

Using ROOTS in mixed-age range groups

10-16 January 2021

Baptism of the Lord

More options for your session

Vary the session to suit the range of ages, preferences and timing for your children's or youth group. Use the **Activity Sheet** **WES** as needed.

See **WED** Very young children page with more activities, prayers and songs.

Gather

Look at a modern-day baptism

5 mins **WES**

You will need: photos from a baptism (ideally from your own church or the family of someone in the group).

- Explain that baptism means being washed in water as a sign of God's forgiveness and a fresh start.
- Ask if anyone has attended a baptism. Discuss who within the group has been baptized or what they know about baptism.

Share the Word

A version of the story for very young children.

Prepare a bag with the following objects in it and invite the children to pull out each item in turn as you tell the story: toy camel or insect, blue ribbon, sandal, dove.

John was Jesus' cousin.

He lived in the wilderness, he wore clothes made of camel hair and ate locusts!

He baptized people in the river and told them that someone even more special was coming, someone whose sandals he wasn't even important enough to untie!

He was preparing people to meet Jesus.

One day, Jesus came to the river for John to baptize him.

As Jesus came out of the water, the Holy Spirit came down like a dove and a voice from heaven called: "You are my Son. I love you and I am very pleased with you!"

Explore and respond

Wipe-away drawings

Play and wonder about God's forgiveness

Provide some chalkboards or wipe-clean boards for the children to make marks on, and then wipe them away.

Sock puppets

Create something new together

Gather together some old, clean socks, and a selection of craft materials for the children to 'upcycle' into simple sock puppets.

Discuss the need for new beginnings

10 mins **WEA**

An opportunity to reflect on world issues

You will need: a large sheet of paper, marker pen.

- Remind the group that John told the people who came to see him that they needed to repent, to have a change of heart and to behave differently.
- Invite everyone to suggest things in the world where people need to repent and change their behaviour, e.g. climate change, bullying, poverty.

- Invite ideas for making a difference in the local area. Make a plan for something achievable and practical that will help to right a wrong, or encourage others to behave differently.

A messy experiment

5 mins **ES**

Demonstrate how power changes things

You will need: space outside; a large bottle of Coca-Cola™, hard mint sweets, e.g. mint imperials.

- Take the group outside. Place the bottle in the centre of the space and remove the lid, asking everyone to stand well back.
- Add several mints into the bottle and move away swiftly to watch the liquid overflow.
- Discuss how simple things can cause such a major reaction. Make a link with the water of baptism which transformed Jesus' life as he began his ministry. Talk together about the difference baptism has made/might make to your lives.

Sing

WED Abbreviations and music links* in Hymns, songs & music.

0-5s Now all the world is changing
(new words **WED** to: Dingle, dangle scarecrow)

5-11s I'm Gonna Jump Up And Down (Be Happy!),
Doug Horley on Lovely Jubbly*
If you climb to the top of a mountain (CJP 388)
Fun, Rend Co. Kids on Sparkle. Pop. Rampage*

12+ O Come to the Altar, Elevation Worship on
Here as in Heaven*

Pray

See **WED** for Welsh translations of prayers.

Pray with play dough

Give each child a lump of play dough. Invite them to make one thing then squash it and make something new.

A gathering prayer

God of all the world,
we come to your Word to be changed,
to be challenged
and to feel cherished
by your Son, Jesus, who is the Word made flesh. **Amen.**

A prayer for forgiveness

Give everyone a piece of paper. Ask them to write one thing they would like to change about themselves, e.g. be more patient, then place it in a basket as you pray:

Dear God,
we are sorry that we don't always do or say the right things.
Please hear our prayer and help us to change, in Jesus' name.
Amen.

A prayer for others

Lord Jesus,
we pray for those whose past troubles them
and who long to start again.
May turning to you help their worlds change for the better.
Amen.

The ROOTS resources for very young children can be found on the third page of the weekly materials. They are all clearly indicated by a teddy head icon. There is a version of the story for very young children; activities to play and create; a prayer activity and specific song suggestions for under 5s.

Using ROOTS in mixed-age range groups

The children's session is presented on the first two pages of each set of weekly materials. Within the children's sessions we always include two songs with new words written to familiar tunes.

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The whole world changed

Mark 1.4-11 Baptism of the Lord

This passage is the first appearance of Jesus as an adult and comes at the beginning of his ministry. His baptism is a new beginning and a transformation. John the baptist says that he is not worthy to untie Jesus' shoes. He recognises that Jesus will be able to do much greater things by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This week we explore the opportunity for a new beginning that comes with Jesus.

Prepare your children's session

Read Bible notes on [CDS](#).

Our new beginnings come through the forgiveness God offers which is not just a once in a life-time opportunity, like baptism, but something that God offers us each and every day. Take an opportunity now to say sorry to God and receive forgiveness.

Children face many new beginnings that can transform their lives, e.g. learning to read, changing school. Reflecting together on the transitions those in your group have made recently may help children understand how significant this episode was for Jesus.

Provide the following play materials for very young children throughout the session: plastic toys, e.g. dolls, bowls of water and sponges to wash them.

Go to www.rootsontheweb.com for all links, templates and images. Extra ideas can be found on page 12.

Children's session

Gather

Use the song, prayer and activity to gather the group and introduce the theme. (5 mins)

Sing to the tune: The wheels on the bus

Welcome back to church this year, church this year, church this year. Welcome back to church this year, we're glad to have you here.

Loving God, we thank you for John the Baptist whose voice spoke truth; for the voice of Jesus' baptism which spoke of delight; and for Jesus himself whose voice calls us to follow him to new beginnings. Amen.

Wash your hands

You will need: a bowl of water, soap, towels – or this can be an imaginary activity.

- Invite the children and adults to take turns to wash their hands to prepare for the session.
- Ask when they usually wash their hands. Talk about the occasions when we wash our hands and how it can mark the end of one, possibly messy, activity and preparation for a new activity, such as eating.


ES

John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness. He was a strange-looking man, clothed in a hairy camel skin, with a leather belt around his waist. And he ate strange things: locusts and wild honey.

John was announcing a message of forgiveness of sins if people repented and were baptized. People came from all over to be baptized by John in the River Jordan. They came from the city of Jerusalem and from the countryside all around.

John shouted loudly, "Someone else is coming. Someone more powerful than me, I am not important enough even to untie his shoes!" John said that although he baptized people with water, the one who was coming would be different. He would baptize people with the Holy Spirit.

Then one day he came. Jesus came from Nazareth to the River Jordan, to be baptized by John. And as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were torn apart and a dove came down; the Holy Spirit descended onto Jesus. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, I love you and I am pleased with you." **Mark 1.4-11**



See Share the Word.

Share the Word

Mark 1.4-11

Stop and share

Read the story on p.10 and pause at the [CDS](#) to share these points with the children. Then use the activity to explore the passage together. (10 mins)

- Remind the children that John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin.
- Explain that repent means saying sorry to God for what you have done; having a change of heart.
- At the end, show the picture of a modern baptism and discuss the differences between baptism today and what happened to Jesus.

Create a story scene

ES

You will need: a strip of blue paper; play figures, a picture or cut-out of a dove.

- Lay out the blue paper and ask the children to imagine it is a river.
- Then use the play figures as you introduce different characters in the story. Finally bring the dove down to rest on the 'Jesus' figure, as you read the last words of the passage.

See p.12 for a version of the story for very young children.

Explore and respond

Use these ideas to help the children make connections between the Bible passage and their lives. (20 mins)

Play with bubbles

ES

Explore the difference water can make

You will need: a beaker for each child; water, washing-up liquid, straws, a towel.

- Half fill each beaker with water. Offer everyone a beaker and add a squirt of washing-up liquid.
- Invite the children to describe what they can see in their beaker. Now give each child a straw and invite them to blow into the mixture.
- Discuss what changes the air has made to the mixture. Remind the group that everything changed for Jesus when he was baptized.

Create a story card reminder

E

Illustrate the main characters

You will need: copies of the template (on [CDS](#)), one per child, pens or pencils.

- Help the children to cut out the template and fold to make doors that open. Talk together about the story as a new beginning for Jesus, like a door opening or a new chapter.
- Ask the children to draw on the outside of their door: John the Baptist on one side, and a crowd of people on the other.
- Invite the children to open their door and draw the scene of Jesus coming up out of the river in the centre, with the dove above him inside the top semi-circle.

Go with God

Consider together what you have explored, what that means for each of you and how it might influence your daily lives. (10 mins)

- Ask the children to think about one situation in their life or in the world where they'd like to ask God to give them a new beginning.
- Invite them to come and dip their finger in a bowl of water as they ask God for that help and guidance.

May the God of new beginnings give you courage to face each new challenge, joy in each new day, and friends to journey with you through this new week. Amen.

Go with God 24/7

Encourage the children to put their faith into action.

Every time you use water, remember to thank God for loving you just as God loved Jesus. **ES**

Before you finish, sing and give out the **ROOTS at home** resources [CDS](#) to encourage faith at home.

Sing to the tune: I'm a little teapot

At this new beginning, God is near, guiding, helping, bringing cheer. When we feel uncertain, we can shout – God will always help us out!

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The first of these can be found in the *Gather* section as a way to introduce the session. The second is found within *Go with God* as the group are sent out.

In addition to that, we always highlight activities within the children's material which are suitable or easily adaptable for very young children.

Using ROOTS in mixed-age range groups

Gathering song

🎵 Sing to the tune: *The wheels on the bus*

Welcome back to church this year, church this year, church this year.
Welcome back to church this year, we're glad to have you here.

Leaving song

🎵 Sing to the tune: *I'm a little teapot*

At this new beginning, God is near,
guiding, helping, bringing cheer.
When we feel uncertain, we can shout –
God will always help us out!

The gathering and leaving songs are perfect for under 5s and can help to bring them into the session at the beginning and gather everyone back together at the end.

The version of the story for very young children is also really great for children of all ages and is one of the key points when the group might come together, even if children end up doing differentiated activities in between. This way of sharing the Word either uses signs/actions, a story scene, a story bag, symbolic objects or puppets. It uses key storytelling methods which work well for under 5s, e.g. repetition, simple language and are creative and engaging ways to tell the Bible story.

Share the Word

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As Jesus came out of the water, the Holy Spirit came down like a dove and a voice from heaven called:

'You are my Son. I love you and I am very pleased with you!'