

## Lesson 3: Jesus Is Baptized

### **Bible Reading:**

Mark 1:9-11

### **Key Verse:**

And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son,  
the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

– Mark 1:11

### **The Point:**

God gives love.



# Activities & Supplies

## Opening

### Water!

Get started in a surprising way.

**15 min.**

- Bible
- Spray bottles or squirt toys
- Water

## Stations

### Storytelling

### Jesus Is Baptized

Experience the story with touch.

**20 min.**

- Bibles
- Activity Sheet A
- Card stock
- Markers or crayons
- Tape
- Scissors
- Burlap or other coarse material
- Smooth stones
- Water
- Cups or bowls
- Towels
- Blue paper
- White craft feathers



## Stations

<p><b>Craft</b> <b>Flying Dove</b> God's Spirit flies like a dove.</p>	<p><b>20 min.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Activity Sheet B</li><li>• Activity Sheet C</li><li>• Paper</li><li>• Scissors</li><li>• Straw</li><li>• Transparent tape</li><li>• Markers or crayons</li></ul>
<p><b>Science</b> <b>Water Music</b> Experiments with making water music.</p>	<p><b>20 min.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Water pitchers</li><li>• Crystal wine glass</li><li>• Water glasses</li><li>• Bamboo sticks</li><li>• Metal spoons</li></ul>
<p><b>Games</b> <b>Baptism Charades</b> Act out the story after Jesus' baptism.</p>	<p><b>20 min.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Slips of paper</li><li>• Pen or marker</li><li>• Basket or bag</li></ul>



## Stations

### Games

#### River Jordan Fun

Play relays.

- Beach bags
- Towels
- Pairs of adult-sized shorts
- Pairs of sunglasses
- Beach hats
- Inner tubes, swim rings, snorkels, or swim fins
- Beach or lawn chairs

### Snack

#### Fishy Eats

Eat from the Jordan River.

**20 min.**

- Apple slices
- Raisins
- Pretzels sticks
- Croissants
- Serving bowls or trays
- Serving utensils
- Plates
- Napkins
- Water
- Cups
- Knife or apple cutter
- Optional: citrus soda or lemon water and a large bowl



## Closing Prayer

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**5 min.**

• For the Home



# Background for Leaders

## Jesus Is Baptized

### The Point

God gives love.

### Did You Know?

- In the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, the heavens simply opened to let the Holy Spirit descend. Here in the Gospel of Mark, the Greek word used in verse 10 means to tear open or tear apart as with a piece of cloth.
- God's declaration here is almost the same in all three Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), though in Mark and Luke the voice is speaking directly to Jesus (You are my Son), while in Matthew, the voice is addressing others (This is my Son).
- This same declaration of Jesus as God's beloved Son is also made at his transfiguration (Mark 9:7). There the voice addresses Jesus' disciples and replaces "with you I am well pleased" with "listen to him!"
- Given that most Christians believe that Jesus was without sin (Hebrews 4:15) and that John's baptism was "of repentance for the forgiveness of sin" (Mark 1:4), the reason for Jesus' baptism is difficult to understand. Though we might not understand why Jesus was baptized; his baptism was an opportunity for God to declare to others who Jesus was.

### Why It Matters

- Jesus is the beloved representative of God whom we can trust.
- Like Jesus, we are declared to be beloved children of God in our baptisms.
- God has ripped apart all barriers that keep God separated from us.

### Prayer of Preparation

Gracious God, thank you for your unending love for all people. Help us to share your love with everyone we interact with this day. In the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen



# Lesson Plan

## Opening

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### Water!

15 min.

Get started in a surprising way.

#### *Supplies:*

- Bible
- Spray bottles or squirt toys
- Water

#### *Preparation:*

1. Fill spray bottles and squirt toys with water.
2. Recruit volunteers to be squirters and sprayers.
3. Instruct volunteers where they should stand and when to start squirting (when you say, “I know what I forgot, it is WATER!”) Be sure to tell them that the idea is to surprise the participants, NOT to douse them with water!

#### *Instructions:*

1. **Welcome, I am glad you are all here! Today we have a short story, but one filled with images and God's love. There will be:**
  - a. **Jesus** (make the American Sign Language sign for “Jesus” by touching your middle finger on right hand to your left palm, and the vice versa).
  - b. **something like a dove** (demonstrate a flying dove by interlocking your thumbs with your palms facing you and wiggling your fingers).
  - c. **and the heavens opening** (put your palms together and move them above your head, then move them apart).



2. **Hmm, there is something else, but I cannot think of it right now. I am sure I will remember before we are done here. Let's go through those actions together so you will remember the words to listen for when you hear the story.**
3. Review the words and actions:
  - a. **Jesus** (make the ASL sign for "Jesus" by touching your middle finger on right hand to your left palm, and the vice versa).
  - b. **something like a dove** (demonstrate a flying dove by interlocking your thumbs with your palms facing you and wiggling your fingers).
  - c. **and the heavens opening** (put your palms together and move them above your head, then move them apart).
4. **Great job, I think you are almost ready to head off to your activities.**
5. **Wait! I know what I forgot, it is WATER!** Start the motion for water (hands together with palms down in front of you, move them to the side making wave motions) while the volunteers you selected spray water onto the participants.
6. **How could I have forgotten the water? We have been hearing water stories each session! Now I KNOW you are ready to hear the story! As I read the story, I would like you to make the actions for each word when you hear them; Jesus, dove, water, and heavens opening.**
7. Read Mark 1:9-11 out loud.
8. **Did you know we are ALL beloved children of God? That is pretty awesome, I think we should shout about it. When I say, "God give us love" I want you to shout it right back to me. God gives us love! (echo)**



# Stations

## Storytelling

20 min.

### Jesus Is Baptized

Experience the story with touch.

#### *Supplies:*

- Bibles
- Activity Sheet A
- Card stock
- Markers or crayons
- Tape
- Scissors
- Burlap or other coarse material
- Smooth stones
- Water
- Cups or bowls
- Towels
- Blue paper
- White craft feathers

#### *Preparation:*

1. Make a copy of Activity Sheet A for each participant on card stock.
2. Cut the burlap into strips or 2 in. x 2 in. squares. The blue paper should be large enough for participants to tear into two pieces.
3. Decide whether small groups will share the tactile objects or if each participant will get their own set. Prepare enough sets accordingly.



**Instructions:**

1. **In today's story, Jesus is baptized. Let's read it! Turn to Mark 1:9-11 in your Bibles.** Help participants find the story in their Bibles before you read it out loud.
2. **Did you hear about an announcement that God made about Jesus?** Allow responses. **Let's hear the story again, but this time with some props. First, we need to make some colorful paper megaphones.**
3. Hand out Activity Sheet A and make sure participants have access to markers or crayons, scissors, and tape. Encourage older participants to help younger participants when needed. After the megaphones are decorated, rolled, and taped, ask participants to set them aside for later.
4. Hand out sets of tactile objects, either one per group or one per person.
5. **Now that we have our megaphones, we are ready to hear the story of Jesus' baptism. Have any of you seen or experienced a baptism? What happens when we baptize people at church?** *[The person to be baptized has water poured on their head or is immersed under water while the pastor speaks.]*
6. **Jesus was baptized by a man named John. Now John was a little strange. He wore clothes made of camel's hair which was very rough to the touch. He also ate unusual foods. Does anyone know what he ate?** *[Locusts and wild honey.]*
7. **You have some objects in front of you. As I tell the story, we are going to touch the various items. Hold up or point to each object in turn. John wore rough clothes like this piece of burlap. We sometimes call Jesus our Rock, so we have this stone for him. John baptized Jesus in water, so we have water in the cup (or bowl) along with a towel to dry our fingers with. The blue paper represents the sky or heavens. I will tell you what to do with that in a moment. Then, we have these feathers to represent the Holy Spirit. And finally, we have our megaphones for a voice from God. Now, let's get ready to hear the story and touch the objects in turn.** Instruct participants to touch the correct object out loud, ask participants which object they should touch, or simply model the action with your own set of objects.



8. **A long, long time ago, before Jesus started teaching and doing miracles, there was a man named John (burlap). He baptized many people in the Jordan River (water).**
9. **One day, Jesus came along (stone) and wanted to be baptized (water) by John (burlap). Jesus went into the water (water). When he came up, the heavens (blue paper) were torn apart (model tearing the paper in two).**
10. **The Holy Spirit (feather) came down to Jesus (stone). The voice of God (megaphone) boomed through the sky and said to Jesus (say through the megaphone), “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”**
11. **Now, let's repeat that statement through our own megaphones!** Lead participants to echo after you say each phrase.
12. **Let's review what each of these objects represent in our story.** Pick up or point to each object and have participants identify what each represents.
13. **What do you think is the strangest part of this story?** If participants do not mention it in the discussion, point out the torn paper or fabric. **This is a very strange thing. Our story says that the heavens, or the sky, was torn apart. We know the sky is made of air and space, things that cannot be torn apart like this. But in ancient times, people thought that the sky was solid, and that God was on the other side. So, when the story says that the heavens were torn apart, that means that the wall between God and us was broken down. With Jesus, we know that God is right here with us!**
14. **But even though nothing separates us from God anymore and the Holy Spirit came down to Jesus looking like a dove, God was not finished. God wanted us to know something important about Jesus. What was it?** Pick up your megaphone and repeat again the Key Verse from Mark 1:11. **“And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”**
15. **That is right! God wants us to know that Jesus is God's Son, and that God loves him very much. You know what? God loves you, too! Now, point to the people near you and say, “God loves you!”** When that is finished, end with: **Thanks be to God!**



## Craft

20 min.

### Flying Dove

God's Spirit flies like a dove.

#### *Supplies:*

- Activity Sheet B
- Activity Sheet C
- Paper
- Scissors
- Straws
- Transparent tape
- Markers or crayons

#### *Preparation:*

1. Print a copy of Activity Sheet C for yourself.
2. Make a copy of Activity Sheet B for each participant.
3. Cut rectangles out of paper.
4. Make a sample to use as an example.

#### *Instructions:*

1. **When Jesus was baptized, God's Spirit descended like a dove. What do doves look like? How does a dove fly?**
2. **What does the symbol of a dove mean to you? Peace? Holy Spirit? Prayers? God's love?**



3. **We are going to make doves that fly through the air!** Demonstrate each as you walk participants through the following steps:
- a. **Write Peace, Holy Spirit, or God's Love, or draw prayers for people or places who need God's peace on the front of the dove shape.**
  - b. **Cut the dove shape out.**
  - c. **Wrap the paper rectangle around the straw (not too tight) and then fold the top of the paper over to make a 'pocket' for the end of the straw. Make a gap between the fold of the pocket and the end of the straw.**
  - d. **Turn the dove over and tape the paper pocket to the middle of the back.**
  - e. **Blow through the straw. Watch your dove fly and share God's love and peace with others!**



## Science

20 min.

### Water Music

Experiment with making water music.

#### *Supplies:*

- Water pitchers
- Crystal wine glass
- Water glasses
- Bamboo skewer
- Metal spoons

#### *Preparation:*

1. Put all supplies on the small group tables, placing one set on a table for your presentation.

#### *Instructions:*

1. **We are baptized with water, just like Jesus was baptized with water. Why do we need water to live? How can we play in the water? How can water make music?**
2. **Watch how I make this glass sing with water!**
  - a. Hold the empty crystal wine glass on a tabletop at the base of the stem with one hand, not touching the bowl.
  - b. Wet your index finger with water.
  - c. Lightly rub your wet finger around the rim of the glass over and over.
  - d. As you rub the glass, you will hear the “singing” sound of the glass. You may have to re-wet your finger periodically or adjust the pressure of your finger on the rim of the glass to keep producing the sound.
  - e. You can change the pitch of the sound by adding water to the glass.



3. **Now, each small group will make some music with water.**
4. **Take a glass and a bamboo skewer and gently hit the side of the glass. What kind of noise does this make?**
5. **Gently hit the glass with the edge of a spoon. What kind of noise does this make?**
6. **Fill your glasses with a little bit of water. Pause. Now try your music sounds with the stick and the spoon.**
7. **When you tap the empty glasses, they all made the same sound.**
8. **Instruct all groups but one to add more water your glasses and try the same music sounds with the stick and the spoon.**
9. **Instruct a few groups to add more water again to their glasses and try the music sounds again.**
10. **When you tapped the empty glasses, they all made the same sound. Adding different amounts of water changes the noise, sound, and pitch.**
11. **Take turns and play your music from low tones to the high tones.** Allow time for each group to play their sounds at least once.
12. **What did you notice about the amounts of water versus the sound or pitch that was created? The more water, the lower the pitch! The less water, the higher the pitch!**
13. **Try to play a song together!** Instruct the groups to start playing their sounds.
14. **Water is very important in our lives. God has given us the gift of water for health, play, music, and a reminder that we are God's beloved children.**



## Games

10 min.

### Baptism Charades

Act out the story after Jesus' baptism.

#### *Supplies:*

- Slips of paper
- Pen or marker
- Basket or bag

#### *Preparation:*

1. Write the following words on each slip of paper for each small group:
  - a. You
  - b. Son
  - c. Beloved
  - d. Love
  - e. God
  - f. Pleased
  - g. Dove
  - h. Holy Spirit

#### *Instructions:*

1. **Do you remember what happened after Jesus was baptized?**
2. **In our small groups we are going to take turns selecting a paper from this basket (bag), and then will act out the word with no talking and try to have your group guess your word.**
3. When all groups have had time to act out the words, wrap up by discussing the following questions:
  - a. **Which words were the easiest to act out or guess?**
  - b. **How does each word show or connect to God's love?**



## Games

10 min.

### River Jordan Fun

Play relays.

#### *Supplies:*

- Beach bags
- Towels
- Pairs of adult-sized shorts
- Pairs of sunglasses
- Beach hats
- Inner tubes, swim rings, snorkels, or swim fins
- Beach or lawn chairs

#### *Preparation:*

1. Gather supplies for relay teams, you will need as many of each item as you have teams.
2. Fill each beach bag with the supplies above except chairs and tubes.
3. Mark a start line with the filled beach bags.
4. Place beach or lawn chairs 10–15 feet in front of the start line.

#### *Instructions:*

1. Divide into teams, and have the teams line up behind their team's beach bag.
2. **Jesus was baptized in the River Jordan. If you wanted to play in that river, what would you bring?**
3. **You will remove all of the items from the beach bag, put them on, run to the chair, sit down on it, stand back up, run back to this line, and remove all of the items, put them back into the beach bag, and hand the bag to the next player in line.**
4. **We will start when I yell, "Play in the River Jordan!" We will play until everyone on one team have completed the relay. Ready? Play in the River Jordan!**
5. After the relay is run, close by saying: **Jesus did not play in the water; he was baptized by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. God gives us the wonderful gift of water!**



## Snack

20 min.

### Fishy Eats

Eat from the Jordan River.

*Before serving any food check with participants or caregivers for potential allergies provide an alternative if necessary.*

#### *Supplies:*

- Apple slices
- Raisins
- Pretzels sticks
- Croissants
- Serving bowls or trays
- Serving utensils
- Plates
- Napkins
- Water
- Cups
- Knife or apple cutter
- Optional: citrus soda or lemon water and a large bowl

#### *Preparation:*

1. Slice apples. Place them in a large bowl of citrus soda or lemon water to prevent browning if you wish.
2. Place bowls of each ingredient, small plates, napkins, and serving utensils on each table.



***Instructions:***

1. **Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River. It is a river with several kinds of fish: catfish, tilapia, and carp. Have you ever seen any of these fish? Allow responses. Tasted any of these fish? Allow responses.**
2. **There are also mollusks in the Jordan River. Mollusks are like clams, where there is a hard shell that opens, and the water animals live inside the shell. Demonstrate a mollusk shell opening and closing with your hands. We are going to pretend the croissant in front of you is a mollusk shell.**
3. **You have treats in front of you to make into fish! Use your imagination and create some fish. Wait until we pray to eat.**
4. **Let us pray. Repeat after me.**

**Dear God, (echo)**

**Thank you for Jesus. (echo)**

**Thank you for the Holy Spirit. (echo)**

**Thank you loving us. (echo)**

**And thank you for this snack. (echo)**

**Amen. (echo)**



## Closing Prayer

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We have been learning about God's gift of water today, let's review what we did! Can someone tell us about what they did in Storytelling? Pause for responses. Games? Continue through all the activities participants did. Wow, that's a lot of activity! Let's close in prayer.

Dear God, (echo)

Thank you for Jesus. (echo)

Thank you for the great gift of water. (echo)

Thank you for calling us your beloved. (echo)

Help us feel your Spirit. (echo)

Amen. (echo)

Remember to send "For the Home" take-home sheet with participants before dismissing them.



# Jesus Is Baptized

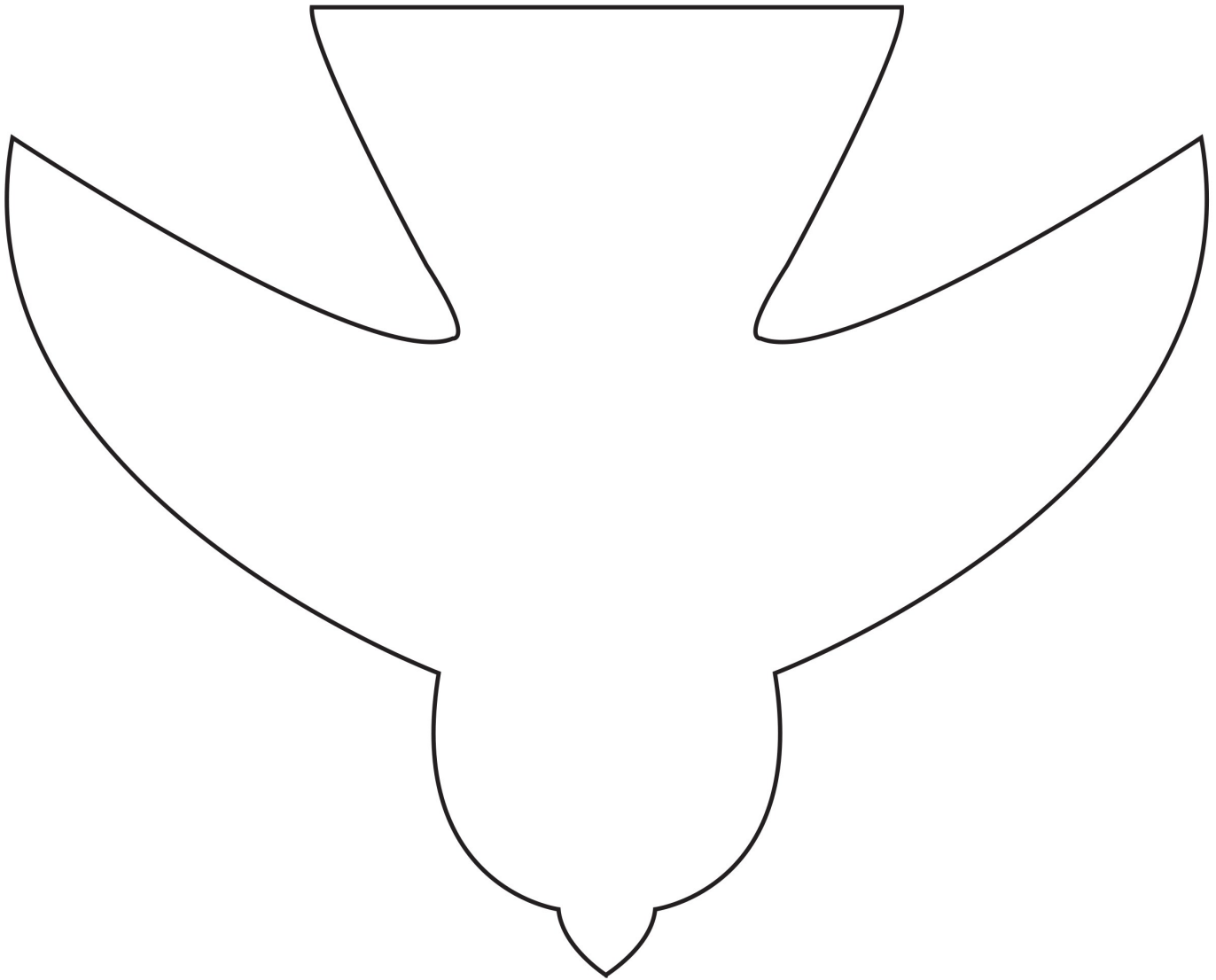
*Experience the story with touch.*





# Flying Dove

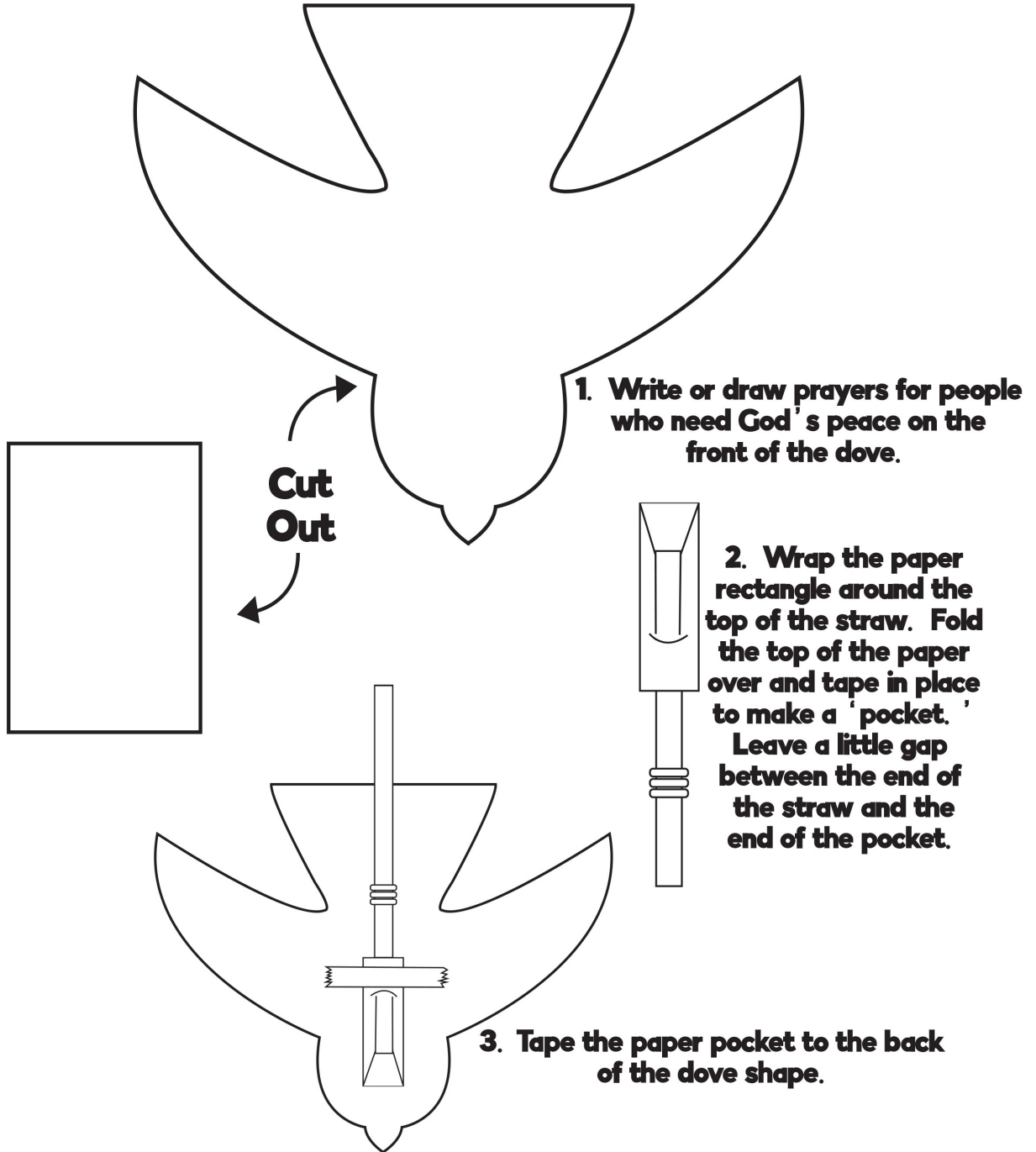
*God's spirit flies like a dove.*





# Flying Dove

*God's spirit flies like a dove.*



**4. Turn your dove over and aim! Blow through the straw and watch your peace prayer dove fly!**

**\* Remember to leave a little gap inside the pocket between the end of the straw or your dove will not lift off!**



## Jesus Is Baptized

### The Point

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God gives love.

### Key Verse

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And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”  
– Mark 1:11

### Did You Know?

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- In the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, the heavens simply opened to let the Holy Spirit descend. Here in the Gospel of Mark, the Greek word used in verse 10 means to tear open or tear apart as with a piece of cloth.
- God's declaration here is almost the same in all three Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), though in Mark and Luke the voice is speaking directly to Jesus (You are my Son), while in Matthew, the voice is addressing others (This is my Son).
- This same declaration of Jesus as God's beloved Son is also made at his transfiguration (Mark 9:7). There the voice addresses Jesus' disciples and replaces “with you I am well pleased” with “listen to him!”
- Given that most Christians believe that Jesus was without sin (Hebrews 4:15) and that John's baptism was “of repentance for the forgiveness of sin” (Mark 1:4), the reason for Jesus' baptism is difficult to understand. Though we might not understand why Jesus was baptized; his baptism was an opportunity for God to declare to others who Jesus was.

### Why It Matters

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- Jesus is the beloved representative of God whom we can trust.
- Like Jesus, we are declared to be beloved children of God in our baptisms.
- God has ripped apart all barriers that keep God separated from us.

## Prayer of the Week

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Dear God, thank for claiming me as your beloved child, and loving me without ceasing. In the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, I pray. Amen.

## Discussion Starters

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Practice telling the story of Jesus' baptism using the actions for Jesus, dove, and the heavens separating with others in your home.

Try to remember a baptism you have witnessed. Who was there? What did the worship leader say or do? Tell each other what you remember.

Think about how you would describe the Holy Spirit. Draw a picture of what you imagine the Holy Spirit might look like.

What does it mean to you to be a beloved child of God? Write your name down the left side of a piece of paper. Make an acrostic poem (using each letter of your name as the first letter of a word) describing why you are beloved.

What are some things that keep you from a close relationship with God? Select one and determine a way to remove that obstacle.



## Blessing for the Week

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Share this blessing while tracing a cross on each person's forehead or hand with their permission: **You are a beloved child of God.**