



ELEMENTARY LARGE GROUP

LESSON 2

JESUS' BAPTISM

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Is God's Son

SCRIPTURE: Mark 1; Matthew 3

GOD'S BIG STORY: John the Baptist prepares the way for Jesus by encouraging people to repent and be baptized. At Jesus' baptism, God reveals that Jesus is His own Son.

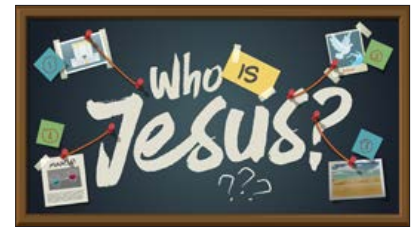
WORD OF WONDER: The Son is the exact likeness of God, who can't be seen. The Son is first, and he is over all creation. —Colossians 1:15

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Welcome Question: Who are you? I am _____.
- Curiosity Questions
- Object Lesson: Pieces of Me
- SMALL GROUP
- Prayer of Invitation
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Worship: My Help, What a Friend
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Responding in Worship: Famous For
- Blessing Your Kids



[Who is Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

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WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Is God's Son

SCRIPTURE: Mark 1; Matthew 3

WORD OF WONDER: Colossians 1:15

Take a moment to read Matthew 3 and Mark 1:1–12. Who do you identify with? The eager crowds? The suspicious religious gatekeepers? Or with John, who obeyed God's call to preach His word even when he didn't fully understand what was happening?

What John *did* understand is that he had a part to play in the work of God. He boldly shared the message he'd been given, but he was quick to get off the stage when Jesus showed up.

When Jesus arrived at the Jordan River, I imagine the crowd sensed something special was happening. And when Jesus was baptized, God, like any proud father, spoke words of identity and blessing over His Son. Only Jesus has the power to touch hearts and change lives. To rescue us from evil and darkness. Jesus truly is the Son of God, and that changes everything.

Take time this week to remember how Jesus has transformed (and is transforming) your life. How has He turned things upside down, made wrong things right, and brought the kingdom of God to you? Then as you hold the wonder of the moment when Jesus stepped into history and changed your eternity, ask God how you, like John the Baptist, can help prepare kids' hearts to encounter Jesus, God's Son, too.

—Lise Caldwell

Children's Ministry Volunteer

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

John the Baptist was the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth. He was filled with the Holy Spirit before he was born. He was a prophet—like Elijah—who prepared people for the Messiah and God's kingdom. He was eventually imprisoned and executed by Herod Antipas.

WHAT?

John preached in the Judean desert and baptized at the Jordan River. Many people came to repent and be baptized, including Jesus Himself. When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit came down on Him and a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son."

WHERE?

The Judean desert was between Jerusalem and the Jordan River. John was baptizing "at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan" (John 1:28, NIV). This indicates the eastern bank of the river, slightly north of the northernmost tip of the Dead Sea.

WHEN?

Jesus was about 30 years old when He began His ministry (Luke 3:23). John baptized Jesus at the outset of this ministry, around AD 26–29. After Jesus' baptism, the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert, where He was tempted by the devil.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Old Testament prophets like Joel looked forward to a day when God would give the Spirit freely to all people (see Joel 2:28). John baptized with water but spoke of Jesus as the One who would baptize with the Holy Spirit. It is through Jesus that God's Spirit is poured out!

Large Group

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Is God's Son
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WORD OF WONDER: Colossians 1:15

As kids arrive...

Around 20 minutes before service begins, display series theme loop. Play high-energy music in the background.

LG Leader walks around the room on mic and greets kids by name as they enter the room. Welcome kids by name and greet them with enthusiasm. Be extra intentional about hearing and responding to what they say.

SLIDE: SERIES THEME LOOP

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN (2min OR 30sec) Start a countdown to begin game 10 minutes prior to service start)

Object Lesson: Pieces of Me

7-10 MINUTES PRE-SERVICE

SUPPLIES: masking tape (prep only), permanent marker (prep only), clear disposable cups, clear shatter-proof jar or container with lid, pom-poms (5-10 per kid), table

SLIDE: PIECES OF ME

Ahead of time, use masking tape and a permanent marker to label clear disposable cups with some common identity statements (one label per cup). Write phrases like "I am a friend," "I am a student," "I play sports," "I am an artist," "I am a musician," "I am an animal person," etc. Label the lidded jar with the phrase "I am God's kid."



Set all the labeled cups and the clear jar on a table and invite kids to gather around. Set the pom-poms nearby.

"Today we're going to think about our identity. Our identity is who we are and who we belong to. Hold up some pom-poms. These pom-poms represent pieces of who you are and how you might describe yourself."

Read the labels on the cups and jar, and model the activity for the kids by placing a few pom-poms into the cups you identify with. Give about 5-10 pom-poms to each kid, and invite several kids at a time to come to the table and put pom-poms into the cup(s) they identify with the most. If your group is large, make multiple sets of labeled cups and set up more than one table.

Leader Tip: For Older Kids. Encourage kids to put multiple pom-poms into the cups that are more important to them. If a kid loves painting much more than sports, he can add three pom-poms to the “I am an artist” cup and only one to “I play sports.”

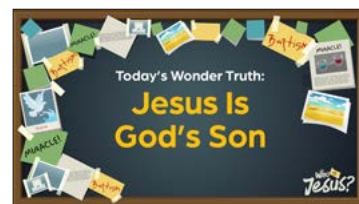
Gather kids together once all the kids have used up their pom-poms. **Some of us put our identity into playing sports. What if one day we have a bad game, and we get discouraged?** Pick up the cup labeled “I play sports” and start shaking it so the pom-poms spill out. **Some of us put our identity into being a student. We love school, and that’s great! But what if we don’t understand something new we are learning and get discouraged?** Pick up the cup labeled “I am a student” and start shaking it so the pom-poms spill out.

Some of us put our identity into being a friend. Our friends are important to us, which is wonderful! But what if our closest friend moves away? Pick up the cup labeled “I am a friend” and shake it so the pom-poms spill out. Do this with each of the cups, talking out scenarios where kids’ identities might get shaky.

Once you get to the “I am God’s kid” jar, screw the lid on the top. **When being God’s kid becomes the most important thing about who we are, we can be certain that no matter what happens to us, and no matter what we do, we will always be God’s kid. Nothing can separate us from God’s love.** As you talk about being God’s kids, shake the jar around and turn it upside down, demonstrating that the pom-poms will stay in no matter what.

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Today we’re going to learn that God sent a man named John the Baptist to get the people ready to meet Jesus. As John baptized Jesus—dipping Him in water—Jesus’ identity became clear. Today’s Wonder Truth is **JESUS IS GOD’S SON**. And when we follow Jesus, we too become God’s kids!"



Make It Inclusive!

If some kids in your group have limited mobility, invite an older kid to bring each jar to them. Or have all the kids sit in a circle and pass the jars around with kids placing their pom-poms in jars as they pass.

Welcome Question

SUPPLIES: paper, coloring utensils, poster board OR whiteboard, dry-erase markers (if needed)

SLIDE: WELCOME QUESTION

At your start time ...

Welcome kids and tell them that you are excited to hear their answers to the Welcome Question. Call on several kids to share their answers:

Who are you? I am _____.

"There are many ways we can describe ourselves. But when we choose to follow Jesus, one thing about us becomes more important than all the others. Today in God’s big story, we’ll learn that Jesus is God’s very own Son. And because of Him, we can become God’s kids too!"



Small Group

Introduce small group time. While kids are in small group, consider sitting in the groups for a few minutes each. Engage and interact as is appropriate.

Countdown

After about 15 minutes of small group, give a 5 minute warning and begin the countdown.

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN

"Hey everyone! Welcome to our Large Group Worship time! My name is _____ and I'm excited to take this time to worship God, review what we just read, and talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning about God! We are going to pray as we prepare our hearts to worship God!"

Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use your own words. Here is an example: **Father God, thank You for speaking to us through Your big story. We ask that Your Holy Spirit helps us understand how amazing Jesus, Your Son, is. Help us know that because Jesus came to us, we can be part of Your family. Thank You for loving us and making us Your very own kids. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Declaring God's Wonder

SLIDE: DECLARATION

Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

You are a good Father. (Kids repeat.)

Thank you for sending Your Son Jesus to us! (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)



Worship

****NEW SONGS!!** Consider sharing some about the songs you are going to sing. What they mean, why we sing them, why they are meaningful and important to you!

"We're going to stand and sing together! One way that we show love to God is to worship through song! So stand up, sing loud, and join in the motions with us. God loves to hear us sing praises to Him! Let's stand together and sing!"

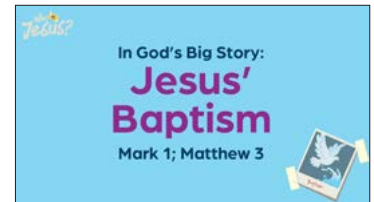
WORSHIP VIDEOS: My Help, What a Friend

God's Big Story

SLIDE: TITLE

Remind them that Mark is in the New Testament, toward the back of their Bibles. Mark is one of the four Gospels—books that tell the story of Jesus from different people's perspectives.

"Let's start by watching part of God's big story directly from the Bible. Afterward, we will experience more of the story!"



LESSON 2 JESUS' BAPTISM

EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: scissors (prep only), sandwich-size resealable bags (1 per kid), paper (10 sheets, 8½" x 11"), tape, cardstock (1 sheet per kid, optional), bins or baskets (optional), whiteboard (optional)

RESOURCES: *Story Cards Sheet (1 per SG), Large Story Cards (2/campus)*

Ahead of time, print the Story Cards Sheet, one set per SG, on cardstock if available. Cut the cards, shuffle each set, and place one set of cards in each resealable bag. Place the prepared bags in the small group leaderbins or baskets to make distribution easier. Prepare to display the Story Cards Slides as you tell the story. Use the large cards to put the pictures in order to display.

"Today we have an exciting challenge! In these bags are pictures that go along with today's part of God's big story. Hold up a resealable bag. As I tell the story, your job is to listen carefully to see if you can guess what picture comes next. Then in the end, we will see if our pictures are in the right order. Let's give it a shot!"

Encourage kids to spread out so they have floor space around them. Invite kids to open their bags and spread their cards out on the floor in front of them, with the images facing up.

As I tell the story, let's work together to put the pictures in order. As Jesus grew up, He became stronger and wiser. Through all the twists and turns of childhood, He came to understand that He had a special relationship with God. God is His Father, and Jesus needed to do what His Father wanted Him to do.

Are there any father pictures in your cards? Kids respond. **Nice! Let's put the picture of a father and son first to remind us that God is Jesus' Father.** Tape the 8½" x 11" printout of the father/son picture to the wall or whiteboard where the kids can see it. (Consider inviting a couple of older kids to help find the right pictures and tape them up in order as the story progresses.)

Display the first of the Story Cards Slides, which shows a father and son.

Encourage kids to set their father/son card in front of them.



Leader Tip: As the lesson continues, kids will catch on and most likely shout out when they recognize a picture that matches the story. Consider using the kids' responses as your cue to pause and add the next card to the wall.

Jesus was ready for His gigantic part in God's big story, but was the world ready for Jesus? Well, God worked through a man named John the Baptist to get people ready. With the help of God's Spirit, John went to the dusty desert to preach to whoever would listen.

A desert? That's one of our cards! Let's put that next in our storytelling order. Tape the printout of the desert picture next to the father/son picture. Display the second Story Card Slide, which shows a desert. Encourage kids to set their desert card next to the father/son card.

John began preaching the message: "Turn away from your sins! The kingdom of heaven has come near" (Matthew 3:2). Could it be true? Was God's kingdom coming?

John lived differently than most people. He ate wild honey and crunchy grasshoppers called locusts. Is there a card that matches what John ate? Awesome! Let's put that in order. Tape the printout of the honey and locusts next to the desert picture. **Display Story Card 2**, which shows honey and locusts. Encourage kids to set their honey and locusts card next to the desert card.

Not only did John eat different food; he wore different clothes too! His clothes were made from camel's hair, and he wore a leather belt. Is there a picture that matches John's look? Yes! Let's put that in order. Tape the printout of the leather belt next to the honey and locusts picture.

Display story card 3, which shows a leather belt. Encourage kids to set their leather belt card next to the desert card.

John ate different food and wore different clothes. He dressed like Elijah the prophet. Could John be a prophet too? Some people thought he was. Hundreds of years before, the prophet Isaiah had spoken about John: "A messenger is calling out in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord. Make straight paths for him' " (Matthew 3:3; see also Isaiah 40:3). John was getting people ready for the Lord—ready for Jesus!

People from Jerusalem and the surrounding area came to John to confess their sins. They wanted to turn away from the wrong things they had been doing and start following God instead. John baptized them in the Jordan River. Do you see a card that shows a river? Great! Let's put that in order. Tape the printout of the river next to the leather belt picture. **Display Story Card 4**, which shows a river. Encourage kids to set their river card next to the leather belt card.

John baptized people in the Jordan River by dipping them under the water. It was like washing off the old yuckiness of sin to make them ready for something new—something better. Lots of people came to listen to John and be baptized in the river.

Even some of the Pharisees and Sadducees came to the river. These religious leaders thought very highly of themselves. They knew how to look and sound like they loved God, but John wasn't fooled. "You are like a nest of poisonous snakes!" John exclaimed (Matthew 3:7). Do you see a snake? Let's put that picture in order! Tape the printout of the snake next to the river picture. **Display story card 5**, which shows a snake. Encourage kids to set their snake card next to the river card.

John called the religious leaders snakes! He wanted them to know that following God isn't like putting on a costume. It requires a change of heart. "Live in a way that shows you have turned away from your sins," he told them (Matthew 3:8).

John also spoke about Jesus. "After me, there is someone coming who is more powerful than I am. I'm not good enough to bend down and untie his sandals" (Mark 1:7). Do you see a picture of sandals? Let's put that picture next. Tape the printout of the sandals next to the snakes picture.

Display Story Card 6, which shows sandals. Encourage kids to set their sandals card next to the snakes card.

John was saying that Jesus is so much more powerful and amazing than him. Jesus is so great that John wasn't even worthy to help Jesus take off His shoes! John said to the people, "I baptize you with water. But he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Mark 1:8). The Spirit would change people's hearts permanently and make them ready for God's kingdom. But how could Jesus baptize people with God's Spirit? Who could do such a thing?

Then, Jesus Himself showed up. Jesus wanted to be baptized, “but John tried to stop him” (Matthew 3:14). **Why would Jesus want to be baptized? He hadn’t done wrong things like all the other people. But Jesus said, “Let it be this way for now. It is right for us to do this. It carries out God’s holy plan”** (Matthew 3:15). **So John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River.**

“As soon as Jesus was baptized, he came up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened. Jesus saw the Spirit of God coming down on him like a dove” (Matthew 3:16). **Do you see a dove? Let’s put that card next.** Tape the printout of the dove next to the sandals picture. **Display Story Card 7**, which shows a dove. Encourage kids to set their dove card next to the sandals card.

“A voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, and I love him. I am very pleased with him’ ” (Matthew 3:17). **The kingdom of God was arriving, and it all started with Jesus.** Tape the second printout of the father/son next to the dove picture. **Display Story Card 8**, which shows a father and son. Encourage kids to take their first card—the picture of the father and son—and move it to the end of their line of cards.

Advance to the last slide, which shows all eight images in order. **Your cards should look like this.** Point to the images on the screen. **This is the story of Jesus’ baptism. Who is Jesus? Why is He able to make wrong things right and rescue people from evil and darkness? How is He powerful enough to pour out God’s Spirit and change people’s hearts? Only one person could do that: the Son of God. And that’s exactly who Jesus is.** Point to the last picture on the slide and the last card taped to the wall or whiteboard. **Jesus is God’s Son!**

Can you say this with me: Jesus is God’s Son! Kids repeat.

Encourage kids to gather their story cards back into their bags so they can tell the story to their families, maybe even challenging the adults in their family to guess what the story is and sequence the cards correctly!

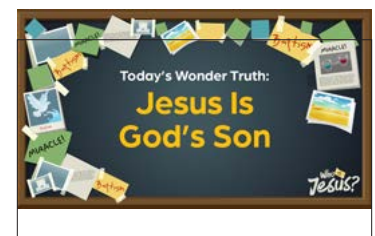
Connecting the Wonder Truth

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Pose the following question to kids to help them connect the Wonder Truth to God’s big story:

“Our Wonder Truth today is JESUS IS GOD’S SON. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in action in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

Prophets in the Old Testament looked forward to a day when God would give His Spirit freely to all people (see Joel 2:28). John the Baptist said that someone was coming who would baptize with the Holy Spirit. The Old Testament prophets and John were talking about Jesus! Through Jesus, God pours out His Spirit on all His people!”



Responding in Worship

SLIDE: RESPONDING IN WORSHIP

Talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning with next steps such as tithing, prayer, asking questions, and worship. Encourage kids to ask their SG leaders any questions they were wondering during the lesson.

***Introduce this next song and invite kids to respond and participate in worship. See the "Worship Posture Tutorial" on the RBKids Resource Page.



WORSHIP VIDEO: Famous For

Blessing Your Kids

Speak a blessing over your kids. Use your own words. Here is an example:

Blessing: May God bless you this week as you remember that He is a good Father. Remember this: Jesus is God's Son, and we are God's kids. God loves you so much, and nothing will ever change that!

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0:35.27 2who_is_jesus_30-second_count...

2:06.33 3who_is_jesus_2-minute_count...

4 Pieces of Me Slide.png

5 Baptism Wonder Truth Slide.png

6Baptism Welcome Question Slid...

5:08.43 7who_is_jesus_5-minute_count...

8Baptism Declaration Slide V2.png

4:26.77 9 my_help_-_motions.mp4

5:04.68 10 What a Friend Motions.mp4

11 Who is Jesus 1920x1080.png

12 Baptism Title Slide.png

6:27.01 13WJU Elem Gods Big Story L2.m...

14 Who is Jesus 1920x1080.png

15 Story Cards Slide 01.png

16 Story Cards Slide 02.png

17 Story Cards Slide 03.png

18 Story Cards Slide 04.png

19 Story Cards Slide 05.png

20 Story Cards Slide 06.png

21 Story Cards Slide 07.png

22 Story Cards Slide 08.png

23 Story Cards Slide 09.png

24Baptism Wonder Truth Slide.png

25 Responding in Worship.png

3:58.00 26famous_for_-_lyrics (1080p)...

0:07.01 27 WJU theme loop.mp4