

At Home with the Good News

Bringing the Sunday Readings to Your Family

Bible Background

Today's readings invite us to respond to God's call in baptism. Isaiah 43:1-7 suggests that God chooses and gathers us to bring compassion and justice to a suffering world. In Acts 8:14-17, we witness Peter and John spreading the

good news of Jesus Christ beyond their comfortable social and ethnic borders. In Luke 3:15-17, 21-22 Jesus is baptized, and we are invited to acknowledge him as God's "Son, the Beloved."

What Your Child Did This Week



Preschool/Kindergarten children gathered around a bowl of water as an introduction to Jesus' baptism, then heard a rhymed version of that story. They may have drawn items for which they are thankful, sung with a movement activity, "baptized" a doll or heard *El Cielo Canta*.

Primary (Grades 1-3) children used a doll and water to show what happens at a baptism. They then heard the story of Jesus' baptism and role-played John and Jesus at the Jordan. They may have heard *El Cielo Canta* or drawn pictures of Jesus' baptism.

Intermediate (Grades 4-6) children explored baptism, hearing the story of Jesus' baptism and writing sentences about baptism on dove shapes. They may have heard *El Cielo Canta* or created a group "statue" showing a joyful moment of baptism.





Family Activity

The feast of Jesus' baptism is a good time to recall your children's (and your own) baptisms. Tell the stories, sing or play any music you remember, look at the photos again.

Gospel Reflection

The gospel gets off to a rolling start, describing "a people filled with expectation." We know that feeling of standing on tiptoe when we await a special holiday, or yearn for the arrival of someone we love but haven't seen in a long time.

In the spiritual life, we must also wait expectantly, knowing that we cannot go it alone, that we desperately need a Redeemer. Do we long for God—or can we be easily satisfied with a new car, a restaurant meal? In the sixteenth century, St. Ignatius of Loyola asked each seeker the same question: "What is your deep desire?" It's not a bad question to ask ourselves, and it can't be answered quickly or superficially.

Jesus models how to wait: praying and together. He enters the waters with the rest of the community, not setting himself apart. The outpouring of the Spirit which he then receives awaits us too: the voice affirming us as beloved child, God's delight. From his baptism flow all the other graces of his life.

What remains for him—and for us—is then to live out of that blessing. It takes him forty days in the desert to internalize the message, which fires all his subsequent ministry. What is the foundational experience, the fundamental grace in our lives?

family discussion question

Recall a time when you were filled with expectation.



P R A Y E R S T A R T E R

Substitute each family member's name as you say to them:

- "N___, you are my beloved child, in whom I delight."

parenting tip

If God delights in your child, so should you. Psychologists say it takes 20 compliments to offset one negative criticism. How's your ratio: are you complimenting more than criticizing?

