

Remember Your Baptism

1

MARK 1:4-11



GOAL

Youth recognize that they are claimed and loved by God and explore the impact this has on their lives.

- A Art
- AM Active/Movement
- AT Abstract Thinking
- C Conversation
- CT Concrete Thinking
- D Drama
- G Game
- M Music
- QC Quiet/Contemplative
- S Service
- T Technology
- X Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



PRAYER

Holy God, remind me of your unending love for me and for each of the participants in this session. Amen.

THIS SESSION

This session is about celebrating how God claims the lives of each youth present. God freely gives love with the hope that everyone receives this love with gratitude. Baptism is the *seal* of this claiming, celebrating the binding of God's love to each of us; however, sometimes it is hard to remember that God loves us.

THE BIBLE STORY

Mark's Gospel begins with Jesus' baptism. There is no birth story. In his baptism, not only is Jesus baptized with others, but he is claimed by the voice of God and the appearance of the Holy Spirit. His ministry begins not with instructions but in a gesture of claiming by God. The tearing open of the heavens illustrates the enthusiasm of the divine at the start of Jesus' remarkable life and death.

CONNECTIONS WITH YOUTH

Youth explore what it means to be *claimed* and chosen by God. This might be difficult as youth are accustomed to exercising their own agency as they determine their loyalty to a particular band, sports team, school, celebrity, video game, and so forth. Instead of youth being loyal to God first, they consider what it means for God to be loyal to them.

This is likely an unfamiliar concept to youth who have not had the opportunity to make a *claim* on many (if any) living things. Youth may relish the idea that God claims them, or they may bristle in the realization that they have no choice about whether God loves them or not. It may take time for youth to feel comfortable with the idea of being claimed.

SESSION PREPARATION

- Send a note to parents/caretakers of youth, asking them to have a conversation with the youth about baptism.
- "Tattoos" (p. 6): Obtain temporary tattoos.

Depending on the options you choose:

- "The Lion King" (p. 8): Familiarize yourself with the movie *The Lion King* (Walt Disney Animation, 1994) and note the baptism moments.

GETTING STARTED

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- Temporary tattoos
 - Water
 - Sponges

TATTOOS

A C X

As youth enter, invite them to choose a temporary tattoo and put it on the back of their hand or somewhere else that feels comfortable and is visible to others. As they do this, encourage casual conversation. When everyone has a tattoo, gather as a group. Tell youth that the next few sessions we're going to talk about baptism. Suggest that, like tattoos, when we are baptized, God marks us. But God's tattoo is permanent.



If temporary tattoos are unavailable, use a permanent marker to draw a cross or simple design on the arm, wrist, or back of hand of each youth, then dust it with baby powder. To set the design and make the mark last longer, spray it with hairspray.



INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or both options.

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- Paper and pens

SCAVENGER HUNT

G AM

Form teams with the same number of youth on each team. Give a piece of paper and pen to each team and have them select a scorekeeper. Explain that you are going to call out names of things that participants may have with them. For each item, they will receive points. Their scorekeeper should write down the total number of points for each item. The team with the most points wins.

- Item of clothing with a sports team represented (one point each)
- Item of clothing with a band/singer represented (one point each)
- Photo on a phone of themselves on a family vacation (one point each, max one per person)
- Rings on fingers (one point per ring)
- Photo on a phone of a family pet (one point each, max one per person)
- Cell phone case with a photo on it (one point each)
- Water bottle with stickers on it (one point per water bottle)
- Item with writing in another language (one point each)
- Something with your initials on it (two points each)
- Driver's license (two points each)
- Something with a school mascot on it (two points each)
- Someone wearing a youth group/church shirt (three points each)

End by cheering for the winning team. Ask youth how the items you called out tell about who they are. Tell the youth that baptism says something about who we are.

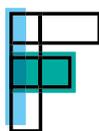
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- Newsprint, marker
 - Baptize* infographic poster (optional)

BAPTISM MEMORIES

C

Invite any youth who have been baptized to share what they remember or what their parents may have told them about their baptisms. Wonder together what everyone's baptism has in common. Write suggestions on a sheet of newsprint. Ask the youth—based on their list—what they think baptism is about and what is most essential for baptism. If you have the

Baptize infographic poster, see if any of the items from your list are also on the poster.



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

Choose one or both options.

PLAY DOUGH

CT T X

Form small groups and have each group read Mark 1:4–11 or read it aloud as a total group. Distribute the play dough and have each group create a series of scenes depicting the story.

As an alternative, have the small groups work as one group to create scenes from the Bible story. Use a smartphone to take pictures. To take this activity to the next level, install and use the Stop Motion Studio app to create a short video. Show the video the youth have made.

After looking at the play dough scenes or the Stop Motion Studio video, talk together about the elements that the youth depicted in their scenes. Wonder why these scenes felt important to the youth.

- Play dough in several colors
- Bibles
- Stop Motion Studio app (optional)



The Stop Motion Studio app is free and easy to learn quickly.

SKIT—ACT IT OUT

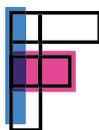
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Distribute copies of Resource Page 1 and assign people the parts of Narrator, John, Jesus, Dove, and Voice from Heaven. Assign all others to read the part of People. Encourage actors to act out the story as they read their parts.

Engage the youth in conversation using the following questions:

- ➔ Why was John baptizing people?
- ➔ How did those being baptized want to be transformed?
- ➔ How is the dove like the Holy Spirit?
- ➔ Who is the Voice from Heaven? What did it say to Jesus?
- ➔ How do you think Jesus felt after hearing those words?
- ➔ How would you feel if a voice from heaven said these words to you, “You are my son/daughter, my beloved. With you I am well pleased”?

- Copies of Resource Page 1



FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

Choose one or both options.

REMEMBERING OUR BAPTISM

A C

Hand out copies of Resource Page 2 and colored pencils. Have a volunteer read the information about Martin Luther, and invite youth to color the page.

As they are coloring, tell the youth that one purpose of baptism is a symbolic washing away of one’s sins. When we repent of sin (as John the Baptizer encouraged), sins no longer stick with us. They are washed away, and we are given a “clean start.” Ask youth how it feels to know that, through our baptism, our sins no longer *stick* to us. Wonder together how their lives might change if they remembered that their sins can’t stick to them because they’ve been washed away in their baptism.

- Copies of Resource Page 2
- Colored pencils
- 8.5" x 11" pieces of clear contact paper (optional)

When the youth have finished coloring their picture, have them cut it out. Provide clear contact paper and instruct the youth to put the contact paper over their picture so that it becomes waterproof. Encourage the youth to take home their picture and tape it to the mirror in their bathroom so that, when they wash their face, they are reminded of the waters of baptism.

THE LION KING

M T

Show the YouTube video “Lion King Opening Scene—Circle of Life” (bit.ly/FMLionKing, 4:34). Discuss the following questions:

- ➔ How is the scene similar to a baptism in our worshiping community? (*Some answers might include everyone gathers, an anointing happens, it's done by a priest [Rafiki], the baby is presented to the congregation in infant baptism.*)
- ➔ How does the ritual in the movie establish Simba's identity?
- ➔ How does the ritual of baptism establish our identity?



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or both options.

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- Colored pencils
 - Cards cut apart from card-stock copies of Resource Page 3

MAKING BAPTISM CARDS

S X

Have the youth sit in a circle. Hand out cards cut from Resource Page 3 and have everyone write their name in the blank. Tell the youth to pass their card to the person on their left. Invite the youth to write down a gift they see in the person whose card they are holding. Continue passing the cards one person to the left until each person has their own card again.

Encourage the youth to take their cards home and remember God's love for them and the gifts their peers see in them.

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- Colored pencils
 - Paper

DESIGNING A TATTOO

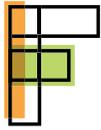
A AT

Remind participants that, in Jesus' baptism, we recognize his identity as one who is claimed by God and *sealed*, or marked, with God's invisible tattoo of love. Suggest that Jesus didn't receive any visible marks in his baptism. Wonder together what they might have looked like if he had.

Discuss the following questions as a whole group:

- ➔ What mark might your own baptism leave on you?
- ➔ How would that mark tell others that you are claimed by God?
- ➔ How would that mark remind you that you are God's beloved?

Have youth design their own tattoo on paper that answers these questions. When they finish, invite them to show their tattoo to the group.



FOLLOWING JESUS

Invite the group to pray this prayer by repeating each line after you:

Dear God, /
we know that we belong to you. /
We know that in our baptism, /
you have sealed us as your child forever. /
Help us remember your love for us /
at all times. /
Amen. /

Act It Out Skit

Narrator: Once upon a time, there lived a man named John. He was known as the baptizer.

John (*striking a superhero pose*): I am John the Baptizer!

Narrator: John proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

John: Say you are sorry! Be forgiven! Get baptized!

Narrator: People from the whole Judean countryside gathered around John, wanting to be baptized in the River Jordan.

People (*ad lib*): Hi, John! Baptize me! Me next! Will you baptize me?

Narrator: Now, John was clothed with camel's hair . . . which was really itchy.

John: This camel's hair feels so weird.

Narrator: He also wore a leather belt around his waist and ate wild locusts and wild honey.

John: The honey tastes better than the locusts, actually.

Narrator: John said . . .

John: The One who is more powerful than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals! I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

People (*ad lib*): I can't wait! How exciting! The Holy Spirit!

Narrator: Then Jesus approached.

Jesus: Hi, everyone. Hey, John! Will you baptize me?

Narrator: And so John baptized Jesus (*pause for action*). Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart.

People: Ooooooh. Aaaaaahhhh!

Narrator: The Spirit descended like a dove on Jesus (*pause for action*). And a voice came from heaven, saying:

Voice from Heaven: You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.

Narrator: Everyone was amazed.

People: We are amazed!

Narrator: After this, Jesus began his ministry of healing and teaching. This is the word of the Lord.

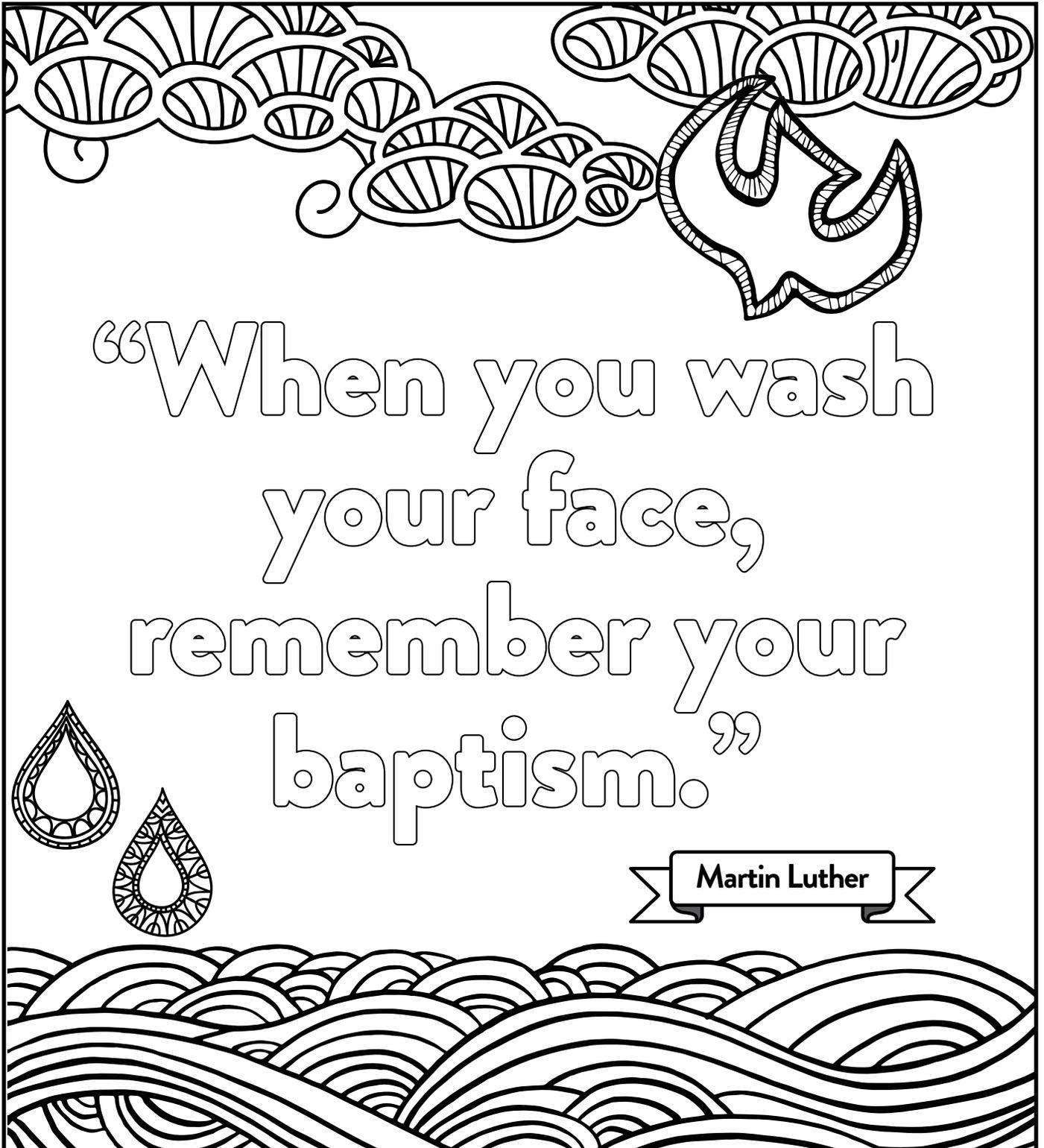
People: Thanks be to God.



Remembering Our Baptism

Martin Luther was a Catholic priest in Germany. He was ordained in 1507; however, as he studied Scripture, he formed some ideas that were different from those of the Catholic Church. He eventually tacked a list of 95 of these ideas (these *theses*) outside the church door. This action marked the beginning of the Reformation.

Luther was also known for how important he believed baptism was. One day when he was feeling down, he wrote the words “I am baptized” in the dust on his desk as if to remind himself that, in his baptism, he received enough grace from God through the act of baptism to matter to God. He also once infamously told someone, “When you wash your face, remember your baptism.”

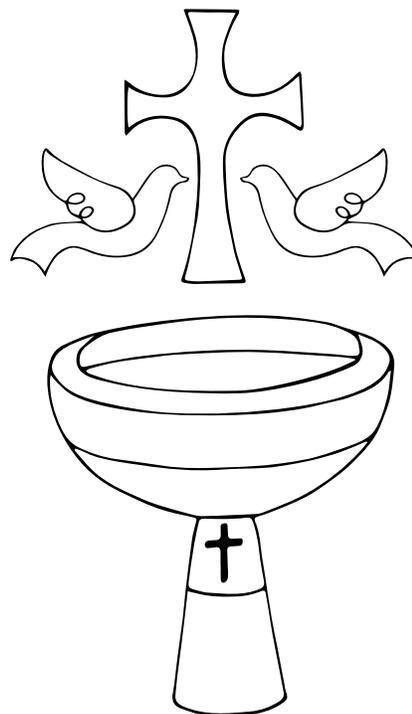


_____,
(Name)

You are God's beloved child.

Through baptism, the church celebrates all of the gifts God gave you before you were even born!

You are lovingly welcomed into the body of Christ and invisibly tattooed with love. You will always belong to God. You will never be forgotten or forsaken. You will be forever sealed by the Holy Spirit to show love and share peace!



_____,
(Name)

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