

1ST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY:

MARK 1:4-11

The baby Jesus is now a man; a man beginning his ministry. Perhaps he is still trying to sort out in his mind what he is being called to do. He looks for validation and turns to his cousin, John.

John, meanwhile, has been faithfully calling people to prepare, turn around, start over. He is pretty sure he will recognize Jesus, but he has not yet met him. When Jesus shows up, John goes into the water with him to baptize him, and both of them hear a voice from heaven. Jesus now knows he will be able to figure out what it is that he is being called to do.

RECEIVING THE GIFT AND OFFERING THE GIFT

The Story

Today we have a story about a grown-up Jesus. Today Jesus gets to meet his cousin, John. John's work was baptizing people and getting them ready to hear Jesus' message. Jesus has not been baptized. So he comes to John and asks him to baptize him. Well John had a different way of baptizing. He went right into the water in the river. Jesus went into the river with John.

And when Jesus was baptized, both John and Jesus heard God say: "I am so glad you are my son!"

Reflection Questions:

Young Children

Has anyone here seen someone getting baptized?

- How do we do it in our church?
- What does the priest do?
- What do the parents and god parents do?

Older Youth

- I wonder what it was like for John to baptize Jesus, his cousin?
- I wonder what it was like for Jesus to be baptized.
- I wonder why we do baptisms in our church and why it is usually babies who get baptized?

YOUNG CHILDREN

Baptismal Prayer Activity: Give each child a sheet you prepared with the Baptismal prayer in the middle. Read to the children what is written on the paper. Tell the children that the priest says

this prayer to each newly baptized baby - or person - as soon as they are baptized. Ask the children to say it with you, phrase by phrase. Then offer the children several pieces of colored chalk. Show them that when we dip the chalk in the water it creates a pretty texture on the paper. They can draw Jesus being baptized, or a picture of them being baptized

OLDER YOUTH

Gifts: The theme for the season of Epiphany is "Receiving the Gift and Offering the Gift." What

do we think this means? (Perhaps your children are familiar with the concept: "Pay it Forward", which was a book and then a movie they might have seen.) Some may have seen the bumper sticker that invites people to practice random acts of kindness and senseless acts of generosity. Help your children identify what they can do to "pay it forward."

ACTIVITIES