

A NOTE TO PARENTS

The word *Epiphany* means “manifestation,” “revelation,” or “showing;” and in the Epiphany season we are presented with a series of luminous moments, in which Jesus reveals himself as Messiah, Saviour, and Lord. After the story of the Wise Men on the day of Epiphany itself, the first of these is Jesus’ Baptism, which is always celebrated on the Sunday following the day of Epiphany.

From the standpoint of children’s experience of the church year, this is quite a jolt. No longer do we imagine Jesus as a little baby: suddenly he has grown up. Since your child’s experience of baptism is probably associated with infant baptisms, it may be necessary for you to explain that it was not Baby Jesus who was baptized by John. Jesus grew up and waited for God to make his mission clear to him; then, when he was ready, he went to John to receive baptism as a sign of his total commitment to God’s call.

When we set out to follow Jesus, we are baptized not only into his call and his mission, but also into his death and resurrection. The water of baptism and the seal of the Spirit make us God’s chosen servants, not only along with Jesus but *in him*: we are taken up into his risen life, to share it as members of his Body.

If your children were baptized in infancy, they will, of course, have no conscious memory of their baptism. You can help them own their baptism by sharing your memories. How old were they? What did they look like? What did they wear? Did they cry, or make a face when the water was poured ... or did they sleep through the whole ceremony? What day was it—what hymns were sung? Was it in your present church? If not, where? What did the church furnishings look like? Who celebrated? Do you have photographs? Was there a party afterwards? Who was there? Who are the godparents? Does your child see them often and know them?

Talk about the promises that were made. How can we be faithful to those promises? Encourage your children to express their own ideas and feelings about their baptisms, and to participate eagerly in the renewal of vows whenever there is a baptism in church.

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THE SUNDAY PAPER JUNIOR

Year B
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after
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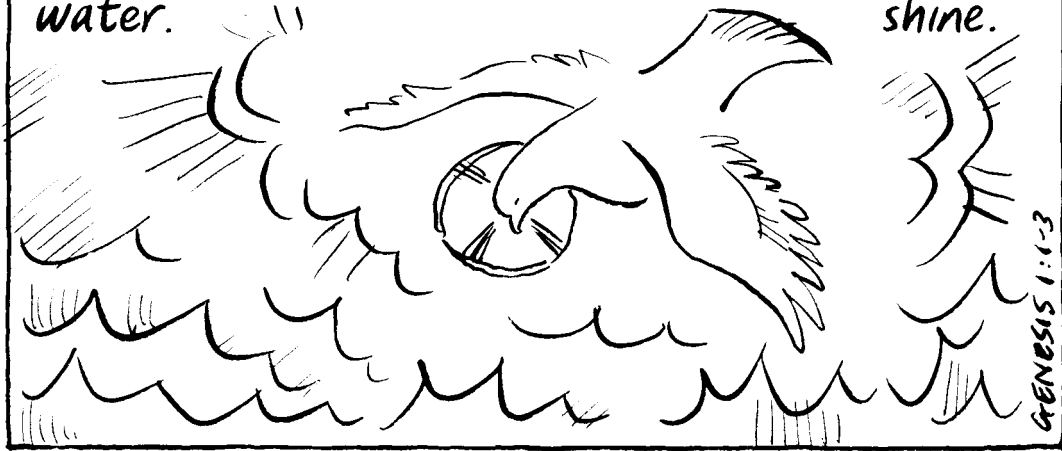
When Jesus was baptized,
he saw God's Spirit, like a dove,
coming down on him.
He heard God's voice:
"You are my beloved Son;
I am pleased with you"

MARK 1:10-11

JESUS WAS BAPTIZED IN WATER.

The Bible says that in the beginning, the world was full of water.

God's Spirit moved over the water, and God's light began to shine.



When people began to believe Jesus, they were baptized, and received God's Spirit.

ACTS 19:1-7



Today when we are baptized, God promises us his Spirit.



When Jesus was baptized, God's Spirit came to him. He knew he was special. He knew that God had special work for him to do.

When we are baptized, God's Spirit comes to us, too. We become part of Jesus. We are special. God has special work for us to do.



How old were you when you were baptized? What happened at your baptism? Under the dove, draw yourself, being baptized.