



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

700 King Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8P 1C7

Children's Liturgy of the Word The Baptism of the Lord

Overview

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord teaches us that Jesus is God's beloved Son and reminds us that we are God's beloved children, too. It's a special day to thank God for God's love and remember that we are called to live like Jesus—loving God and loving others. This Feast ends the Christmas season and begins Jesus' public ministry.

Baptism is the first of the Church's seven sacraments. In Baptism, water symbolizes death, purification, regeneration, and renewal. The white garment represents the new life in Christ; the oil symbolizes the anointing into the ministry of Jesus—priest, prophet, and king. The lit candle represents the light of Christ in our lives.

As we consider the responsibilities of our baptism this week, let us reflect on our sense of being set apart and chosen by God.

Leaders Reflections Question:

- † What have been the consequences of my baptism?
- † How is my life different because of it?
- † How strong is my sense of being 'beloved' by God?

Suggested Focus

Prepare a focus for the area where the children's Liturgy of the Word is to be held:

White cloth, a Lectionary, a candle, a bowl of water, a white garment and a small bottle of oil.

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Background

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11 Today's reading from Isaiah talks about the Jewish community's hopeful return from Babylon. Isaiah uses comforting images to show how this will happen: valleys will be filled, mountains will be lowered, and God's glory will be visible to everyone. This powerful and loving God will care for God's people. The message is clear: do not be afraid. The hard times of exile are ending. Your God is here!

Psalms 104 The psalm is a powerful response to Isaiah's message of God's power and mercy. It celebrates God's wisdom and majesty, affirming that God is the Creator and sustainer of life. Centuries later, God remains present, faithful, and merciful.

Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7 Paul addresses the Christian community in Crete, highlighting that God's grace is revealed through Jesus Christ. He encourages followers to reject immorality and live with fairness and self-control while anticipating Jesus' return. Paul explains that it is through God's kindness and love that we are saved by the Holy Spirit, representing a new birth for the baptized, freeing them from sin and instilling hope for eternal life. He underscores the Holy Spirit's role in renewing believers as they await the Lord's return, affirming God's constant presence.

Luke 3:15-16, 21-22 Jesus' baptism is an essential event in salvation history. It shows that Jesus is the Son of God, his mission, and his unity as the second person of the Holy Trinity.

The Baptism of the Lord reminds us of our baptism and our role as God's beloved children. The Spirit anoints us to bring light and love to the world.

Luke's Gospel emphasizes Jesus' prayer after his baptism, showing the importance of prayer in Jesus' ministry and the way divine revelation occurs. It also reminds us, the baptized, of the importance of prayer in our ministry.

The Liturgy

Procession from the main Church

After the opening prayer, when all are seated, the leaders come forward and stand facing the altar.

Priest: (in these or similar words)

When most of the children have formed a procession, the leader with the book proceeds to the place of the celebration. The second leader usually walks behind the children. Upon arrival at the location of the celebration, the leader places the book on the prepared table.

Dear Children, go with your children and hear that Jesus is God's beloved. Know that you, too, are loved by God.

Welcome.

The leaders assist the children in sitting and preparing. **Begin with the Sign of the Cross.** Help the children think and connect their actions as they touch their foreheads, shoulders, and stomachs. The leader may say the following prayer in these or similar words.

Let us pray.

Dear God,

Thank you for sending us Jesus to show us how much you love us. Help us to listen to your Word today and to follow Jesus in our lives. May we always remember that we are your children, loved and chosen by you.

We ask this through Jesus, your Son.

Amen.

Invite the children to listen to the readings. Proclaiming all the readings is unnecessary; however, the Gospel is required.

First Reading

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and cry that she has served her term and her penalty has been paid.

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level. Then the glory of God shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together."

Lift your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it, do not fear; say, "Here is your God!"

The Lord God comes with might; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

He will feed his flock like a shepherd, gather the lambs in his arms, carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

The word of the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

Responsorial Psalm

R. O bless the Lord, my soul.

O Lord my God, you are very great.
You are clothed with honour and majesty,
wrapped in light as with a garment.
You stretch out the heavens like a tent. **R.**

Living things all look to you
to give them their food in due season;
when you give to them, they gather it up;
when you open your hands, they are filled with good things. **R.**

Second Reading

A reading from the letter of Paul to Titus.

Beloved:

The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and, in the present age, to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

He gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

When God, our Saviour's goodness and loving kindness, appeared, he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

The word of the Lord.

Children: Thanks be to God.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

Gospel

The children stand for the Gospel. They sign themselves on the forehead, lips, and chest.

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel, according to Luke.

As the people were filled with expectation and questioned in their hearts whether John might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

Now, when all the people were baptized, and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove.

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

At the end of the Gospel, the Minister of the Word proclaims, "The Gospel of the Lord."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Children: Glory to you, O Lord.

Reflection: The Holy Family teaches us love, obedience, and trust in God.

The leader may offer this reflection in these or similar words. Remember the amount of time available to return to the main assembly. The leader may wish to reduce the number of questions. An excellent place to begin is the question:

Welcome and Introduction

Leader:

- **What did we hear?**
- **Who was baptized in today's Gospel?** (Jesus)
- **Who baptized Jesus?** (John the Baptist)
- **What happened after Jesus was baptized?** (The Holy Spirit came down like a dove, and God's voice spoke from heaven.)
- **What did God say?** ("You are my beloved Son. I am very pleased with you.")

Leader:

When Jesus was baptized, God showed everyone that Jesus was his Son and that he was loved.

- **Did you know that when you were baptized, God said the same thing about you?** Baptism reminds us that we are God's children, and he loves us very much.
- **How can we live as God's children this week?** (Let children respond with ideas like being kind, helping others, praying, etc.)

Catechetical Notes

1. Baptism is a sign of God's love: Just like Jesus was baptized in the River Jordan when we are baptized, we belong to Christ.
2. Becoming Part of God's Family: Baptism makes us part of a big family—the Church!
3. Water: During baptism, the priest or deacon pours water over a person's head or dips them in water. The water reminds us that God washes away anything that keeps us from God. It makes us clean and new in God's love.
4. The Holy Spirit: Baptism gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit, just like what happened to Jesus when He was baptized. The Holy Spirit helps us make good choices, love others, and follow God.
5. A New Beginning: Baptism begins a new life in Christ. It's like planting a seed of faith that will grow as we learn more about Jesus and live like Him.

Following the reflection, the prayer leader invites everyone to stand to profess their faith. Recite the Creed or use the sample below to ask the children to respond.

The Creed

Depending on the time, a simple profession of faith may be made (see below).

Leader: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth?

All: I believe.

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, who gave his life for us?

All: I believe.

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts and gives us everlasting life?

All: I believe.

Leader: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it.

Prayer of the Faithful

Leaders may begin the intercessions by announcing the needs they know. The leader may need to repeat and paraphrase the petition and conclude it with the cue for the response: we pray. All respond to each petition by saying, "Lord, hear our prayer." Sample intercessions are below.

Leader:

Let us pray to God, who loves and listens to us.

1. For the Church, that we may always share God's love with others. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For all baptized people, they may live as children of God. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

3. For those who feel lonely or forgotten, they may know God's love. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

4. For our families and friends, we may show kindness and love to one another. We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

The leader may invite other intercessions from the children.

Leader:

Loving God, hear our prayers spoken and in our hearts. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Return to the church.

Ask the children to return to the main assembly. Ask them to return quietly and think about what they have heard and are now doing. Be mindful of children having difficulty finding their families.

Readings: Lectionary Sundays and Solemnities;
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops Ottawa – Canada, 1992
Adapted for children.
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