



a Kendall Hunt Company

## Baptism of the Lord, Year A, junior high - RCLB Lectionary



### Junior High Session

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

Matthew 3:13-17

## Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

O God,

our baptism calls us to take on the mission of Jesus.

Help us to live our baptism.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

## Opening Life Reflection

The theme for today is Baptism and mission. To begin, invite the youngsters to prepare a mission statement for themselves as active members of the Catholic Church. Divide the large group into small groups of five or six. Give each small group a sheet of newsprint paper and have them jot down what they see as the mission of Christians in the world. Bring the small groups together and have them share their responses with the large group. As a large group, form a mission statement combining the responses from each small group, writing the statement on one sheet of newsprint.

- Do Catholic Christians have a mission?
- What is the mission of Catholic Christians in the world?
- How does the Sacrament of Baptism help us to make a difference in the world?

Allow time for discussion. In Baptism we are united with Christ and we take on his mission to spread love and healing throughout the world.



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# Listening to the Word of God

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In the Old Testament reading listen to a description of God's chosen servant.

Read Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7.

Allow for silence.

## Scripture Discussion Starters

- How is God's servant described?
- What will God's servant bring to the Earth?
- What is hopeful about the reading?

In the gospel today listen to the baptism of Jesus.

Read Matthew 3:13-17.

Allow for silence.



- What does Jesus ask John to do?
- Why does John baptize Jesus?
- What happens just after Jesus comes up from the water?

## Scripture Background

Provide 2-3 minutes of background information on the readings using the Catechist Background section.

The baptism of Jesus continues the theme of Jesus' humanity, which is apparent throughout the Christmas season. However, today's celebration of the Baptism of the Lord marks the end of the Christmas season. The baptism of Jesus begins his public ministry. Today's readings help us understand the significance of the sacrament of Baptism for all Christians.

The Old Testament reading today describes a chosen one who will deliver God's people.

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God's servant will endure suffering and remain faithful to his mission. God's chosen servant will be a light to all nations and bring justice to the world.

The Gospel today presents the baptism of Jesus. Jesus comes to John to be baptized. John questions Jesus at first because he thinks that Jesus should be the one to baptize. Jesus tells John to baptize him in order to fulfill what he has come to do. When Jesus comes up from the water, the heavens open and Jesus is revealed as God's Son, the beloved.

## **Questions for Deeper Reflection**

- What does the baptism of Jesus reveal about him?
- How does Jesus' baptism mark the beginning of his public ministry?
- How does the sacrament of Baptism mark a new beginning for all Christians?

[If you are not going to continue with the doctrinal discussion, proceed to the Gospel in Life.]

## **Doctrinal Discussion Starters**

### **Baptism and Mission**

In the sacrament of Baptism we are joined to Jesus Christ and we are joined to the Church. We become members of the body of Christ and we share in the mission of Jesus. In Baptism we begin a new life that will be lived in the Spirit.

Water is the main symbol used in Baptism. The term "baptism" comes from the Greek word to "plunge" or "immerse". At our baptism we plunge into the water of new life. In Baptism we are cleansed and all sins are forgiven.

Catholics understand Baptism to be a sacrament that we continue to live throughout our lives. Through Baptism we are charged with the responsibility to continue the mission of Jesus and to participate in the Church's mission of spreading Christ's message of forgiveness and love throughout the world.

- How does our Baptism join us to Christ?
- How does our Baptism join us to the Church?



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- How does our Baptism help us to spread Christ's message of love and forgiveness to others?

## **The Gospel in Life**

How can you show others that you are a member of the Body of Christ this week?

### **Connecting to Faith First® Legacy Edition**

At Home Family Guide, theme 7

Junior High, Church and Sacraments, chapter 8

