God’s Big Story: Jesus Gets Baptized

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| scripture focus |
| Mark 1:4-11 |

big picture

Both the figure of John the Baptist and the story of Jesus’ baptism have raised questions from interpreters. How exactly was John preparing the way for Jesus? And if John was baptizing people who needed to repent, then why did Jesus (who never sinned) need to be baptized? Encourage your children to wrestle with these questions, and don’t suggest answers right away. Make sure that your children notice that God was well-pleased with Jesus before Jesus had done anything spectacular; God was pleased with Jesus because of who Jesus was, not because of what he had done. Mark writes that after Jesus’ baptism, the heavens were torn apart – literally ripped open (like the temple curtain after Jesus’ death). Adam and Eve’s failure to obey put a barrier between them and God; it resulted in a closed gate and angels with flaming swords barring the way back to Eden. But Jesus’ act of obedience and submission did the opposite; it tore open the barrier between people and God. The Holy Spirit descended, and the glory and peace and love of God made its home with humanity.

|  | storybooks | bible readings |
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| read aloud | *Jesus Storybook Bible:* “Heaven Breaks Through”, p.200-207 | Mark 1:4-11; Matthew 3:1-17; Luke 3:1-22 |
| discuss/ ask | What would you think if you encountered somebody who lived in the desert, dressed in animal skins, and ate bugs and honey? Why do you think people were so drawn to John the Baptist, even though he was so strange?  How do you think John the Baptist got people ready for Jesus?  People came to John to be baptized because they were sorry for the wrong things they had done and wanted to be washed clean and start over. But Jesus had never done anything wrong. Why do you think he was baptized?  Why do you think that God was well pleased with Jesus? Did Jesus do anything special that made God say that? When have you felt that somebody was proud of you and loved you? How did it make you feel?  What do you think it looked like for the heavens to be torn open? What do you think is in up heaven that you don’t find on earth? What do you think it meant when the barrier between heaven and earth was torn open? | |
| do together | Tell the story of either your own baptism or a baptism you witnessed. What did you feel? What do you think happened at that baptism?  Reenact the story of Jesus’ baptism with a bowl of water and Lego figures or other figurines – let John “baptize” them. Hold a heavy piece of paper over the bowl of water with a paper dove on top. When the Jesus figurine is baptized, tear the paper in half and let the dove drop down into the water (perhaps also have a flashlight shine into the water) and choose a voice to say “This is my son, in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him.” | |