



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

The Baptism of the Lord

Children's Liturgy of the Word

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord concludes the Christmas season by revealing Jesus' divine identity through his baptism in the Jordan, manifesting the Holy Trinity and inaugurating his public mission. Year A's readings—from Isaiah's Servant Song, Psalm 29's majestic voice of God, Peter's witness in Acts, and Matthew's Gospel account—emphasize God's favour on his chosen One, the gentle establishment of justice, and the call for believers to live their own baptismal grace amid humility and mission.

The baptism unveils Father, Son, and Spirit in a profound theophany, tearing open the heavens and bridging divine life to humanity. "The heavens are truly open and continue to open." The sinless Jesus is among penitents, humbling himself to share our condition and transform John's baptism into a divine revelation. Echoing Isaiah, the Father affirms Jesus as the elect Servant, inviting believers to hear him and receive adoptive sonship through their own baptism.

The feast reminds the faithful of their rebirth as God's children, called to conversion, justice, and good works empowered by the Spirit. "In Baptism every Christian personally meets him; he is inserted into the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection." Jesus obeys the Father fully, opening the path for our personal relationship with God, countering sin's "second death" with eternal life.

This feast calls for the renewal of baptismal promises, fostering a life of service and openness to the life of the Trinity.

Background

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7 portrays God's chosen Servant, upheld and delighted in by the Lord, upon whom the Spirit rests to bring forth justice gently to the nations—until justice is established. God calls the Servant as a covenant for the people. In the baptism liturgy, this prophecy finds fulfillment in Jesus, the meek Messiah who heals the wounded and proclaims justice with mercy, not arrogance.

Psalms 29:1-2, 3ac-4, 3b+9c-10 is a hymn of praise that calls heavenly beings and all creation to ascribe glory to the Lord in holy splendour. The psalm evokes Jesus' baptism, where the Father's proclamation sanctifies the waters, transforming chaos into divine blessing and peace.

Acts 10:34-38 Peter declares God's impartiality toward all nations, announcing Jesus of Nazareth through the power of the Holy Spirit. This links the baptism of Jesus' mission of liberation and salvation with the fulfillment of Isaiah's Servant passage by extending divine favour universally. It invites hearers to recognize Jesus' post-baptismal anointing as the pattern for Christian witness.

Matthew 3:13-17 Jesus comes from Galilee to John at the Jordan for baptism; John resists, but Jesus insists "to fulfill all righteousness." Emerging from the water, heavens open, the Spirit descends like a dove, and the Father's voice affirms: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." This Trinitarian epiphany inaugurates Jesus' mission as the Suffering Servant, humbling Himself among sinners to sanctify the waters and reveal divine communion. Jesus' Baptism is the action of the One who wanted to make himself one of us.

These readings reveal the unity of the Servant-Messiah's gentle justice, proclaimed by the divine voice, empowered by the Spirit for universal salvation, culminating in the Gospel's theophany.

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)

We gather today to celebrate the Baptism of Jesus. Go with your leaders to listen to the readings and think about how your baptism and the Baptism of Jesus are similar.

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

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 offer the following prayer, in these or similar words.

Today we celebrate a very special day in Jesus' life — the day He was baptized. That means today is also about your baptism, when God said to you, “You are my child, and I love you!”

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Amen.

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

READINGS

FIRST READING

Isaiah 42.1-4, 6-7

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Thus says the Lord:

"Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my spirit upon him;
he will bring forth justice to the nations.
He will not cry or lift up his voice,
or make it heard in the street;
a bruised reed he will not break,
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.
He will not grow faint or be crushed
until he has established justice in the earth;
and the coastlands wait for his teaching.
"I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness,
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;
I have given you as a covenant to the people,
a light to the nations,
to open the eyes that are blind,
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in darkness."

The word of the Lord.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 29.1-2, 3ac-4, 3b+9c-10

R. The Lord will bless his people with peace.

Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name;
worship the Lord in holy splendour. **R.**

The voice of the Lord is over the waters;
the Lord, over mighty waters.
The voice of the Lord is powerful;
the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. **R.**

The God of glory thunders,
and in his temple all say, "Glory!"
The Lord sits enthroned over the flood;
the Lord sits enthroned as king forever. **R.**

SECOND READING

Acts 10.34-38

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Peter began to speak:

"I truly understand that God shows no partiality,
but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right
is acceptable to him.

You know the message he sent to the people of Israel,
preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all.

That message spread throughout Judea,
beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced:
how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth
with the Holy Spirit and with power;
how he went about doing good
and healing all who were oppressed by the devil,
for God was with him."

The word of the Lord.

A period of silence is observed after the reading.

GOSPEL

Matthew 3.13-17

A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan,
to be baptized by him.

John would have prevented him, saying,
"I need to be baptized by you,
and do you come to me?"

But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so for now;
for it is proper for us in this way to fulfil all righteousness."

Then John consented.

And when Jesus had been baptized,
just as he came up from the water,
suddenly the heavens were opened to him
and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove
and alighting on him.

And a voice from heaven said,
"This is my Son, the Beloved,
with whom I am well pleased."

The Gospel of the Lord.

REIMAGINED READINGS FOR CHILDREN

The reimagined readings below are intended for use after the children have heard the original reading. The intent is to allow the children to hear the original reading and help them better understand it (not replace it).

Read at a minimum, the Gospel, which has the highest priority, and then ask the children to sit down. You can then read the reimagined reading. Leaders may not have time to read all of the reading. If time permits, after the Gospel, proclaim the Psalm, and then the first reading, if time permits.

Reimagined readers must always remain faithful to the original Scripture's intent, making it age-appropriate for children to understand.

FIRST READING

Long ago, God told the prophet, Isaiah, about a special helper, Jesus, God's own Son. God loves him so much and gives him power from the Holy Spirit. Here's the story told in easy words just for you:

"Look at my helper! I hold him up strong.

He's the one I picked, and I'm so happy with him.

I've given him my Spirit, like a big hug of power.

He'll help make things fair for everyone in the whole world.

He won't yell or shout loudly in the streets.

If a reed (like a bendy grass stick) is hurt and wobbly, he won't snap it.

If a candle wick is flickering low and almost out, he won't blow it away.

He'll keep making things right, gentle and true.

He won't get tired or give up until fairness covers the whole earth.

Even faraway islands will wait and listen to what he teaches.

I am God! I called you to do what's good and right.

I grabbed your hand tight and kept you safe.

You're like a promise to my people, a bright light for all nations.

You'll help blind eyes see,

free prisoners from dark jails,

and bring everyone out into the sunshine!"

Jesus is this gentle hero! He helps the weak, fixes what's broken, and brings God's love to everybody—no matter what.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Imagine a huge thunderstorm where God's voice booms like thunder, showing how strong and glorious He is! This psalm is like a song praising God for His mighty power over the waters and the whole world. Here's the song rewritten in super simple words just for you:

R. The Lord will bless his people with peace.

Hey angels and everyone in heaven,

clap and cheer for the Lord!

Give Him all the glory and super strength! **R.**

Praise the Lord's beautiful name!

Bow down and worship Him in His shiny holy house. **R.**

God's voice echoes over the big waters.

The glorious God thunders loud—

the Lord over the crashing waves! **R.**

God's voice is so strong and powerful.

God's voice shines with majesty, like a king! **R.**

In God's temple, everyone shouts, "Glory!"

The Lord sits like a king above the floodwaters,

ruling forever and ever! **R.**

God's voice is amazing—it's like thunder that shakes trees and mountains, but it also brings peace and shows He's in charge of everything. Just like at Jesus' baptism, when God's voice from heaven said He loves His Son, this psalm reminds us to cheer for our powerful, loving God!

SECOND READING

In our second reading, Saint Peter shares great news with his friends: God doesn't pick favourites—God loves every single person who tries to do what's right! Jesus came with God's power to bring peace and help everybody, starting right after His baptism.

Peter said, "I finally understand! God treats everyone the same—no favourites at all. In every country, if you love God and do good things, He loves you too!

God sent a special message to Israel about peace through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Lord of the whole world!

You know the story—it started in Galilee after John baptized people. God poured the Holy Spirit and super strength on Jesus from Nazareth.

Jesus went everywhere doing good things and healing people who were hurt or suffered from others, because God was right there with Him! "

Just like at Jesus' baptism, the Holy Spirit came down like a dove, giving Him power to love and help *you* too—no matter where you're from. Cheer for Jesus, our kind hero who shows God's big love for all!

GOSPEL

The Gospel tells us that Jesus goes to His cousin John by the Jordan River to get baptized. It's not because He did anything wrong—Jesus is perfect! But He wants to show us how to follow God's good plan. Watch what happens next—it's super special!

Jesus came from Galilee to John at the river. John said, "Wait, Jesus! You should baptize me! Why do you want me to baptize you?"

Jesus smiled and said, "Let's do it this way now. It's the right thing to obey God completely." So John agreed and baptized Jesus.

Right as Jesus came up from the water, the sky opened wide! The Holy Spirit came down like a soft, white dove and landed on Jesus.

Then a big, happy voice from heaven boomed, "This is my Son! I love Him so much—I'm super happy with Him!"

Wow! At Jesus' baptism, God the Father speaks, the Holy Spirit shows up like a dove, and Jesus stands strong in the water. It's like a family hug from heaven, showing us God loves Jesus—and loves you too! Get baptized, live like Jesus, and hear God's "I love you" every day.

Reflection

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:

What did you hear? Allow children to respond.

Today we heard about something very special — the day Jesus was baptized. Jesus went down into the river, and John poured water over His head. When Jesus came out of the water, God said something amazing: "You are my beloved Son. I love you."

Who here has heard the words "I love you" before?

That feels really good, doesn't it? Now here is the best part: God says the same thing to you — every single day. When you were baptized, God made you part of His family. That means you are never alone. God walks with you to school, to practice, to bedtime — everywhere.

Where do you go that you would like God to walk with you? (School, sports, home)

Yes — God goes with you there, too!

Sometimes we make mistakes. Sometimes we get angry. Sometimes we forget to be kind. But guess what? God never stops loving us.

When you make a mistake, do you think God still loves you? (Yes)

That's right — always.

When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit came down like a dove. A dove is gentle and peaceful. God sends His Spirit to help us be gentle too.

Can you think of one way you can be gentle today? (Family, friend)

Great ideas!

Now place your hand on your heart. Let's listen very quietly. (Softly say) God is whispering to you right now: "You are my child." "I am proud of you." "I love you very much."

Who is God's child? (Point to the children — they answer: "Me!")

Yes — you!

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.

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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, concluding it with the cue for the response: 'We pray.' All respond to each petition by saying, "Lord, hear our prayer." Sample intercessions are below.

The intercessions are said. The Leader introduces them, and an assistant announces them.

The leader says:

Let us pray to God, our loving Father, who calls us His beloved children. After each prayer, we all say, 'Lord, hear our prayer.'

R: Lord, hear our prayer.

Assistant:

For the Church, that we always remember we are God's family and share His love with the world. We pray to the Lord. R:

Assistant:

For parents, godparents, and families, that they help children grow in faith and kindness. We pray to the Lord. R:

Assistant:

For children everywhere, that they know they are loved by God just as Jesus is loved. We pray to the Lord. R:

Assistant:

For those who feel sad, lonely, or afraid, that they may feel God's gentle care today. We pray to the Lord. R:

Assistant:

In the quiet of our hearts, we offer our own prayers... [pause] We pray: Come, Lord Jesus. R:

The Leader says:

Loving God, thank you for calling us your children in Baptism. Hear the prayers we make with trusting hearts, and help us follow Jesus every day. We ask this through Christ our Lord. 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.

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM: WELCOME TO GOD'S FAMILY!

INITIATION INTO THE CHURCH - BECOMING CHILDREN OF GOD!

BAPTISM IS INITIATION!

WE JOIN GOD'S FAMILY
& THE CHURCH!

WELCOME TO
THE BIG FAMILY OF
THE CHURCH!

WHAT BAPTISM MEANS!



ORIGINAL SIN
IS FORGIVEN!



A VOICE FROM HEAVEN
SAYS: 'THIS IS MY BELOVED
SON, WITH WHOM
I AM PLEASED!'
(Matthew 3:17)

GOD IS PLEASED
TO WELCOME US!

WE BECOME ROYALS! (PRIEST, PROPHET, KING)



PRIEST!
PRAY &
BLESS
OTHERS!



PROPHET!
SHARE THE
GOOD NEWS &
EVANGELIZE!



KING!
SHARE GOD'S
AUTHORITY &
CARE FOR
THE WORLD!

CALLED TO EVANGELIZE! REJECT SATAN & LIVE A HOLY LIFE!

JESUS' HUMILITY!

JESUS SHOWS
US TO BE
HUMBLE!

I SHOULD
BE BAPTIZED
BY YOU!

JOHN
WAS ALSO
HUMBLE!

PLEASE BAPTIZE
ME, TO FULFILL ALL
RIGHTEOUSNESS.

OUR BAPTISMAL CALL!



REJECT
SATAN!



LIVE A PURE,
HOLY LIFE!



GO TO CONFESSION
WHEN WE SIN!



APOLOGIZE
& SAY
SORRY!

LIVE AS ONE
FAMILY OF GOD!



MEMORY VERSE: MATTHEW 3:17 'THIS IS MY OWN
DEAR SON WITH WHOM I'M PLEASED.'
WE ARE ALL CHILDREN OF GOD!

HALLELUJAH! THANK YOU FOR OUR BAPTISM!

Readings: Lectionary Sundays and Solemnities,
Canadian Conferences of Catholic Bishops, 2009, adapted for children.
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