus came to save sinners. When believers are baptized, it shows that our old, dead selves have been buried with Christ and raised to life with Him.

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • It’s important to remember that baptism is not what saves us from sin and death. Baptism is not what gives us life with God forever. Only faith in Jesus can do that. Baptism is a sign that tells the world who we are in Christ. Think about that when you watch this video.

- “Unit 19, Session 5” discussion starter video

Show the “Unit 19, Session 5” discussion starter video. Talk to kids about why the kid in the video was unable to fly a plane even with all the pilot gear on. Why wasn’t wearing pilot gear enough to make the kid a pilot?

LEADER • Pilots wear special gear to help them perform their jobs as pilots, not to help them become pilots. They are already pilots. In a similar way, we participate in baptism to show that we are Christians,

not because it helps us become Christians. **Jesus obeyed God by being baptized**, and we should obey God by being baptized too. Our baptism shows that we trust in Jesus for our salvation from sin.

Sing (4 minutes)

• “The Savior We Need”
song

LEADER • Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and was raised again on the third day. When we have faith in Him, we are saved. Baptism is part of God’s plan to show the world we are saved. Worshiping God is another way to show the world we trust God. Let’s worship God with our voices right now.

Sing together “The Savior We Need.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

LEADER • Father, You are good. We praise You for Your grace and mercy to us. We confess that we sin against You and thank You that Jesus never sinned and that He died for our sin. Thank You for giving us baptism as a way to show the world what You did for us. 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. You may 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
- fish-shaped paper cutouts
- paper clips
- string
- magnet

Before class, write each word or phrase of the key passage on a separate fish-shaped paper cutout. Attach a paper clip to each fish near the mouth. Tie a magnet to the end of a string. Challenge kids to take turns catching fish in order. If a fish is caught out of order, kids must toss it back. Once kids catch all the fish in the correct order, read the key passage together. Then take volunteers to say it from memory.

SAY • Jesus was baptized in a river. People can be baptized just about anywhere there is water! Keep working on our key passage to memorize it by next week. It helps us remember that baptism is a symbol of what Jesus did for us: dying on the cross for our sin and rising again on the third day.

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

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

Write each of the following names on a separate sheet of paper and hang them around the room. Read the descriptions of each person and challenge kids to find the person's name and stand near his or her sign. Encourage kids to use their Bibles to look up different Bible stories to

help them determine who is being described.

Names and descriptions:

- David—famous king in Jesus’ family line
- Mary—woman God chose to be Jesus’ mother
- Elizabeth—Mary’s cousin, had a son named John
- Joseph—Jesus’ earthly father, engaged to wed Mary
- John—told people that God’s promised Rescuer was coming, baptized Jesus in the Jordan River
- Jesus—fully God and fully man, He obeyed God by being baptized.

SAY • Great job! We have learned a lot about Jesus, including what we learned today about baptism. We know that, although Jesus is like us in many ways, Jesus is also very different from us in some very important ways. ***What makes Jesus different? Jesus is fully God and fully man.***

Jesus was baptized, and God announced from heaven that Jesus is His beloved Son. Jesus’ baptism is different from our baptism because Jesus had no sin to repent of. **Jesus obeyed God by being baptized.** We can obey God by being baptized too. Our baptism shows the world what Jesus did for us by dying on the cross for sin and rising again on the third day.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Baptism 101

Invite a pastor or another church leader to visit your group and talk to kids about how baptism works at your church. Encourage kids to ask questions about baptism, and help them figure out when they might be eligible to be baptized. Use the following questions if kids cannot think of any they



• guest

Tip: Leave a note explaining where your group will be.

want to ask:

1. How old do you have to be to be baptized?
2. How can you know if you are ready to be baptized?
3. Where do we baptize people?
4. Who can baptize people at our church?

Consider traveling to the baptistry, if your church has one, to take a tour.

SAY • That was some great information about how our church handles baptism! Remember that baptism is not what saves us. Baptism is a way to show to the world what God has done for you when you have faith in Jesus. It shows on the outside that your heart inside has been changed by Jesus. **Jesus obeyed God by being baptized** to give us an example to follow. When we trust in Jesus, we can obey God by being baptized as well.

OPTION 2: Jesus' baptism craft

Before class, print a copy of the “John and Jesus” printable for each kid. Help kids cut out both figures using the cutting lines as a guide. Using the paper plate as a template, show kids how to draw a semicircle on blue construction paper and cut it out. Glue or tape the rounded edge to the edge of the paper plate, forming a pocket. Tuck the John cutout behind the blue paper and tape it to the plate so that it appears he is standing in the water. Do the same with the Jesus cutout, but use a brass fastener instead of tape so that He can rotate to be dunked below the surface of the water.

SAY • Use these fun crafts to help you remember today's story. Jesus did not have any sin to repent of, but **Jesus obeyed God by being baptized** anyway. We are all sinners, but when we repent of our sin and

- “John and Jesus” printable, 1 per kid
- scissors
- paper plates, 1 per kid
- blue construction paper
- glue or tape
- brass fasteners

trust in Jesus, we are saved. We can obey God by being baptized too! Our baptism shows the world that Jesus has saved us from our sin by His death and resurrection. You can use your craft to tell a friend about baptism and what Jesus did for us, too!

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute each child's journal. Ask the kids to write about or draw what they want their baptism to look like (what it did look like for those who may have been baptized already). Who will (did) baptize them? Who will be there (was there) to see them be baptized? Where will they be (were they) baptized?

SAY • Remember, baptism is a very exciting and important part of being a Christian. Baptism does not save us, but it is one of the ways God wants us to show the world that we trust in Jesus and are living for Him. If you have faith in Jesus, you can talk to your parents about when might be a good time for you to be baptized to show the world that you love and trust Jesus.

Make sure each child secures this week's sheet in the journal, and then collect them. Keep the journals in the classroom so they will be available every week or as often as you wish to use them.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray, thanking God for baptism and asking Him to bring your group to faith. Ask Him to help them treasure baptism as a special symbol of what Jesus did on the cross to pay for sin.

- pencils and crayons
- Journal Page
- Bible Story Coloring 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.