

I Can Prepare for Baptism

Lesson
12

Purpose

To increase each child's desire to be baptized and to give the children an understanding of how to prepare for baptism.

Preparation

1. Prayerfully study Matthew 3:13–17 and Doctrine and Covenants 20:72–74. See also John 1:25–34 and *Gospel Principles* (31110), chapter 20.
2. If possible, ask the Primary music leader to have the children sing “Baptism” (*Children's Songbook*, p. 100) during opening or closing exercises.
3. Obtain a heavy piece of paper large enough to cover picture 2-19, John the Baptist Baptizing Jesus. Cut the paper into as many smaller pieces as there are children in your class. Place the pieces over the picture so it cannot be seen.
4. Make six large footprints out of heavy paper.
5. Make a copy or tracing of the page of drawings at the end of the lesson for each child.
6. Prepare to give a few details about your own baptism, such as who baptized you and where you were baptized, and talk briefly about your feelings about being baptized. If you were baptized as a child, you may want to bring a picture of yourself at that age.
7. Materials needed:
 - a. A Bible.
 - b. Tape or other adhesive.
 - c. Picture 2-19, John the Baptist Baptizing Jesus (Gospel Art Picture Kit 208; 62133); picture 2-20, Boy Being Baptized (62018).
8. Make the necessary preparations for any enrichment activities you want to use.

Note to teachers of older children: Enrichment activities 5, 6, and 7 are designed especially for older children who will soon be baptized.

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.

Jesus Christ Was Baptized

Attention activity

Display the covered picture of John the Baptist baptizing Jesus. Tell the children that the picture underneath the paper is of two important people. Ask the children to try to guess who the people are, but tell them not to say anything out loud until the whole picture can be seen. Ask each child to remove a piece of paper from the covered picture, one at a time.

When all the pieces have been removed, ask:

- Who are the people in the picture?
- What are they doing?

Scripture story

Tell the story of Jesus Christ's baptism, as found in Matthew 3:13–17. Explain that John the Baptist was surprised when Jesus asked to be baptized. John knew that Jesus had never sinned, so he didn't think Jesus would need to be baptized. But Jesus told John that being baptized was a commandment from Heavenly Father, and he wanted to obey all of Heavenly Father's commandments.

Point out the river in the picture and explain that John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River. John baptized Jesus by immersion. *Immersion* means being completely covered by water.

Read aloud Matthew 3:17 and explain that these are Heavenly Father's words. Tell the children that Heavenly Father is also pleased when we are baptized.

Game

Play the "Last Words" game with the children. Read the statements below, leaving out the underlined words. Ask a child to fill in the appropriate words. If a child does not remember the answer, go to the next child until the right answer is given (do not embarrass a child who cannot answer a question). Continue until each child has answered a question correctly, helping the children as needed. Use questions twice if necessary.

1. Jesus Christ was baptized by John the Baptist.
2. Jesus was baptized in the river Jordan.
3. Jesus was baptized to obey Heavenly Father's commandment (teaching).
4. When Jesus was baptized, he was completely covered by water.
5. After Jesus was baptized, he and John heard the voice of Heavenly Father.
6. When we are eight years old, we can follow the example of Jesus and be baptized.

We Can Follow Jesus Christ's Example by Being Baptized

Teacher presentation

Tell the children that when they are eight years old, they can be baptized. Right now, they should be getting ready for when they turn eight years old and can be baptized.

Explain that when we are baptized we make covenants (promises) with Heavenly Father. We promise to obey his commandments, forgive others, and follow Jesus Christ. In return, he accepts us into the Church and promises to guide and help us.

Tell the class about your baptism. You may want to mention where you were baptized (such as a font or river), who baptized you, and who was there to see you be baptized. If you were baptized as a child, show the children a picture of yourself at that age. Share with them the feelings you had about being baptized, such as excitement or a desire to be a member of the Church.

Tell the children that someday they can also be baptized as Jesus Christ was and as you were.

Story

Tell a story about a child being baptized. You may want to use the following story:

Marco's family joined the Church when he was seven years old. Everyone in the family was baptized except Marco. He was not old enough yet. Marco was very disappointed that he could not be baptized with his family, but his mother told him that soon he would be old enough to be baptized, and he should use the time while he was waiting to prepare.

- How could Marco prepare to be baptized?

During the next year Marco tried hard to choose the right and do what Jesus would want him to do. Finally Marco turned eight years old. He dressed all in white, and his father baptized him. As Marco's father brought him out of the water, Marco was very glad he could be baptized by immersion, as Jesus was. He was happy to be a member of Jesus' church.

We Can Prepare Now for Baptism

Footprint activity

Show picture 2-20, Boy Being Baptized, and, if possible, attach the picture to the classroom door.

- How is this child following Jesus' example?

Remind the children that right now they can prepare for baptism. Show the paper footprints and one copy of the six drawings from the end of the lesson. Tell the children that the drawings represent steps that will lead them to baptism. Discuss each step illustrated, asking questions such as those listed below. After you discuss each step, have a child place a footprint on the floor, forming a path to the baptism picture.

1. Believe in and learn about Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father.
 - Why should we learn about Jesus Christ and Heavenly Father?
 - Where can we learn about them?
2. Pray to Heavenly Father.
 - How can praying help us be ready for baptism?
3. Be forgiving and love others.
 - What happens when we forgive?
 - How can we show our love for others?
4. Choose the right every day.
 - What are some ways we can choose the right?
5. Read or listen to scripture stories.
 - How has studying the scriptures helped you?
6. Be eight years old.
 - What can you do before you are eight years old to prepare for baptism?

After all the footprints have been placed on the floor, let the children, one at a time, cross the room to the baptism picture by stepping on the footprints. Help the children explain, as they step on each footprint, how they can prepare for baptism.

Summary

Handout	Give each child a copy of the set of six drawings to take home. Print or have the children print their names on their papers.
Testimony	<p>Bear testimony to the children of the importance of baptism. Remind the children that Heavenly Father is pleased when we are baptized.</p> <p>Suggest that the children use the page of drawings to teach their families what they learned about baptism. Encourage each child to prepare to be baptized by following the six steps illustrated by the drawings.</p> <p>Invite a child to give the closing prayer.</p> <p>When the children are ready to leave class, have them walk on the footprints again on their way out of the room.</p>

Enrichment Activities

Choose from the following activities those that will work best for the children in your class. 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. Draw a footprint on a piece of paper for each child. Write *I will follow Jesus Christ* on each footprint. Let the children color or decorate the footprints.
2. If there is a baptismal font in the building where you meet, arrange to take the children to see it.
3. Sing or say the words to the first two verses of “I Like My Birthdays” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 104). The words to this song are included at the back of the manual.
4. Sing or say the words to “Baptism” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 100) or “When Jesus Christ Was Baptized” (*Children’s Songbook*, p. 102). The words to “Baptism” are included at the back of the manual.

When Jesus Christ Was Baptized

When Jesus Christ was baptized
Down in the River Jordan,
Three members of the Godhead
Were present there in love.
The Father spoke from heaven
When Jesus Christ was baptized;
The Holy Ghost descended
As gently as a dove.

And now when I am baptized,
I’ll follow his example—
Be baptized by immersion
Through sacred priesthood pow’r.
Then I will be a member
Of Heav’nly Father’s kingdom
And have the Holy Spirit
To guide me ev’ry hour.

5. Display picture 2-20, Boy Being Baptized, next to picture 2-19, John the Baptist Baptizing Jesus. Review with the children what they know about being baptized. Help them understand that baptism is a special experience to look forward to. It is one of the most important things they will ever do. Discuss the following points:
 - a. When we are baptized, we become members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (If younger children are concerned that they are not members of the Church, assure them that children under eight can be considered members. Once they are eight years old, however, they must be baptized to be official members of the Church.)
 - b. We must be at least eight years old to be baptized.
 - c. The bishop or branch president meets with us to talk about our baptism.
 - d. We wear white clothing when we are baptized (refer to picture 2-20).
 - e. We are baptized by immersion, being completely covered by water. (Be sure that the children understand that they are under water for only a second or two, that the water is not very deep, and that the person baptizing them holds them securely.)
 - f. The person baptizing us must be a priest or hold the Melchizedek Priesthood.
 - g. We are baptized the same way Jesus Christ was baptized. He set the example for us.

6. With the approval of your Primary president, invite a priesthood holder to talk with the children about what will happen when they are baptized. Have him explain how the child and the person performing the baptism will stand and how they will hold their arms. Have him explain that the person performing the baptism will gently put the child under the water and quickly bring him or her up again. Remind the children that when they are baptized this way, they will have been baptized as Jesus was.

With the approval of your bishop or branch president, the priesthood holder can demonstrate in the classroom how a baptism is performed. (The priesthood holder should *not* say the baptismal prayer during a demonstration.)

7. Explain that the baptismal prayer is one of the few prayers that must be said exactly the same way every time. Jesus Christ revealed the words of this prayer in the scriptures. Read aloud the prayer in Doctrine and Covenants 20:73 (from *Having been commissioned*).

