

# FAITH @ HOME

Week of January 12, 2020

First Sunday after the Epiphany

## ADULT AND SMALL CHILD

**READ:** Matthew 3:13-17

**REFLECT:** In this story, Jesus is baptized. Baptism is done with water, usually in church when a priest pours water on your head and blesses you. It is a way to show that you are part of God's family, and that God loves you and is always with you. You may have been baptized when you were a baby, or you may not have been baptized yet. No matter what, God is always with you.

When Jesus was baptized, God showed everyone how much he loved Jesus by sending a dove. The dove landed on Jesus and God said, "This is my Son, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased." The dove is a symbol of God's love here with us. Just as the dove was with Jesus at his baptism, God is with us all the time. It is as if we always have a dove with us, maybe sitting on our shoulder, reminding us of God's love.

**RESPOND:** Draw a dove or print out this coloring page:

<http://www.supercoloring.com/coloring-pages/flying-dove-4?version=print>. Color the dove and then ask an adult to help you post it somewhere in your home. Every time you see it, it can remind you that God is always with you.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: JEREMIAH SIERRA



Jeremiah Sierra is currently the communications manager for Cities of Service, a nonprofit that works to change the way local government and residents work together. He has worked for a variety of other nonprofit organizations and Episcopal churches, most recently Trinity Church Wall Street, where he was the managing editor of the quarterly magazine. He has written for *Forward Day by Day* and other publications about faith. He lives in Brooklyn with his wife and three-year-old daughter.

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## ADULT AND ELEMENTARY

**READ:** Matthew 3:13-17

**REFLECT:** You may be wondering why Jesus would be baptized as he was part God and without sin. Yet, in being baptized, Jesus set the tone for what was to happen going forward for his followers. God's recognition of Jesus at his baptism marked him as God's own and prepared the way for Jesus' ministry. Baptism is known as a sacrament, which is an outward physical sign of an inward spiritual grace. The outward sign of baptism is water, and as we heard in the story, Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River. In the time of Jesus, water was a sign of both life and death, and as such, the waters of baptism help us to recall the death and resurrection of Jesus, birth into God's family in the church, forgiveness of sins, and new life in the Holy Spirit. All persons baptized in the Episcopal Church are marked with the sign of the cross with special chrism oil, baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**RESPOND:** Have you seen a baptism before at church or another place? (Yes, this can include your own if you are baptized.) What do you remember about the service? Ask a grown-up if there are pictures from your baptism or theirs (if one or both of you is baptized). Notice all the different things that you see in the pictures. How old is the person who is being baptized? Next, either draw a picture of a baptism service and label the different people in it, like the priest, deacon, the person being baptized, Godparents, etc. Have your grown-up help you as needed.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: ERIN WOLF



Erin Wolf is a Youth Minister hailing from Little Chute, WI where she lives with her four kids. She serves both All Saints Episcopal in Appleton and the Episcopal Diocese of Fond du Lac. Her focuses include children & youth, camp & retreats, music, service work, interactive prayer for all ages, and more. You can connect with her via email at [ewolf@diofdl.org](mailto:ewolf@diofdl.org).

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## ADULT AND YOUTH

**READ:** Matthew 3:13-17

**REFLECT:** Why did Jesus have to be baptized? Even John the Baptist is confused and tries to skirt around it, but Jesus tells him it is proper, it is right, for him to be baptized. This is the beginning of Jesus' ministry and his baptism is a public recognition of that. By being baptized, Jesus is also affirming he identifies with all of humanity.

After he is baptized, the heavens part, the Holy Spirit descends and you hear the words of God the Father, "This is my Son, the beloved, with whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17, NRSV) There is a public pronouncement of who Jesus is. This is also a beautiful moment of seeing the Trinity—the Triune God. Jesus embraced the mission he was given.

We each have a call, and we too are God's beloved with whom God is well pleased. How do we know what our ministry is and how do we live into whatever that is?

**RESPOND:** Look in the mirror and say these words aloud: "I am God's beloved with whom God is well pleased." Do you believe it? How do you live into that belief? Now make a list of roles you have in life—daughter/son, friend, sibling, student, etc. Read the Baptismal Covenant found on pages 304-305 in the Book of Common Prayer, or at this link: <https://episcopalchurch.org/baptismal-covenant>. In each of your roles, how do you live out (or try to live out) these promises? Draw a chart, make a list, or draw a picture that reflects the intersection of your roles and the baptismal covenant. Attach a picture of yourself and keep it somewhere you can see it every day.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: KATHERINE DOYLE



Katherine is the Coordinator for Youth and Young Adult Ministries and the rector of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Kentucky. She lives in Louisville with her husband and whichever of her four young adult children happen to be home at the time. Katherine's greatest joy is being a mama: first to her own four and then to all the children, youth, and young adults who call her Mama Doyle. She often finds God in the ordinary messiness of everyday life and writes about it on her blog [thesixdoyles.blogspot.com](http://thesixdoyles.blogspot.com).

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## ADULT AND ADULT

**READ:** Isaiah 42:1-9

**REFLECT:** God is serious about God's glory. God will not share God's glory with anyone or anything else. Our problem is that the time, attention, and praise that is due to God is often given to other things in our lives. Things that are not inherently bad like working hard, loving our spouses and children, caring for our friends, and even our phones. None of these are bad, but when we put them in the place of God in our lives, they become idols. We are giving them the glory that only belongs to God. We all have something that we devote ourselves to a little too much. God does not want to play second place in our lives. It is when our devotion is given solely to God that we are free to live as God has called us to. It is then that we, like Jesus, are able to live a life honoring God through our good work and spread of the gospel.

**RESPOND:** Take time to pray and repent today. Repent for the ways in which you have placed God second in your life. Make a list of things you have placed before God, read it aloud to yourself, and then throw it in the trash. Let that action symbolize the ways in which you are leaving it behind and turning towards Jesus.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTOR: CJ QUARTLBAUM



CJ is a writer and speaker from Brooklyn, NY. He spends most of his time hanging with his family, playing with his daughter, playing basketball, and reading. He's passionate about seeing the gospel spread in his city, in Brooklyn as it is in heaven. You can catch up with him on Twitter @CJ\_Quartlbaum or at CJQuartlbaum.com

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