

**Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Olympia, WA**  
*Written by Beth Tobin, January 2008.*



# Baptism Rotation

## Exploration: An Introduction

They will become familiar with the story of Jesus' baptism and understand the sacrament of baptism with its promises.

### **Bible Texts and References:**

**Scripture:** Matthew 3:1-17, and Mark 1:1-11, Luke 3:1-22, John 1:19-34

### **Memory Verses:**

#### **Matthew 3:17**

*"And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."*

#### **Matthew 28:19**

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"*

### **Leader Preparation:**

Read the scripture for this lesson.

Read and reflect on the overview material provided for this lesson.

### **Gather the following materials:**

- Bibles; one purple Adventure Bible/child
- Pencils
- A photo of your baptism, or your baptism gown if you have one available.
- White cloth, bowl, water
- Exploration Sheet with instructions for each shepherd.
- "Celebrating Our Baptism" a booklet published by Lutheran Brotherhood 1/child
- Chart paper and markers or white board and markers
- Apples/cutting board/paring knife
- Candles/lighter/safe zone to light them in
- Dove stickers 1/child
- Angel robes from the Christmas drama
- White dove cut-outs
- Baptism Dates for all children as available.
- Wall space labeled with the months of the year.
- Masking Tape

**Opening:**

Greet your students warmly, welcoming them to the Exploration Workshop. Introduce yourself and any other adults.

Ask for any prayer requests. Ask if anyone would like to lead the group in prayer. Be prepared to say a prayer yourself, working in prayer requests. A suggestion: "Dear God, we are thankful to be here today among friends. We are thankful we can hear Bible stories that teach us about Jesus. As we begin learning about baptism, help us to find ways we can remember your love and share it with others on a daily basis. Amen"

**Dig In:**

Ask students what they know about baptism. (Write this down on chart paper.) Accept their answers. Share your baptism photo/gown, or something you remember from your baptism. Ask if anyone else has brought in a photo or recalls something they would like to share about their baptism? Spend a short time sharing.

**(Be sensitive to those who have not been baptized. Encourage them to talk to their parents about it, or our pastor or children's ministry coordinator. Be sure they know that all who believe can be baptized and that God loves them too and would want them to be baptized.)**

Ask if anyone knows where "baptism" came from?

( Greek, BAPTISMA = "immersion in water" or "washing in water." )  
It's a once - in - a - life time washing.

A sacrament is a ritual action using something very ordinary - such as a water bath - or a simple meal - which, when connected to the promise-filled word of Christ, becomes extraordinary - an event of God's grace-filled presence.

Lutherans have two sacraments. What do you think they might be?

(Baptism and Holy Communion)

From the Bible, we learn that baptism is ENTRY into Christ and into the community of Christ, the CHURCH. It lead people to a unique form of community life - a life of faith practices.

What are the faith practices you recall? (Pray, Serve, Worship, Give, Encourage, Invite, Study God's Word) In the early church - and today - our fellowship together and the sharing of a meal (Holy Communion) along with witnessing to others - are central to the life of baptized people.

Distribute Bibles. [Praise those who have brought their own Bibles.]  
Have everyone find Matthew, chapter 3, verse 10 in his or her Bible.  
[Remind them of the quick way to find the New Testament.]  
Ask for a volunteer to read.

Ask: What all took place at Jesus' baptism? (John the Baptist, Jordan River, Dove, Heavens, Voice) Underline Matthew 3:17.

Point out that the other places this story is found are located on their schedules.  
Encourage them to read this other passages at home.

Now have everyone look up Matthew 28:19 and underline it as we read it together.

Point out that this is called the "Great Commission" and is a direct command for us to tell others about God and to baptize all who believe in Him.

For the next three weeks we will be learning more about the different parts of this story.

Explain that Jesus' baptism, with the coming together of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit in this one event, is a model for our baptisms. Read the following from Luther's Small Catechism:

**Baptism is not simply plain water. Instead it is water used according to God's command and connected with God's Word.**

[Note to teacher: the Lutheran Definition of Sacrament - an outward sign of God's grace using an earthly element and commanded by Christ.]

Connect the presence of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit at Jesus' baptism with our baptisms "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." God - three in one. Holy Trinity Sunday etc.

### **Exploration Time:**

Shepherds will take their groups around to various locations throughout the church building to do the following explorations about baptism as time allows:

**For 2012, we will combine activities 1 and 2, and omit activity 6.**

1) Back Kitchen - Prayer Table

Light a candle and read Ephesians 5:14. Students may underline the verse if they would like. Ask how they might connect this verse to baptism?

(Enlightenment, the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the dawning of the light of Christ within us.... let our light shine for others to see....) Please make sure candles are extinguished before leaving the room. Thank you.

2) The Kitchen

Slice an apple. Look at the three parts: the skin, the meat, and the seeds. Ask students how they could use an apple to help them describe God as one being, yet also as three persons: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit?

(An apple has three parts, and those three parts are the one apple.)

3. The preschool sink. Ask for volunteers to wash their face with the water. Tell students that each time they wash their face - for the rest of their life, they can be reminded of their baptismal splash. Ask what other water they encounter that might help them to remember their baptism? (Swimming pool, bathtub, baptismal font, drinking fountain, lake, river, ocean....) Have students look up and read: 1 Peter 3:21-22, Acts 22:16, and Titus 3:4-8. How do they think these connect to baptism?

( A cleansing bath, the washing away of sin.)

4. The baptismal font in the sanctuary. Have students look up Romans 6, and Colossians 2:12-13 and read them. How might these be connected to baptism? (In baptism, we die with Christ (our sins are forgiven) and we rise again with Christ to a new life. It's like waking up each morning to a fresh start, a wholeness made possible by God's love for us.) Ask students where the water comes from for baptism? (A pitcher of water.) What combines with the water to make a baptism an extraordinary experience? (God's word and God's command - it's all God's actions) If water is in the font, allow students to make the sign of the cross with the water on their foreheads.

5. The Choir Room: Ask students to look up (II Corinthians 1:21-22, and Ephesians 1:13-14. How do they think these verses pertain to baptism?

(Being sealed by the Holy Spirit. A seal testifies to authenticity. Baptism is our sealing, God's pledge that we are children of God.) Give each child a sticker as a reminder of being sealed. Have them look up when they were baptized and add their name to a paper dove. Tape the dove on the wall under the appropriate month.

6. The Bride's Room: Ask students to put on the white robes if they would like to and look up Galatians 3:27-28, Colossians 3:9-10, and Revelation 7:9. After reading these verses, how do they think these pertain to baptism?

( Being **clothed** in a new robe - Jesus Christ, covered by his forgiveness and righteousness.) Point out that many times infants and others wear white when they are baptized. Why do the students think most people wear white? (A sign of God's pureness and being cleansed.)

**Closing and Prayer:**

**Each shepherd will lead his or her group in prayer at their location. Each shepherd will be responsible for cleaning up the area where his or her group ended their exploration.**

**Special note:**

Be sure to be sensitive to the fact that some children may not have been baptized yet, or that they don't remember if they have or not. Make no judgments about this, and don't allow any discussion of individual circumstances.

**References:**

"Let the Children Come - A Baptism Manual for Parents and Sponsors" by Daniel Erlander. PO Box 1059, Freeland, WA 98249 360-331-4066

**Lesson Time Outline:**

- 10:00 Welcome Students and Take Prayer Requests
- 10:05 Begin Lesson
- 10:20 Dismiss Groups for Exploration Time with Shepherds

Time	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd/4th	5th/6th
10:20	Choir Room	Preschool	Sanctuary	Back Kitchen
10:30	Sanctuary	Choir Room	Back Kitchen	Preschool
10:40	Back Kitchen	Sanctuary	Preschool	Choir Room
10:50	Preschool	Back Kitchen	Choir Room	Sanctuary