



Living in Faith Together



January 2023

Baptized in Christ Jesus



Available online at www.hosannatogether.org/lift

This Month's Theme and Scripture

In baptism, we are adopted as God's beloved children and given the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 3:1-18 and Matthew 3:13-17.

LiFT with Children...

Read this story together in a Bible:

Spark Story Bible:

John the Baptist - pages 234-239

Jesus' Baptism - pages 242-245

The Action Bible:

Birth of a Prophet - pages 556-557

Baptized - pages 579-581

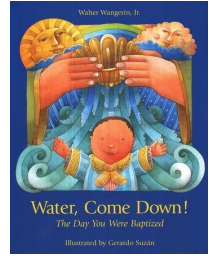
This Bible has been revised, so your page numbers may be slightly different.

Ask each other some or all of these questions:

- Why did Jesus have to be baptized if he is divine and sinless? Martin Luther described this as the "happy exchange." What of our lives does God take on when joining with us in Jesus? What of God do we receive in return?
- Why do you think we baptize babies in the Lutheran tradition? Why not wait until people have the opportunity to choose God and prove their worth to God?
- Brainstorm all the times God uses water to rescue people in the Old Testament. Are you sensing a theme?

Read Water Come Down

- If your child was baptized at Hosanna! in the past 6 years, your child received a copy of the book *Water Come Down* by Walter Wangerin Jr. Read this book together again.



Choose a few activities that fit you:

- Baptism is a time when we think about God's love for us. Make a Love Box together. Cut a hole in the top of a shoe box. Decorate the box with stickers, markers, crayons, or paint. Throughout the week, place love notes in the box for each other. Read them together at the end of the week.
- The story of Jesus' baptism is found in all four gospels. See if you can find these verses. Then look for other places in the Bible that talk about baptism or water. (You can use a concordance in the back of a full Bible or search online for help.) Work on building up your Bible searching skills together!
- Use watercolor paint to create the scene of a baptism. Will it be in a river like Jesus? Or in a church baptismal font like you? In baptism, God invites us to join God in the act of creation. How is painting with watercolors like how God creates, shapes, and colors the world with water? Talk about how you get to help God be creative in the world.
- Make rock candy as an object lesson for how from the waters of baptism comes the rock solid promise of God's love. It's easy, fun, and takes about a week. The supplies are simple: a glass jar, a thread or skewer, water, and sugar. Search online for specific instructions.
- Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River. Search online for information about this body of water. How long is the river? How deep? What animals and plants live by this river? Then explore a river near your home to find the same kinds of facts. Did you find any similarities between these two rivers?

- Everyone loves to hear stories about when they were little. Take out family photos, videos, and memorabilia from the kid's baptism and play "I remember when . . ." Invite grandparents and long-distance relatives into the discussion by phone or video chat.
- If you don't remember that dates of your kids' baptism or your own, take this opportunity to research and find the dates (we likely have a record in the church office if you need it). Mark the dates on your calendar and make a plan to celebrate somehow in the coming year.

Pray together--this or a prayer you make up:

Dear God, we are called to repentance. We are called to turn our lives around and begin living righteous lives. We should behave the way Jesus taught and lived. With you loving us, it should not be so hard, but it is! God, please continue to be with us. Please continue to help us act according to your wishes. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Keep Thinking:

Whenever you encounter water in the next week (taking a drink, in the bath/shower, when it rains, in a pool, taking care of a pet, etc.), take a moment to think about your baptism. What might this water remind you about God's promise of life for you?

LiFT with Teens or Adults...

Read the story...

Luke 1:5-25, 57-80 - Birth of John the Baptist

Discuss these questions:

- Why do you think Zechariah was struck mute?
- Research the meaning of the name John. Why might this be a fitting name for this child?
- What stands out to you in Zechariah’s prophesy (sometimes called the Benedictus) in verses 68-79? What does it say about who God is? What does it say about what God is doing through John and Jesus?

Read another passage...

Luke 3:1-22 - John the Baptist and Jesus’ Baptism

Discuss these questions:

- The words of verses 4-6 come from Isaiah 40. What do these words prophesy? What is God’s will for our world?
- The Hebrew word for repentance (*shoov*) means to “turn around” or “turn back.” In Greek, the word (*metanoia*) used in the Bible means to “be of a changed mind.” What does repentance mean to you? How do *you* “repent?”
- From where did John the Baptist and Jesus claim their authority? How did others—religious and political leaders of that time, for instance—claim authority? Who do we let be in charge today and why?

Read another passage...

John 3:1-21 - Born again

Discuss these questions:

- This is a confusing passage--not just for us, but for Nicodemus, a religious “expert.” What do you think Jesus is trying to say?

- This is context in which we receive that well-known verse John 3:16 (and the equally important John 3:17). What does baptism have to do with God's saving love for the world?

Read another passage...

Acts 8:26-40 - Phillip and the Ethiopian

Discuss these questions:

- What prompts baptism in this story? What is necessary? How complicated should baptism and other acts of faith be? Who can be baptized?
- What do you think the Ethiopian man receives in baptism?

Read another passage...

Isaiah 11:1-3a - The Spirit of the Lord

Discuss these questions:

- Whenever we baptize, we pray for the Spirit to fill the newly baptized, using words similar to those found here in Isaiah. What do these words mean?
- What qualities or talents does the Spirit give to us? Which gift most connects with you?

Choose a few activities that fit you:

- The story of Jesus' baptism is found in all four gospels. See if you can find these verses. Then look for other places in the Bible that talk about baptism or water. (You can use a concordance in the back of a full Bible or search online for help.) Work on building up your Bible searching skills!
- Use watercolor paint to create the scene of a baptism--in a river like Jesus or a church baptismal font. In baptism, God

invites us to join in the act of creation. How is painting with watercolors like how God creates, shapes, and colors the world with water? How do you help God be creative in the world?

- Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River. Search online for information about this body of water. How long is the river? How deep? What animals and plants live by this river? Then explore a river near your home to find the same kinds of facts. Did you find any similarities between these two rivers
- Everyone loves to hear stories about when they were little. Take out family photos, videos, and memorabilia from the your kids' (or your own) baptism. Talk with others who might remember these events. If your kids are grown up, call them or your grandkids to share your memories with them.
- If you don't remember that dates of your kids' baptism or your own, take this opportunity to research and find the dates (we likely have a record in the church office if you need it). Mark the dates on your calendar and make a plan to celebrate somehow in the coming year (such as calling your kids or grandkids and wishing them a happy baptismal birthday).

Pray together--this or a prayer you make up:

Dear God, we are called to repentance. We are called to turn our lives around and begin living righteous lives. We should behave the way Jesus taught and lived. With you loving us, it should not be so hard, but it is! God, please continue to be with us. Please continue to help us act according to your wishes. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Keep Thinking:

Whenever you encounter water in the next week (taking a drink, in the shower, when it rains, in a pool, in a stream or river, taking care of a pet, etc.), take a moment to recall your baptism. What might this water remind you about God's promise of life for you?

What is LiFT?

Living **i**n **F**aith **T**ogether is a monthly series of conversations and activities to grow your connection with God and others.

When do I LiFT?

We're encouraging you to gather the second Sunday of each month, but you can choose *any* day. Just be intentional

Who do I LiFT with?

Anyone and everyone! LiFT at home with kids, grandkids, or a spouse (or all of them!). Invite grown kids over or talk on the phone/online. Gather friends or neighbors over a snack. Join a group after worship the second Sunday of the month. Activities are listed by age, but you can do any of them.

COLORING PAGE

While coloring, think about a baptism you witnessed. What happened? What was the most meaningful part of that event that connected with or moved you? Why?

