

Liturgy of the Word

Baptism of the Lord, Cycle B

Please Note: All scripture readings must be read from the Children's Lectionary

Opening Prayer:

God in heaven,
 you sent down your power
 and your Spirit on Jesus
 to be the light of the world.
 Lead us by that same light
 so that we may see what we have done wrong
 and find the way to be happy with you forever and ever. Amen.

First Reading: Isaiah 42:1, 6-7

Our God says, This is my servant, my chosen one. I give him my strength and my spirit to bring justice to all the people. And I say to him, "I, your God, have called you. I have taken you by your hand. I have sent you as my covenant to the people, as a light for the world. I have sent you to open the eyes of the blind, to free those in prison, and to give light to those who live in darkness."

Gospel Reading: Mark 1:7-11

(This reading is to be used for personal study. It should not be used in liturgy.)

He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Special Families: Gospel Reflection

Every living creature made by God belongs to its own special family. All dogs belong to the canine family. From your own little puppy to the fox in his den, all canines love to chew with bone-crunching teeth. All cats belong to the feline family. From soft purring kittens to great roaring tigers, all felines like to scratch with needle-sharp claws. You belong to the human family. From the people next-door to the rulers of the land, all human beings are a whole lot like you.

But you belong to another family too -- the family of God. In this week's gospel story, Jesus is baptized by John. God speaks from heaven: "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

When you were baptized, you became a child of God, a brother or sister to Jesus. You were given the Spirit of Jesus, which means that you are like him in a very special way.

You can be just like Jesus, in the way you love and live. You can love like Jesus loved without expecting anything in return. You can help those who need you the way Jesus always helped others. You can share with others the way Jesus shared. You can be like Jesus because his Spirit lives in you.

A Decision for Life: Gospel Reflection

When Jesus came to John to be baptized in the Jordan River, it was a time of decision for him. Jesus came to be baptized, even though he had no sins. By this baptism, Jesus made a decision to become one with his people. He knew God had work for him to do in the world. Now he was ready to serve.

The day you were baptized was an important day of decision too. Most likely, it was your parents' decision rather than your own, reached because of their great love for you -- a decision that would change your whole life. They knew you would have many important and often difficult decisions to make in your life, so they chose to present you with the greatest gift you would ever receive, the gift of baptism in the Holy Spirit.

On that special day, everyone in the church promised to help you to grow in wisdom and grace. They all remembered what John the Baptist said: "I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." As the priest or deacon poured the baptismal waters over your head, he called on God -- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit -- to be with you always.

Through this sacred sacrament, you became a child of God. You were filled with the love of Jesus and the Holy Spirit came to live in your heart, to help you live as a true child of God for the rest of your life.

Think about those times when you have known that Jesus and the Holy Spirit were with you: Times when you needed extra strength; times when you shared some special happiness; times when you faced important decisions. Can you remember your first day of school? your first Communion? your first penance? Can you see again those special birthdays and celebrations in your family? Aren't you glad God was there with you during such special times?

Prayers of the Faithful: Allow a few moments for the children to offer prayers aloud for their special intentions. Ask them to end with "Let us pray to the Lord". All respond, "Lord, Hear our Prayer".

Renewal of Baptismal Vows: Class or Family Activity

(You may do this instead of the Apostle's Creed)

Here is an opportunity to come together as a group and renew your baptismal vows. The support you gain from one another in this shared prayer can be a means of mutual growth in wisdom and grace.

ALL: Lord, at our baptism, a decision was made that would change our lives. With that decision, we received the gift of the Holy Spirit. We wish to reaffirm that decision now, and to renew the promises that go with it.

LEADER: Do you reject the devil and all the works and promises of the devil?

ALL: We do.

LEADER: Do you believe all that the holy Catholic Church teaches?

ALL: We do believe.

LEADER: As you renew your promises, what do you ask of the Church?

ALL: We ask for the gift of faith and the help of the Holy Spirit to be true to these promises.

(continued on next page)

LEADER: Jesus gave us two great commandments: "You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, and with your whole soul, and with your whole mind, and your neighbor as yourself." Will you try to keep these commandments?

ALL: We will.

LEADER: Let us thank our God for every blessing in our lives, especially for the gift of the Holy Spirit, given to us in baptism, who remains with us always.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

The Baptism of the Lord

Thought for the day

Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus is affirmed at his Baptism as God's beloved Son, and we too are given the Spirit of God, which affirms us as God's adopted daughters and sons.

Readings

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

Acts 10:34-38

Mark 1:7-11

Aim: To become familiar with Mark's account of Jesus' Baptism and the significance of the dove.

Starter

Give out long strips of crepe paper, or several sheets between a group, or use a parachute for the whole group. These things are waved in a way that expresses different moods, for example: angry, happy, gentle, excited, peaceful, wild, controlled, hopeful.

Teaching

Share this poem:

It's funny,
my puppy knows just how I feel.
When I'm happy he's yappy
and squirms like an eel.
When I'm grumpy he's slumpy
and stays at my heel.
It's funny,
my puppy knows just how I feel.

(Anon)

As humans we can feel all sorts of different things, and as God made us like him, and as Jesus showed us, we can tell that God also feels sad and happy, he's both peaceful and powerful, both gentle and strong. So the Spirit of God will show that too. Sometimes, like at the beginning of creation, we are told the Spirit of God was "brooding over the face of the deep," full of love and hope for all that was going to be brought to life. (They can move their streamers like this, starting still, moving gently and then more powerfully.)

Today we are hearing about the time when Jesus was baptized. As they listen to the way Mark tells it, suggest they listen for what mood the Spirit of God was in at this particular time. Use a clear translation to read today's gospel; you may find it helps the children to have it projected on an overhead projector with a picture of water on a transparency behind it. Or have it written clearly on a

blackboard with colored chalks or on a length of wallpaper, with a "watery" border drawn around it. Talk about the Spirit of God resting gently on Jesus, like a gentle white bird, and let them move the streamers to express this.

Everyone can read out together the words of God, which Jesus heard as the Spirit rested on him.

Remind everyone of how the Spirit of God came at Pentecost, powerful and sounding like a great rushing wind and like fire. (Move the streamers or sheets like this.) The Spirit can come on all of us gently and powerfully, quietly or noisily. Sometimes the Spirit makes us feel suddenly very full of peace and calm, and other times it makes us feel full of excitement about Jesus and enthusiasm for following him no matter what.

Praying

Spirit of the living God,
I believe and trust in you,
and want to follow you all my life.
Come into my life and live there,
so that each day I may know you better
and love you more.
Amen.

Activities

On the activity sheet there are instructions for making a Holy Spirit mobile, with the Spirit of God expressed in the power of flame and the gentleness of a dove. Either copy the activity sheet on to thin cardboard or mount it on cardboard before tying on to cotton for hanging up.

Notes

Liturgy of the Word--Baptism of the Lord

1. Jesus Your Brother: Hidden Message

You and Jesus have something very special in common. Read every other letter in the message below to see what that something special is.

G R O P D A I R S E Y N O T U G R O P D A I R S E Y N O T

2. Baptism Celebration: Family Activity

The work of bringing the Good News of God's love to all people began with the baptism of Jesus.

This gospel should remind you of your own baptism, when you became members of the family of Jesus.

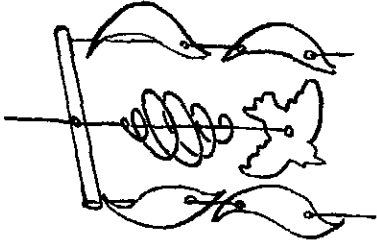
Make or buy a special candle to be lit on the anniversary of each family baptism. On that day, plan a special meal and light the candle to symbolize the light of Christ received in baptism. Initiate that tradition this week with a celebration in honor of Jesus' baptism. Say the simple creed below.

I believe in God the Father,
maker of our world so wide;
I believe in Jesus Christ,
who for me was crucified.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
sent by God to be my guide.
I believe in the Catholic Church
and all the saints in heaven too.
I know that God forgives my sins
and helps me to begin anew.

Answer for #1: God is your Parent.

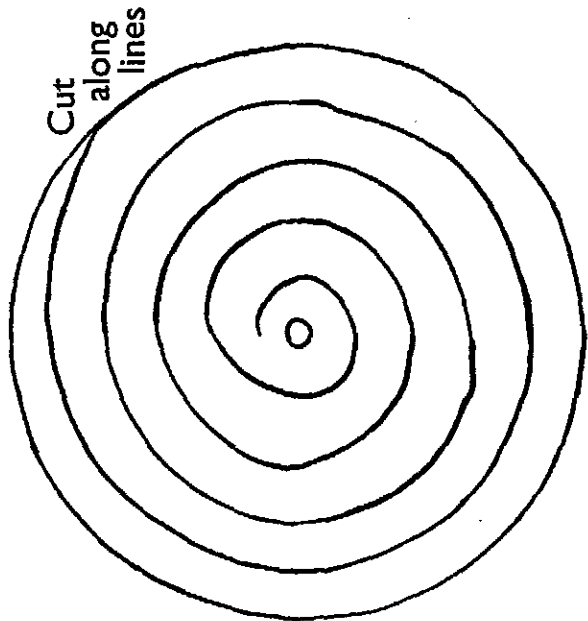
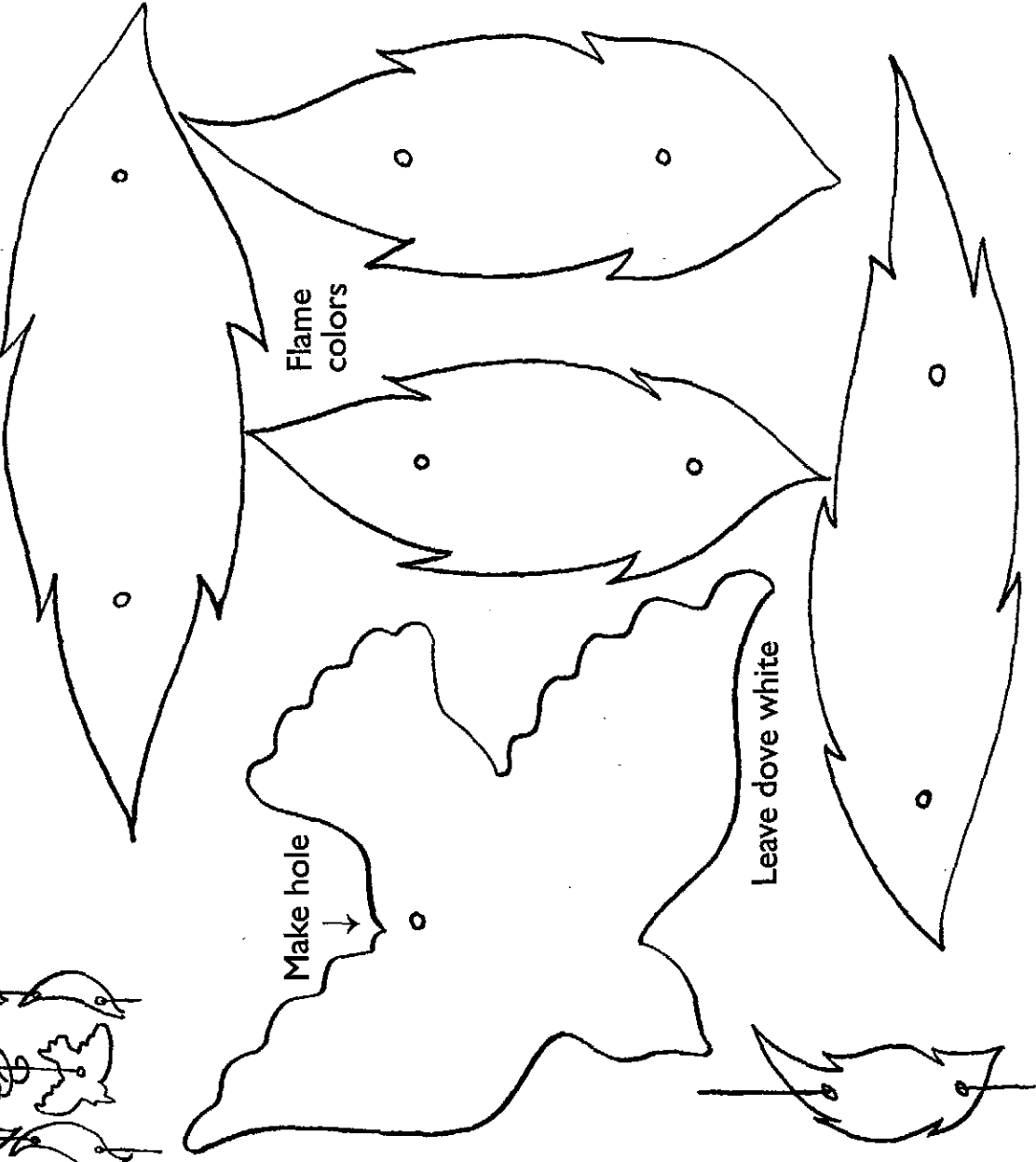
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1. Color the flames and spiral red and orange and yellow
2. Cut out and make holes as shown
3. Thread wool, cotton, or thin wire through the holes
4. Fix on to a straw as shown left



To pray this week

Spirit of the living God,
 I believe and trust in you,
 and want to follow you
 all my life -
 Come into my life and live there,
 so that each day
 I may know you better
 and love you more.
 — Amen —



Flame colors

The Baptism of the Lord

INTRODUCTION

Today we hear how Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. This was part of God's plan. The story reminds us of our own baptism, when God's spirit became a living spring in each one of us.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

As we light the candles today, we remember that at our baptism we were given the light of Christ, which burns in our hearts and lights up our lives each day.

SORRY

Lord, as we sing this song together, help us to feel truly sorry if we have not always been good. Sing Sorry Song 2.

GLORIA

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 3.

GOSPEL (MATTHEW 3:13-17)

Jesus came from Galilee to the banks of the River Jordan to be baptized by John the Baptist. John was surprised by this and said to him, "Surely this is wrong; it should be you baptizing me!" Jesus answered, "We will do things this way for it is right to follow my father's plan."

Reluctantly John agreed, and Jesus was baptized in the river. As he stood up in the water, the clouds parted and the Holy Spirit appeared as a dove and settled on Jesus. Then a voice from heaven said, "This is my son, whom I love very much."

DISCUSSION

Where was Jesus baptized? What sign appeared so that John and all the people knew that Jesus was the son of God?

Jesus was baptized in order to receive the Holy Spirit for his work of teaching and healing, which was about to begin, and so that everyone would

know that he was the son of God. By his baptism, Jesus showed the people a way to begin again so that they could grow in goodness.

Using a doll and suitable props such as a bowl of water, point out these important features of a baptismal ceremony:

—Promises are made on behalf of the child by the godparents to obey God's rules and to lead a Christian life.

—Water is poured over the baby's head three times to represent the rebirth of the child by water and the Holy Spirit, and the washing away of the original sin of Adam and Eve.

—The baby is anointed with holy oil, called "chrism," as a sign that God's spirit is making this person special, a member of God's family who shares in everlasting life.

—The child is clothed in a white garment as a symbol of its purity as a child of God.

—The godparents or parents, on behalf of the child, are given a lighted candle for they have received the light of Christ and the flame of faith burns in their hearts.

Encourage the children to discuss any baptisms they have attended, and to share what they can remember about the occasion.

ACTIVITY

Make a copy of the illustration for each child. Ask each child to draw a picture of their own baptism in the space provided and then color the whole page.

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Begin by making the sign of the cross. Each time we make the sign of the cross, it is a prayer without words.

Dear Jesus, accept our sign of the cross
as our prayer to you.

It reminds us that through our baptism
we belong to you,
and are children of God.

Let all who are baptized
walk together in the light of Christ.