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| Purpose | To help each child better understand the importance of baptism. |
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| Preparation | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prayerfully study Matthew 3:13–17; 2 Nephi 9:23; and Doctrine and Covenants 20:73–74. 2. Prepare to sing or read the words to the song “I Like My Birthdays” (<i>Children’s Songbook</i>, p. 104). 3. Bring the chart “Becoming a Member of the Church of Jesus Christ,” first used in lesson 7. Have the wordstrips “Faith in Jesus Christ” and “Repentance” in place on the chart. Have the wordstrip “Baptism” ready to be placed on the chart during the lesson. 4. A soft ball or small stuffed toy animal. 5. Materials needed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A Bible, a Book of Mormon, and a Doctrine and Covenants. b. Picture 3-13, Boy Being Baptized (62018); and picture 3-1, John the Baptist Baptizing Jesus (62133; Gospel Art Picture Kit 208). 6. Make the necessary preparations for any enrichment activities that you will be using. <p><i>Note:</i> Adapt this lesson as needed if any of the children have already been baptized.</p> |
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Suggested Lesson

Development

Invite a child to give the opening prayer.

Follow up with the children if you encouraged them to do something during the week.

We Can Be Baptized at Age Eight

Chart

Display the chart “Becoming a Member of the Church of Jesus Christ.” Have a child place the wordstrip “Baptism” on the third step. Tell the children that baptism is the third step in becoming a member of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Attention activity

Explain that before the children can be baptized, something important must happen. Tell them to listen as you sing or say the words to a song about baptism. Explain that you will leave out one word. That word is also a number. Ask the children to listen and see if they can tell what the missing word is. They are to raise their hands when they know what word you left out.

I like my birthdays, ev’ry one;
 Each brings a greater joy to me.
 But I can’t wait until I’m _____,
 For then I’ll be baptized, you see.

- What is the missing word? (Eight.)

Explain that we look forward to all of our birthdays, but our eighth birthday has special meaning because it means that we are old enough to be baptized.

Jesus Christ Obeyed the Commandment to Be Baptized

Teacher presentation

Remind the children that Heavenly Father has commanded everyone to be baptized. Jesus Christ wanted to obey all of Heavenly Father's commandments.

Scripture

Read aloud 2 Nephi 9:23. Explain that the Holy One of Israel is another name for Jesus Christ.

Explain that this scripture tells us that we are commanded to be baptized. The scripture also tells us that if we are not baptized, we cannot be saved in the kingdom of God; in other words, we must be baptized to live again with Heavenly Father and Jesus.

Picture and discussion

Display picture 3-1, John the Baptist Baptizing Jesus, and tell the story (see Matthew 3:13–17). Read as much of this scripture to the children as they can understand.

- Who baptized Jesus? (John the Baptist.)

Point out that Jesus came to John the Baptist to be baptized because John had the priesthood authority to baptize.

To baptize Jesus, John the Baptist took him down into the waters of the Jordan River. After saying the baptismal prayer, John placed him completely under the water. Then John brought him out of the water.

Explain that to be baptized by being completely covered by water and coming back up out of the water is called baptism by immersion. Have the children repeat the words *baptism by immersion*.

We Can Be Baptized Just As Jesus Christ Was

Song

Have the children listen as you sing or say the words to the second verse of "I Like My Birthdays." Then have them sing or repeat the words with you.

To be baptized as Jesus was
By one who holds the priesthood true
And thus obey God's holy laws
Is just the thing I want to do.

- What is "the thing I want to do," according to this song? (Be baptized, "as Jesus was.")
- How will we be baptized if we are baptized the same way Jesus was? (By immersion and by someone with priesthood authority.)

Picture and discussion

Place picture 3-13, Boy Being Baptized, next to the picture of John the Baptist baptizing Jesus.

Explain that when Jesus Christ was baptized, he was immersed or completely covered with water. Today, baptisms usually take place in a meetinghouse in a special pool of water called a baptismal font. If there isn't a baptismal font nearby, streams or other pools of water are used.

- What authority did John the Baptist have to baptize? (The Aaronic Priesthood.)
- What authority must the person who is baptizing us have to baptize? (He must be a priest in the Aaronic Priesthood or hold the Melchizedek Priesthood.)
- Do you know anyone who has the priesthood and can baptize?

Teacher presentation

Remind the children that when Joseph Smith was translating the Book of Mormon with Oliver Cowdery, John the Baptist came to them and taught them the correct way to baptize. He gave them the priesthood so that they had the authority to baptize others. The priesthood has been given to other people so that we can have the privilege of being baptized by someone with the proper authority.

Article of faith

Explain to the children that the person who baptizes each of them will have the same priesthood that John the Baptist had. The fifth article of faith tells us how a man receives this authority.

Read aloud and have the children repeat the following:

“We believe that a man must be called of God . . . by those who are in authority.”

The Ordinance of Baptism

Picture and explanation

On picture 3-13, Boy Being Baptized, point to the position of the hands. Explain to the children the following guidelines: when you are baptized, you and the man baptizing you will go down into the baptismal font. The man baptizing you holds your right arm with his left hand. You can hold your nose with your right hand and with your left hand hold on to the left arm of the man baptizing you. The man baptizing you will then raise his right hand and say the words of the baptismal prayer.

Scripture

Tell the children that the baptismal prayer is found in the scriptures. Have them listen as you read them the words of the prayer.

Read Doctrine and Covenants 20:73, starting with the words “Having been commissioned.”

Explain that *commissioned* means “given authority to represent.” Help the children understand that true baptism is performed only by someone who has been given the authority to represent Jesus Christ in performing the baptism. Their baptism will have the same value as if Jesus himself had baptized them.

Explain that after saying the prayer, the man who is baptizing puts his right hand on the person’s back and gently lowers him into the water until the water completely covers him. Then he lifts the person up out of the water.

Help the children understand that they will be under the water for a very short time, and the man baptizing them will hold them firmly. They will hold his arm and will be able to hold their noses so they won’t breathe or swallow any water.

Personal experience

If you desire, you could tell about your baptism. Or if any of the children in your class have already been baptized, invite them to tell about their baptisms.

Let the children ask questions and share their feelings about baptism. Help them understand that baptism can be a wonderful experience for them.

We Are Happy When We Are Baptized

Tell the children that you have some questions that you would like to ask them in order to review what they have learned about the important step of baptism. Toss the ball or small toy animal to a child and ask one of the following questions. Be sure that each child gets a turn to catch the toy and answer a question.

- How old are we when we may be baptized? (Eight.)
- Why should we be baptized? (It is a commandment.)
- Where will we be baptized? (In a baptismal font or other pool of water.)
- What must a man have to be able to baptize? (The priesthood.)
- How will we be baptized? (By immersion.)
- Why do you think you will feel happy when you are baptized?

Let the children respond and share their feelings. You might emphasize that they will be happy to be members of Jesus Christ's Church, they will be happy to know they are following his example, and they will be happy to obey his commandment.

Story

Tell the following story of a girl who wanted to be baptized:

"When Alice's mother and sisters decided to become members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Alice was only six and too young to be baptized with the rest of her family. . . . Because they often talked of the wonderful experience of baptism and the joy their membership in the Church had brought them, Alice could hardly wait to be eight so she could be baptized too.

"Alice planned and dreamed how she would be baptized on her birthday. 'Not sometime after,' she insisted, 'but on that very day.'

"However, three days before Alice turned eight, she awoke with a severe headache, and the next day she was too ill to go to school.

"The doctor who was called said she would have to stay home and in bed for at least a week. Alice's big eyes filled with tears of disappointment.

"The next day Alice was even more miserable, and her temperature was higher despite the medicine the doctor had prescribed. Mother was puzzled and concerned, but Alice felt worse about not being baptized on the very day of her birthday than she did about all her aches and pains and fever.

"The afternoon before Alice's birthday, her mother started into the sickroom. But she stopped at the door when she saw Alice kneeling in fervent prayer on her bed. This little girl was pleading with Heavenly Father for fulfillment of her great desire to become a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

"On the morning of her birthday, Alice got up, dressed, and prepared for baptism. Her fever was gone and she felt well and happy. Some hours later her mother checked Alice's temperature again and it still registered normal.

"[Heavenly Father] had answered Alice's sincere prayer. That evening she was baptized!" ("A Birthday Baptism," *Friend*, Oct. 1974, p. 33).

- How would you have felt if you had been Alice?

Help the children understand that they might not be baptized exactly on their birthday but rather on a day soon after their eighth birthday; usually there is

one baptismal date each month for all children in a ward or stake. Tell them that they will be interviewed by the bishop or branch president before they are baptized. Tell them when baptisms usually take place in your area. Express your hope that the children will have the same happy feeling that Alice had when they are baptized.

Summary

Remind the children that their eighth birthday can be special because they will be old enough to be baptized.

Sing or say the words to the song “I Like My Birthdays.”

Point to the steps on the chart, and read them. Explain that after the children have been baptized, they will be ready to take the final step in becoming a member of the Church.

Invite a child to give the closing prayer.

Enrichment Activities

Choose from the following activities those that will work best for your children. You can use them in the lesson itself or as a review or summary. For additional guidance, see “Class Time” in “Helps for the Teacher.”

1. Copy or trace a picture of the birthday cake for each child. Have the children draw eight candles on the cake and then color it. Label the picture, “I can’t wait until I’m eight.”

If your class is not familiar with the tradition of birthday cakes, explain that in many countries, when children have a birthday, a birthday cake is made for them. A candle is put on the cake for each year since they were born. When the children turn eight, they have eight candles on their cake.

2. Discuss steps that the children need to take to prepare for baptism. As each of the following ideas is mentioned, lay a cutout of a footstep on the floor. Have the footsteps lead to picture 3-13, Boy Being Baptized.
 - Attend Primary and sacrament meeting each week.
 - Learn about the scriptures.
 - Be honest.
 - Pray daily.
 - Pay tithing.
 - Be kind to family and friends.
 - Follow Jesus Christ’s example.
 - Be eight years old.
 - Be interviewed by the bishop or branch president.
3. Invite a man who holds the Melchizedek Priesthood to come to class and tell the children what will take place at their baptism. Have him practice with them the correct position for their hands and the motions of baptism.
4. Show to the children *Baptism—A Promise to Follow Jesus* (9 min.) on *Primary Video Collection* (53179).

I Can't Wait Until I'm Eight

