Preschool–Grade 6

The Baptism of Jesus

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: Jesus is God's Son. Jesus obeyed God, and God was well pleased. We can obey God too.
Bible passage: Matthew 3:13–17. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." *Matthew 3:17 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible, 6 paper strips, a marker, tape, masking tape or a blue towel for a "river" on the floor, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the 6 paper strips (see part 4). Make a "river" on the floor with two lines of masking tape, or lay down a blue towel. Put bookmarks in your Bible at Matthew 3:13 and Matthew 3:17.

1. Opening game: I Spy a Sign (5 minutes)

Say: "I am thinking of something in this room. I will give you signs until you know what it is." Give one clue at a time: "It is blue." "It is on the wall." "It has numbers on it." The kids guess after each clue. Play three or four rounds, and let a child give the clues too. Ask: *How did you know the right answer? (The signs, the clues.)* Say: "Today we will hear how God gave a man named John a sign, so he would know who Jesus is."

2. Bible story: Jesus Is Baptized (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Matthew 3, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

A man named **John the Baptist** lived out in the wilderness. He wore clothes made of camel's hair, and he ate locusts (a kind of grasshopper) and wild honey (Matthew 3:4)! John told people to **repent**, to be sorry for their sins and turn away from them (3:2). People came from all around, and John **baptized** them in the Jordan River while they **confessed**, or told God, their sins (3:5–6).

One day **Jesus** came from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John (3:13). Jesus was about thirty years old (Luke 3:23). But John tried to stop Him! John said, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" (Matthew 3:14). Say: "John meant, 'I need **you** to baptize **me**! Why are you coming to me?' John knew Jesus was greater than he was (3:11)."

Read Matthew 3:15 from your Bible: "And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him." Say: "**Suffer it to be so** means 'let it happen.' Jesus was saying, 'This is the right thing to do. We will do everything that is right.' So John baptized Jesus." Jesus never did anything wrong (1 Peter 2:22). Jesus was baptized because He obeyed God in everything.

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The story continues: When Jesus was baptized, right away He came up out of the water. **Lo**, which means "look!", the heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God came down like a dove and landed on Jesus (Matthew 3:16). **Read Matthew 3:17 from your Bible:** "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Say: "**Beloved** means loved very, very much. **Well pleased** means very happy with Him."

God had told John ahead of time to watch for the Spirit coming down and staying on someone. That would be the One (John 1:33)! When John saw the Spirit come down like a dove, he knew. John said, "This is the Son of God" (John 1:34). The dove was God's sign, so John could tell everyone who Jesus is.

There is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4). And Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Hold up one finger and say together: "There is one God!"

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. Where did John baptize people? *(In the Jordan River, Matthew 3:6)*
2. What did John say when Jesus came to be baptized? *(That he needed Jesus to baptize him, 3:14)*
3. Did Jesus ever sin? *(No, never, 1 Peter 2:22)* So why was He baptized? *(Because it was the right thing to do, to fulfil all righteousness, 3:15)*
4. What came down like a dove? *(The Spirit of God, 3:16)*
5. What did the voice from heaven say? *(This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, 3:17)*

4. Memory verse: Six Strips game (5 minutes)

Tape the 6 paper strips up in order: *And lo a voice / from heaven, saying, / This is my / beloved Son, / in whom I am / well pleased. / Matthew 3:17.* Explain the old words: **lo** means look, **beloved** means loved very much, and **well pleased** means very happy with. Read the verse together. Then take down one strip and read it again. Keep taking down one strip each time until the kids can say the whole verse by themselves.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Jesus obeyed God in everything, and God was well pleased. God loves you very much. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (Acts 2:4)."

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

This week: obey right away, the first time a parent or teacher asks you. Jesus did what was right, and you can too.

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Baptism of Jesus word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/baptism-of-jesus-word-search), crossword (vbshq.com/puzzles/baptism-of-jesus-crossword), maze (vbshq.com/puzzles/baptism-of-jesus-maze) or worksheet (vbshq.com/worksheets/baptism-of-jesus-worksheet), the coloring page or craft (vbshq.com/bible-stories/baptism-of-jesus), or **Up Out of the River:** all the kids stand inside the "river" on the floor. Ask a question from part 3, or "What does beloved mean?" The child who answers steps up out of the river and flaps their arms slowly, like a dove. Keep going until everyone is out of the river.

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7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus. Thank You that You love us so much. Help us obey You right away and do what is right, like Jesus did. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks why Jesus was baptized when He never sinned: say what Jesus said: it was right "to fulfil all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15), to do everything God asks. Jesus left us an example to follow (1 Peter 2:21).
If a child asks, "If Jesus is God, who talked from heaven?": keep it short and simple. There is one God (Deuteronomy 6:4). God fills heaven and earth (Jeremiah 23:24), so He can speak from heaven and be in Jesus at the same time: "God was in Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:19). The voice and the dove were signs, so John and the people could know who Jesus is (John 1:33–34).
If a child asks why Jesus is called the Son of God: the angel told Mary that the Holy Ghost would come upon her, "therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16).
If a child asks if our baptism is the same as John's: John's baptism got people ready for Jesus (Acts 19:4). After Jesus rose again, Peter preached baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38).

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