

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B – First Sunday in Lent
Intergenerational Lesson Plan

Scripture: Mark 1:9-15

Background

Succinct! Mark wastes no words: Jesus' vita as he presents himself for ministry – in 6 lines! Baptized, his call affirmed by God, ministry temptations faced, Jesus is ready to begin. Mark does not see the need to list the temptations, only that the angels were with Jesus as he did his discernment. Jesus emerges and announces his ministry: the time has come. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe: our creed in a nutshell.

Before

Since baptism is one of the focuses of today's Gospel, it would be good to find out if a baptism is being planned for your church today and, if so, something about the person to be baptized. You may also be starting classes for those to be baptized on Easter. If that is the case, you may want to pray for those people. Also look into the tradition of your congregation to decide whether having a priest bless the water you will be using will add to the occasion. There are probably more activities than your time allows, so choose the ones that best fit your situation.

Look at each activity and decide which ones you are going to do. Gather the supplies and have them ready for each activity.

Gathering

Ask the group to each find one other person – preferably of a different age – and share what they can remember about a baptism – one we have seen in our church, their own baptism or perhaps another child's.

Supplies needed:

A bowl with water (Clear glass is most attractive, but any bowl will do.)
Name tags, pencils, pens

Opening Prayer

Thank you, God, for this time together with you right here with us as we look at what Lent calls us to notice. Amen.

Getting Started

Convene the group and ask if in their meeting with another person anyone discovered a story they want to share with the group. Ask for a show of hands of people who were baptized in this particular church. Then discover who was baptized the farthest from your church, the one who was most recently baptized, etc. Be sensitive that not everyone might be baptized.

Preview

Tell the group what you have planned for this session: beginning and ending in prayer, hearing and reflecting on today's Gospel passage with a few questions and selected activities. Let them know what time you expect to be finished and answer any questions.

The Story: Mark 1:9-15

Options: ask for volunteers to read verses 9-11, verses 12-13 and verses 14-15. Or tell the story yourself, using the following as a guide.

Supplies needed:

Copies of the passage – either Bibles or this passage printed out

Our story for today is from Mark, who chooses to tell the story quite simply – just the facts. John and Jesus went into the River Jordan so John could baptize Jesus. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, everyone could hear: “You are my Son. I love you. I am very pleased with you.”

Jesus knew he had to figure out what God wanted him to do, so he went off by himself for 40 days.

When he was ready, he said, “This is the time. God is right here with us. Stop doing things that are not helpful and celebrate the Good News.”

Reflection Questions:

- What stood out for you about this story?
- I wonder what you have questions about when you hear this story?
- What was different about the way John baptized Jesus from the way we baptize people in our church? (It was just the two of them, they went into a river and went under the water, we usually have baptisms in church where the rest of us can be there to pray with the newly baptized, etc.)
- Where do baptisms take place in our church? (You might choose to move to the font and invite questions.)
- How would we define “being tempted”? What’s the difference between getting a bad idea and actually doing something about it? What are some things we can do when we get a really bad idea and want to be sure we don’t do it?

Supplies needed:

(Option) a large piece of paper and marker to record the group’s paraphrase of the Gospel message.

In Our Own Words:

Let’s say we are going to explain to one of our friends what Jesus has told us here. How would we say it in our own words?

Here is the way Mark said it:

“The time is fulfilled,
“The kingdom of God has come near,
“Repent
“Believe the Good News.”

Work together and come up with your own words. If you choose, ask for a volunteer to jot down ideas on the large piece of paper. Here are some ideas:

The time is fulfilled: *Now, not later, not when we die, but right now.*

The Kingdom is near: *God is here with us, A new way, God’s Game, etc.*

Repent: *stop doing stuff that gets in the way, start over, begin again.*

Believe: *trust, choose, get on with it.*

Repent Race

Ask for two volunteers to “demonstrate” the difference between running a race while dragging along extra stuff and running the race without all that stuff. Have the group decide the start line and the finish line and cheer the runners on to victory. After the race, interview both runners.

Supplies Needed:

A heavy-duty trash bag stuffed with things to make it heavy.

Celebrating Baptism

Gather around the table with the bowl of water. Tell the group that when a person is baptized these words (below) are used. Consecrated oil – oil that is made holy with a prayer said by the Bishop – is often used with the words as the bishop or priest marks the sign of the cross on the newly baptized person’s forehead. You may choose to ask your priest permission to show the oil, which may also be scented.

Supplies needed:

The bowl of water placed on a small table in the center of your circle. Optional: consecrated oil of Chrism

Ask each person to come up to the table and dip a finger in the water. (If the group is used to making the sign of the cross on head, chest and shoulders, invite them to do so.) As each person comes forward, someone (the priest, if present) can say the words said at Baptism:

“(Naming the person), you are sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked as Christ’s own forever. Amen.”

Alleluia on Hold

Explain that we do not say “Alleluia” during Lent, but we will say it a lot on Easter Day. So to protect the alleluias, we will put them in a box – perhaps placed where we will be able to see it during Lent or you hide the Alleluias – and then open it on Easter Day. Choose the way you will do this activity.

Supplies needed:

A box to decorate with felt markers, a roll of calculator paper tape, felt markers or crayons and other art supplies you have on hand - glitter and glue, bright-colored tissue paper to tear into designs, etc.

Alleluia Option 1: Put a length of calculator tape on a table – the length sufficiently long for all to work side by side on the strip together. Provide markers or crayons and whatever else you have on hand. You might also provide the word Alleluia in different type faces in which you can find on your computer word processor.

Alleluia Option 2: Give each person a length of calculator paper tape and let them decorate their own Alleluia to place in the box.

One group of people can decorate the box that will hold the Alleluias the group produces.

When the tapes are finished, if they are folded accordion style, they will pop out of the box when the lid is removed on Easter.

Closing Activity

Gather the group into a circle and sit for just a moment looking at the bowl, the box, and the oil. Then, ask those who were baptized BEFORE 1979 to sit in a circle and all those baptized AFTER 1979 to stand behind these people, holding hands over the heads of those seated.

Supplies needed:

The bowl of water, the Alleluias in their box, and the optional Oil of Chrism, placed on a small table in the center of your group.

Explain that the prayer you are going to say is prayed for people who have been baptized since 1979, so those seated in the circle may never have had this prayer prayed for them. (If anyone asks why, the simplest answer is: “that is the year that the Book of Common Prayer was revised”.)

Read the concluding prayer at Baptism (p. 308, Book of Common Prayer) with these slight word changes that are in **bold**:

Heavenly Father, we thank you
that by water and the Holy Spirit
you have bestowed upon **us**
the forgiveness of sin,
and have raised **us** to the new life of grace.
Sustain **us** O Lord, in your Holy Spirit.
Give **us** an inquiring and discerning heart,
the courage to will and to persevere,
a spirit to know and to love you,
and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works.
Amen

Closing Prayer

Thank you, God, for you love for us and for giving us the gift of Baptism. Amen.

Mark 1:9-15

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.” ¹²And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness.

¹³He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

¹⁴Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

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