

LORDSBRIDGE TEAM OF CHURCHES



Baptism of Jesus – 10th January 2021

Read Mark 1.4-11

You may like to use this material as a basis for discussion in your family.

Last week in our Gospel reading Jesus was just a baby receiving some special visitors: the wise men. This week he is already a man, probably 30 years old, and about to start his ministry of teaching and meeting people. Very little is recorded about Jesus' early life and so the accounts in the Bible jump to the important three years of his ministry.

Three of the Gospels tell the story of Jesus' baptism (Matthew, Mark and Luke) – today's reading is from Mark. It's a short description but has lots of detail in it. There are important symbols in the story, such as water and a dove. Symbols help to communicate ideas and information.

First of all, we read about John the Baptist and his role of encouraging people to turn away from things that are evil and turn to God. He asks people to repent of their sins and be baptised in the River Jordan. Have you been baptised? Do you remember your baptism or did it take place when you were a baby? What did your baptism mean for you then, and what does it mean to you now?

Water is an important part of a baptism. Think of all the ways in which we use water; make a list to show how important water is for our lives. We can't survive without water. In baptism water is used as a symbol of life. It represents the start of a new life with God, where we are washed clean of all our sins.

Jesus asks John to baptise him. Jesus doesn't need to repent of his sins – he is the Son of God so he is without sin. So, why do you think he wants to be baptised by John?

When Jesus is baptised, a dove comes out of the sky and the voice of God is heard. Doves are often used as a symbol of God. They represent the Holy Spirit. When Jesus is baptised the three aspects of God are present; the voice of God the Father, Jesus the Son of God, and the dove representing the Holy Spirit. These three aspects of God are called the Trinity. When someone is baptised in church the vicar asks God to send the Holy Spirit to that person, so that they know that God is with them throughout their lives – even though they can't see God they know that God is there.

Activities

- Be a symbol sleuth. Look for symbols in your home – which symbols are very common and well known e.g. recycling, first aid?
Which symbol is used throughout the world to represent Christianity? Can you find out what symbol was used by the first Christians? It was used as a secret sign.



- A dove is often used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Copy the dove from this page onto white card and hang it up in your bedroom as a reminder of God's presence with you at all times. You could make one for each room of your house.

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Prayer

Loving God, you have given us a world to care for and people to love.

We thank you for the presence of your Holy Spirit to support and guide us.

Help us to make new beginnings and face new challenges with courage. Amen.

