

# Jesus' Baptism

## LEADER Bible Study

Zechariah's son, John, grew up in the wilderness. His ministry began when God's word came to him, and he began preaching near the Jordan River. John worked to get 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. 40:3a).

John called people to repent of their sins, and he baptized them in the Jordan River. John also instructed people on right living. (See Luke 3:10-14.) Some of the people suspected that John might be the Messiah, but John insisted, "One who is more powerful than I am is coming" (Luke 3:16).

Before His ministry began, Jesus came from Galilee to be baptized by John at the Jordan River. But John was calling people to a baptism of repentance. Jesus never sinned (see Heb. 4:15; 2 Cor. 5:21), so why did Jesus come to be baptized? John recognized this when he said, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me?" (Matt. 3:14).

Commentators' ideas vary about why exactly 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). Jesus completely obeyed God, and God audibly confirmed His sonship.

As you teach, allow time for kids to ask questions about repentance, salvation, and baptism. 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 Him. (See Rom. 6:3-4.)



The **BIBLE** Story

## **Jesus' Baptism**

*Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 3; John 1*

**John the Baptist lived in the wilderness.** His clothes were made out of camel's hair and he wore a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey. **John began telling people, "Repent and be baptized because 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?" they asked.

**Long before John was born, the prophet Isaiah said, "Someone is shouting in the wilderness. He says, 'Prepare the way for the Lord; make His paths straight!'"** Isaiah was talking about John. John had 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 greater than me is coming. I am not worthy to remove His sandals. I baptize you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."**

**By this time, Jesus was an adult. He went 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.** "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 and Jesus saw the Holy Spirit coming down on Him like a dove. God's 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.*

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