

1

The Voice

Worship

We praise God for His great love for us.

POWER TEXT

"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Romans 6:4).

KEY REFERENCES

- Matthew 3:1-3, 5-12
- *The Desire of Ages,* chap. 10, pp. 97-108
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 7, pp. 18-22, 97-99
- student story on page 22 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 15, Baptism
- No. 10, The Experience of Salvation
- No. 22, Christian Behavior

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that God's love draws them to confess that Jesus is Lord.
- **Feel** a growing desire to depend on Jesus for everything.
- **Respond** by demonstrating their choice through baptism.

POWERPOINT

God's love leads us to depend on Jesus and to be baptized.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

To prepare the people for Jesus' ministry, God raises up John the Baptist to call them from their sins. He baptizes them in the Jordan to signify their death to self and their birth to a new life. Many people respond to the call of John, but many priests and Pharisees do not. They believe their own goodness is enough.

This is a lesson about worship.

We have a need to repent of whatever we do outside of Christ. We need to confess our total dependence on Him. We seal this commitment through baptism. We respond to God's great love for us by choosing to depend totally on Him to live a new life. Worship is our response to God's saving love.

Teacher Enrichment

"Prepare ye the way. When an Oriental monarch intended to visit parts of his realm he would dispatch messengers to each district to be visited, announcing his anticipated visit and summoning the inhabitants to prepare for his arrival. The local inhabitants of each district were expected to 'prepare' the highway over which he would travel, inasmuch as little was ordinarily done to maintain roads.

"Make his paths straight. . . . Straightening the crooked places of men's hearts is . . . the preparation of which John here speaks. This is why John preached a 'baptism of repentance' (Mark 1:4, KJV), literally, a 'baptism of a change of mind' . . . (Luke 3:5, KJV; DA 215)" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* vol. 5, p. 296).

Synonyms for repent: think better of, change one's mind, have second thoughts, own oneself in the wrong, humble oneself.

Synonyms for confess: acknowledge, admit, own, accept, recognize.

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson.

Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the Readiness Activity of your choice. »

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	*A. Water, Water* *B. How to Depend*	basins, water dictionaries, paper, pencils
* Prayer and Praise	15-20	See page 17. Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, offering plate/basket, letter to parents—see page 153
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story Experiencing the Story Exploring the Bible	 Bibles, copies of baptism crossword puzzle found on page 144, pencils Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Scenario*	
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Preparing the Way*	Bible, whiteboard or chalkboard, markers/chalk
* Closing		A. Prayer and Closing Comments B. Reminder to Parents C. Coming Up Next Week	

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:
- ☐ basins
- ☐ water

Water, Water

Provide a large basin of water and have students circle around the basin. Then ask them to describe water's characteristics. Encourage all students to share their ideas.

Debriefing

Say: **Baptism—being immersed in water—is a symbol. Let's read our power text, Romans 6:4, together. Let's also read 1 Peter 3:21.**

Ask: **According to these verses, what does baptism symbolize?** (dying to self and selfishness, being raised to a new life in Jesus) **Which ideas that you shared are similar to baptism? How? This week our power point is:**

God's love leads us to depend on Jesus and to be baptized.

B

YOU NEED:
- ☐ dictionaries
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils

How to Depend

Provide a dictionary, paper, and pencil for each pair of students. Ask them to find the definition of the word *dependence*. Provide each pair with a copy of today's power point. Ask them to choose the definition that best describes the kind of dependence we are to have on Jesus. Have the students list ways they might demonstrate dependence on Jesus. Each pair can then share their list with the whole class.

God's love leads us to depend on Jesus and to be baptized.

Accommodations for students with special needs

Have the students work in groups of three or four on this activity. One of the students could look up the word in the dictionary, and another student could read the power point. Then each group member could take turns expressing which definition best describes the dependence we need to have on Jesus. Another student could take notes and create a list of the ways in which we could show our dependence on Jesus based on the other students' responses.

Prayer and Praise

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"Lord, Be Glorified" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 148)
"Pass It On" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 130)
"I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 146)

Mission

Use *Adventist Mission* magazine for the mission story. You can go to https://am.adventistmission.org/mq-children or go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION.

Offering

YOU NEED:

- ☐ offering plate/basket
- ☐ letter to parents (see sample on p. 153)

Explain to students that in order to help others learn to depend on Jesus, we support the spread of God's message by giving our offerings. At the beginning of the quarter send a letter to the parents, informing them that an offering is taken up each week in Sabbath School. Include a small note about the various locations where the mission offering will be directed this quarter in order to help the students understand the importance of giving to the Lord (see a sample letter to parents on p. 153 of this guide). Encourage the students to collect the money. You may want to have some extra money if you notice that a student never comes with an offering so that each one may contribute.

Prayer

Ask your students to think of something for which they would like to depend on Jesus. Lead the students in a sentence prayer thanking God for leading us to depend completely on Jesus. Encourage all students to take a turn and have prayer for their class.

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

Notes

2

BIBLE LESSON

Introducing the Bible Story

Ask: **What kind of people in today's world "prepare the way" for others?** (ambassadors, secretaries, personal assistants, congress and parliament people, publicists, public relations people, pastors, teachers, opening acts at concerts) **Name some of them.** (The students will probably name contemporary people.) **What are some of the ways they prepare the way?**

Say: **This week we are beginning to study about John the Baptist, who was sent to prepare the way for Jesus, and about the meaning of baptism.**

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ baptism crossword puzzle handouts, (p. 144)
- ☐ pencils

Experiencing the Story

Have students form pairs. Give each pair a Bible, a pencil, and a copy of the baptism crossword puzzle found on page 144 of this guide.

Say: **You have some key words in the crossword that can help you think of familiar baptism stories in the Bible.**

You may look up Matthew 3:13-17 and Acts 8:26-38 to identify the words in the puzzle. (Give a time limit for the completion of this activity.)

Debriefing

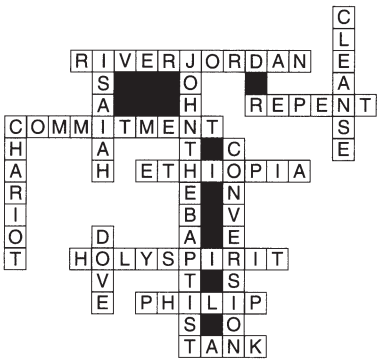
Ask: **What must it have been like to be baptized in John's day? How is baptism today similar or different from baptism in John's day?**

Say: **Baptism is our response to God's love and the symbol of our commitment to live for Him.**

God's love leads us to depend on Jesus and to be baptized.

Accommodation for students with special needs

Use the Bibles with tabs so that students who don't know all the books of the Bible may become independent in finding them.



3

APPLYING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:

- □ Bibles

Exploring the Bible

Say: **There are two well-known baptism stories in the New Testament and you may already have an idea of what the stories are about, if you look at the words on the crossword that you have completed. Now let's read together Matthew 3:13-17 and Acts 8:26-38.** (Have students take turns reading the passages).

Debriefing

Ask: **What is similar about the two stories? What is different? What do the stories tell us about baptism?** (Jesus set an example for us; baptism involves being in the water, not being sprinkled; baptism is a response to hearing the good news about Jesus.)

Accommodation for students with special needs:

Use the Bibles with tabs so that students who don't know all the books of the Bible may become independent in finding them.

Scenario

Read and discuss the following scenario with your students.

Alberto has been coming to church for a while. He has started developing a friendship with Jesus. Every day he reads his Bible and prays for help with everything he does at home and at school. Jesus is becoming as real to him as his friend. Alberto is so thankful to be able to depend on Jesus to help him. He wants everyone to know about his friendship with Jesus.

Ask: **What could he do?** (One way to respond to God's love, acceptance, and friendship is to be baptized. Explain that baptism is a way of worshiping God, thanking Him for saving us, and showing others that we depend on Him. It is another step in a growing and developing relationship with Jesus.)

Say: **Let's remember our power text for today:**

"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Romans 6:4).

4

SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ whiteboard OR chalkboard
- ☐ markers/chalk

Preparing the Way

Have someone read Matthew 3:1-3 again. In your own words, share the following information with the students: When a king or other ruler decided to visit parts of his kingdom, he would send notices by messenger so the cities could prepare for his arrival. Part of the preparations involved removing the bumps and filling the holes in the road along the way so the king would have a smooth path. (See *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary,* vol. 5, p. 296).

Ask: **How can we "prepare the way for the Lord" and "make straight paths for him"?** (We offer our lives to Him in baptism. We also "prepare the way for the Lord" when we tell others what we know about Jesus.) Write the students' responses on the board.

Say: **We worship God when we respond to His love and grace toward us.**

Say: **Let's decide on at least three concrete ways each of us will prepare the way for the Lord this week.** (Lead students to make a decision to be baptized if they haven't already.)

God's love leads us to depend on Jesus and to be baptized.

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

Ask the Holy Spirit to show your students the importance of baptism as a way to depend on God's love and grace toward them and to depend on God for help in making good choices.

Reminder to parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to guide your children spiritually. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel=1.**

Coming up next week:

Say: **John the Baptist—a temple for Christ. Taking care of our bodies is a way of worshipping Jesus.**

Notes

Student lesson

The Voice

Have you ever been confused over what someone was trying to say? It sounded important. It sounded right, but you just needed to think about it for a while. Imagine a young man asking John the Baptist about his message.

A lone man, an outdoorsman, sat quietly on a large rock beside the Jordan River. The sun was setting. John knew many alone times with God. During the 30 years of his life he had spent a lot of his time this way. But since he had started preaching beside the Jordan River, most of his days were filled with people. People streamed to him from every Jewish town and village. They came for many reasons.

John could see someone coming now, walking along the shore toward him. It was probably someone who had not been able to talk with him earlier because of the crowds. A young man walked up and sat down on a rock near John. John turned and smiled. The two sat in silence for a while.

Finally the young man broke the silence. "Sir, what did you mean today when you told the people to 'repent,' and why are you baptizing them?"

John said a quick prayer, asking that God would give him wisdom to share His message with this young man.

"The Messiah is coming, and I've been sent to tell people how to be ready. Confession means that you admit that you need God. Repentance means you are sorry for the mistakes you've made by trying to do things in your own power, and you turn your life over to Him.

"Baptism is showing those around you that you have chosen to depend on God rather than yourself. Another way of looking at it is that you are choosing from now on to depend on God each day to help you live life His way."

Again it was silent there by the Jordan.

"But," began the young man, "you said something different to the Pharisees and Sadducees when they came out today. You made them angry. How could you say leaders such as these weren't ready to be baptized? Weren't you afraid?" The young man talked openly to John; he seemed to trust him.

"I speak only what God has told me to speak," John explained. "Do you remember the words from the prophet Isaiah about 'a voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God" ' " (Isaiah 40:30).

"Yes," the young man replied. "I have heard my father read it in the synagogue."

"I am that voice," John said simply. "When I call people to repentance and baptism, I am asking them to prepare their hearts for God's guidance, so that He can change their lives from the inside out. I am telling people the truth about God and what He wants to do for them. The Messiah is coming to set up His kingdom in their hearts and minds."

"But what about the priests?" persisted the young man. "How could you call them 'deadly slithering serpents'? Aren't they also trying to teach people about God?"

John sent up another prayer for the right words to say. This young man was trying to understand. What did God want him to understand?

John turned to talk face to face. "Not everyone who comes to hear me preach is coming for the right reason. Some people are not really ready to depend on God. Some only want to get out of trouble. God knows who is sincerely wanting to live life God's way. Just working as a preacher or teacher isn't enough to make someone ready for God's kingdom."

John looked at the young man, who was staring past him. John's silent prayer might have been "Father, this is a hard message and yet it is so simple. Speak to his heart. Help him understand how to respond to Your love for him."

The night sounds along the river were the only amen. But John knew that God had heard. The young man stood up, smiled at John, and said simply, "Thanks. See you tomorrow."

KEY REFERENCES

- Matthew 3:1-3, 5-12
- *The Desire of Ages,* chap. 10, pp. 97-108
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 7, pp. 18-22 ("Two Happy Mothers"); pp. 97-99 ("The Shining Light")
- Our Beliefs, nos. 15, 10, 22

POWER TEXT

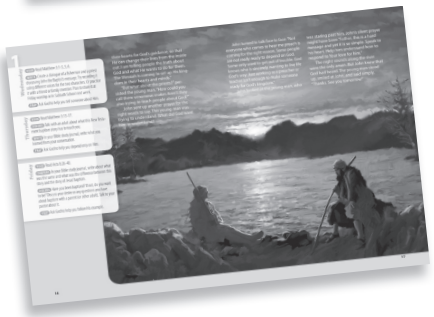
"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Romans 6:4).

POWER POINT

God's love leads us to depend on Jesus and to be baptized.







Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 18.

Sunday

READ Read Matthew 28:19, 20 and this week's story, "The Voice."

WRITE Write the power text on a disposable cup or on a paper and tape it to a glass. Fill the cup or glass half full of water. Set it where you can see it all week.

LEARN Begin to learn the power text, Romans 6:4.

PRAY Ask God to make you thirsty for His Word this week.

Monday

THINK Think of ways in which you could "seek the Lord while He may be found" and daily maintain your relationship with Jesus.

READ Read Isaiah 55:6, 7 and Proverbs 28:13.

LOOK Look up the words *repent* and *confess* in a regular or a Bible dictionary. Write the definitions and ones of your own in your Bible study journal.

PRAY Pray a prayer confessing your need of Jesus, and your thankfulness for His love.

Tuesday

READ Read Colossians 2:12 and 1 Peter 3:21.

THINK Think of a creative way to explain baptism so that someone who knows nothing about it can understand it better.

CREATE Think of a creative way to illustrate and explain baptism to someone. For example, you could make a drawing, sculpture, poem, or dialogue. Plan to share it at Sabbath School.

PRAY Ask God to help you choose to worship Him with your whole life.

Wednesday

READ Read Matthew 3:1–3, 5, 6.

WRITE Create a dialogue of a fisherman and a priest discussing John the Baptist's message. Try recording it using different voices for the two characters. Or practice it with a friend or family member. Plan to share it at Friday worship or in Sabbath School next week.

PRAY Ask God to help you tell someone about Him.

Thursday

READ Read Matthew 3:13–17.

DISCUSS Talk with an adult about what this New Testament baptism story has to teach you.

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write what you learned from your conversation.

PRAY Ask God to help you depend only on Him.

Friday

READ Read Acts 8:26–40.

COMPARE In your Bible study journal wribe about what was the same and what was the difference between this story and the story of Jesus' baptism.

DISCUSS Have you been baptized? If not, do you want to be? Discuss your desire or any questions you have about baptism with a parent (or other adult). Talk to your pastor about it.

PRAY Ask God to help you follow His example.