



**WELCOMING
CHILDREN
in WORSHIP**

**THE CATHOLIC
UNIVERSITY
OF AMERICA**



Baptism of the Lord January

Adaptive Activities for Children



**National Catholic
Partnership on Disability**

© 2026



Introduction

Welcome and thank you for your ministry that serves the liturgical formation of children for their participation in the Eucharist, the “source and summit of the Christian life.” This resource is provided by the Committee on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities of the National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD). It aims to offer an adaptive catechetical opportunity for all who have a heart for disability ministry to reflect on the liturgical year. We welcome you to this virtual community and hope you find this resource beneficial.

Here you will find reflections to guide children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, or diverse learners, through the current liturgical season with adaptive catechesis to help them to participate fully. Each offering includes prayer, Scripture, activities and more that incorporate the senses and take into consideration the needs of all learners. We invite you to gather children around the table of the home or the table of the classroom as preparation for their participation at the sacred table of the Eucharist.

Each monthly edition incorporates the following:

- 1. Prayer**
- 2. Sacred Scripture**
- 3. Reflection**
- 4. Faith in Action**
- 5. Activities**
- 6. Saint**
- 7. Resources/Bibliography**

Prayer

Leader: Do you know what baptism is? If you don't know or can't remember, don't worry, we will talk about it in a few minutes. What is important to know now is that you have been baptized and Jesus was also baptized. That is one of the many ways that we are just like Jesus! Today we are going to learn all about his baptism and why it is important. But first, we are going to start with a prayer that repeats our baptismal vows. A vow is a promise and in this prayer we are telling God that we continue to believe in him and in the goodness of all that he has done. After each question you will say "Yes, Lord! I love you and believe in you!"

Begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Leader: Will you do your best, with the help of God, to avoid bad things?

All: **Yes Lord, I love you and believe in you!**

Leader: Do you believe in God who created heaven and earth?

All: **Yes Lord, I love you and believe in you!**

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus, the Son of God and Mary?

All: **Yes Lord, I love you and believe in you!**

Leader: Do you believe that Jesus died on the cross, came back on Easter day, and is with God the Father now?

All: **Yes Lord, I love you and believe in you!**

Leader: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

All: **Yes Lord, I love you and believe in you!**

Leader: Do you believe that all Christians living and dead are part of the Body of Christ?

All: **Yes Lord, I love you and believe in you!**

Leader: Do you believe that God forgives our sins and that we will live forever?

All: **Yes Lord, I love you and believe in you!**

Leader: This is our faith. If you are proud to share it with others, say Amen.

All: **Amen.**

Close with the Sign of the Cross.



Image by HollyGirl18 from Pixabay

Reading of Sacred Scripture

Matthew 3:13-17

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.

John tried to prevent him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?”

Jesus said to him in reply, “Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed him.

After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened [for him], and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove [and] coming upon him.

And a voice came from the heavens, saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



Unidentified Artist. Baptism of Christ. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Bequest of Mabel Johnson Langhorne.

Gospel Reflection

Did you hear John trying to get out of baptizing Jesus? John knew that Jesus was special and did not need baptism like we need baptism. You and I were born with original sin, passed down from Adam and Eve when they went against God's rule. Baptism cleansed us from original sin to bring us closer to God.

Jesus was born without original sin, so why did he want to be baptized? Jesus chose to model for his followers the importance of following God's will and to show that he would take the place of sinners. Jesus wants us to be cleansed from original sin and for us to become a member of his Church by way of baptism so that we can live with him forever.

It was also important for Jesus to be baptized because when the dove appears and God the Father speaks everyone present hears God call Jesus his Son. After his baptism, Jesus travels and teaches and performs miracles and more people see and believe that he is the Son of God.



Image by Karen .t from Pixabay

Faith in Action

Celebrating the Baptism of the Lord: Growing Faith Through Jesus' Example

The Baptism of the Lord celebrates the day Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan River. John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin. This moment shows us how Jesus chose to share in our human experience and begin his mission of love and service.

When Jesus was baptized, the heavens opened, and God said:
"You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

This feast reminds us:

- ◇ Jesus shows us the way to live as God's children.
- ◇ Baptism calls us to belong to God's family.
- ◇ We are loved by God and invited to share his love with others.



Image by Thomas from Pixabay

The Baptism of the Lord reminds us that Jesus entered the waters not for himself, but for us to show that we belong to God's family and are called to share his love with the world. This feast invites us to go out and live our baptism by bringing light and hope to others.

Water of Life: Remembering Our Baptism - Help families recall their baptism and celebrate being part of God's family.

- ◇ Create a prayer space using a bowl of water, a baptismal candle, a white garment (perhaps one that the children wore), and some oil
- ◇ Take time to share memories and photos from each person's baptism
- ◇ Invite each family member to gently touch the water, make the Sign of the Cross, and say: "Thank you, God, for making me your beloved child."

Adaptations: Use warm water for comfort. Allow children with sensory sensitivities to use a small sponge to feel the water.

Sharing Jesus' Baptism - Help families understand Jesus' baptism and live its meaning by creating a sensory-rich experience.

- ◇ Create a "Jordan River" at home using a shallow container or tray filled with water.
- ◇ Add smooth stones, shells, or blue fabric to represent the river.
- ◇ Place a picture or statue of Jesus and John the Baptist nearby.
- ◇ As a family, gather and read Luke 3:21-22: "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

Adaptations: Include tactile items for sensory engagement.
Use audio recordings of the Scripture.



Image from Canva

Go Out and Share - Engage in an activity to share God's love with others.

- ◇ Make "God's Beloved" blessing cards with the words: "You are God's beloved child."
- ◇ Deliver them to neighbors, parish members, or a local nursing home.
- ◇ If possible, invite another family to join your "Jordan River" prayer time and share blessings together.

Adaptations: Use large print, bright colors, or tactile decorations. Children can decorate cards with water drops, doves, or rainbows.

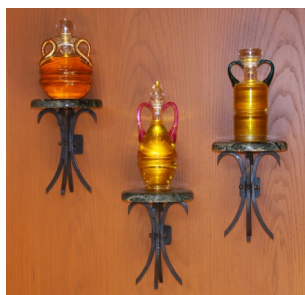
Community Connection - Connecting the Sacrament of Baptism to parish life.

- ◇ Visit your parish baptismal font.
- ◇ Talk about baptism and retell baptismal stories from your family.

◇ Find the sacred oils in the Church. Smell the chrism oil if you are able.

◇ Pray together: "Lord, help us live like Jesus—humble, loving, and ready to serve."

◇ Take a photo and share it with your parish or faith group to inspire others.



Jonathunder, GFDL 1.2, via
Wikimedia Commons



Farragutful, CC BY-SA 3.0, via
Wikimedia Commons

Activities with Children

Let's Talk: Have a conversation with your child about Jesus' baptism and why it matters. You can use these questions to help guide your talk:

◇ What happened?

Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. When Jesus came out of the water, the Holy Spirit came down like a dove, and God's voice said that Jesus is his beloved Son.

◇ Think about it:

Why do you think Jesus chose to be baptized?

How do you think Jesus felt when God showed his love so clearly?

◇ Why is this important?

Jesus' baptism shows us how much God loves him and us. It also reminds us that when we are baptized we become part of God's family and are called to follow Jesus with love and kindness.

Let's Read: One of the best ways to learn about our Lord's baptism is by reading the story together in the Holy Bible. Here are some special passages you and your family can enjoy reading this month.

◇ Matthew 3:13–17

◇ Mark 1:9–11

◇ Luke 3:21–22

◇ John 1:29–34



Photo by Antoni Shkraba Studio

Let's Make It: Jesus' Baptism Scene

Supplies: Blue construction paper (background/water), Brown or green paper (riverbank), White paper, Cotton balls, Crayons or markers, Glue, Scissors

Optional: glitter or light-blue tissue paper

Directions:

1. Create the river: Glue blue paper onto a larger sheet to make the Jordan River.
2. Add Jesus: Draw and cut out a simple picture of Jesus (or draw him directly on the paper) standing in the water. Color him in and glue him onto the river.
3. Add the Holy Spirit: Draw and cut out a dove from white paper. Glue it above Jesus. You can add a cotton ball to make the dove soft and fluffy.
4. God's love: Draw sun rays or light coming down from the sky. You can add glitter or tissue paper to show God's glory.
5. Finishing touch: Write at the top "Jesus Is God's Beloved Son."

Let's Cook: "Baptism Cupcakes – God's Beloved"

Supplies: Plain cupcakes or mini cupcakes (store-bought or homemade), White frosting, Blue sprinkles or blue sugar, Mini marshmallows,

Optional: white chocolate chips or jelly beans

Directions:

1. Frost the cupcakes: Spread white frosting on each cupcake. Talk about how white reminds us of new life and God's love.
2. Add the water: Sprinkle a little blue sugar or blue sprinkles on top to represent baptismal water.



Image from Pixabay

3. Create the dove: Place one mini marshmallows (wings) on either side of a big marshmallow (body of the dove) on top of the water to represent the Holy Spirit.
4. Finish the design: Add a small white chocolate chip or jelly bean for the dove's head if you'd like.

Talk About It While You Decorate:

- ◇ What do the blue sprinkles remind us of?
- ◇ Who came down like a dove at Jesus' baptism?
- ◇ What does it mean to be God's beloved child?

Simple Prayer Before Eating:

"Thank you, God, for loving us and calling us your children. Help us remember our baptism every day. Amen."

Jordan River Sensory Bin: Sensory bins can help children with hands-on learning. This month, read Scripture about Jesus' baptism and create a sensory bin based on words and objects mentioned in the text. Potential objects include:

Blue water or blue fabric

Smooth stones

Small bowl or cup

Toy people or peg dolls

Optional: toy dove



Image from Canva

Saint for December

Saint Francis de Sales

Feast Day January 24

Francis de Sales was born two months early on August 21, 1567, in France. His parents were nobility, very important people. Francis was smart and received a good education. Francis had a great love for God and knew he wanted to serve God from an early age, but hid that from his parents. Francis earned advanced college degrees in law and theology and then decided to become a priest. His parents were not happy with this because they planned on him becoming a politician and marrying a woman from an important family.

Francis spent a lot of time telling people about Jesus. At first, no one would listen to him. But Francis was very patient and a good problem-solver. If the people would not open doors, Francis wrote pamphlets and slipped them under the doors. Parents would not listen until Francis played with their children demonstrating that he was kind. He taught people how to be kind, patient, and loving towards others.

One day, Francis met a man named Martin. Martin was a young boy who was deaf, which means he could not hear. Francis wanted to make sure that Martin knew about God but Martin could not hear his words. Francis learned sign language so that he could teach Martin all about God's love!



Unknown Artist, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Francis was also an author and wrote books about how to be holy. He wanted everyone to know that you do not need to be an adult or to be a priest to be holy. Everyone can grow to be more like Jesus, whether they are big or small.

Francis died on December 28, 1622, and the last word he spoke was “humility.” It means not thinking you are more important than you are or more important than others.



Engraving by G. Hubert, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia

Activities

Make a Card: Saint Francis de Sales loved to write books to teach others about Jesus! Can you make a card for someone you know, and tell them one thing that you know about God?

Random Act of Kindness: Saint Francis de Sales helped everyone, even people he did not know. What is something that you can do with your family for someone you don't know?

Sing and Dance: This video is all about generosity! It is a great reminder of how Saint Francis de Sales lived: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrh03wedlZw>

December Resources

Catholic Kids Media. "Jesus gets Baptized?! - Baptism of the Lord A." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uR1w-YBtl0A>

Catholic Kids Media. "The Baptism of Jesus." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TNpYIJgYT8>

Catholic Icing. "Baptism of the Lord activities for kids." <https://www.catholicicing.com/baptism-of-the-lord-ideas-jan-10/>

Sara J Creations. "Baptism of the Lord craft idea." <https://www.sarajcreations.com/2018/01/baptism-of-lord-craft-idea.html>