

## Sunday Gospel Background

This Sunday, we celebrate another sort of epiphany or manifestation. By the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus' identity as Messiah and Son of God is revealed or given voice in this world. The story of Jesus' baptism in Sunday's Gospel begins Mark's Gospel and Jesus' public ministry. The story tells us that Jesus is God's Son. Being called by God as his beloved sons and daughters is what Baptism is about. Strengthened by Holy Communion and ultimately by Confirmation, we are fully brought into the Church and prepared to live as sons and daughters of the Father, brothers and sisters of Jesus and of one another.

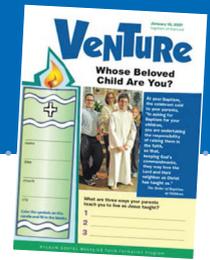
## Share Experiences

Check off the boxes as you complete each part of the lesson.

- Pray together** Lead your child in making the Sign of the Cross slowly and intentionally. Explain that this prayer shows our Christian belief in the Holy Trinity—God the Father, Jesus his Son, and the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, the Sign of the Cross reminds us of our belief in Jesus as God incarnate and in the Holy Spirit as God guiding us and our Church today. It is an act of faith.
- Cover Activity • Whose Beloved Child Are You? (page 1)** Read aloud the headline, and ask if the word beloved sounds familiar. These words were spoken by God the Father to Jesus at his baptism: "This is my beloved Son." *Beloved* describes us as well. In Baptism, we become beloved children of God and members of Jesus' family.  
  
Help with the candle activity, which is about when and where your child was baptized. For the three ways you help your child live like Jesus, you might have your child read this silently and answer in their own words.
- Article • Branson Becomes a Christian (pages 2-3)** Read the story together, taking turns at the bold text transitions. Most Catholics are baptized as infants and by pouring (affusion) of water. Ask if your child would like to be baptized as Branson was. Why or why not? What is good about being baptized when you are older?
- Discuss the Think questions on page 3.** *Answers: 1. Branson was part of an RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) group in his parish. He studied with children his own age; he went to the cathedral to sign the Book of Election with adults. 2. Water cleanses us. Water also washes things away, as in a flood. Going into the water and rising out of it is a sign of moving from death to life; in this case, water symbolizes moving from death and sin to rising and new life in Jesus. 3. Branson said that receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus made him feel like he was part of the church community. Open-ended. 4. The Easter Vigil celebrates Jesus' rising from the dead. It is a good time to be baptized into Jesus' family.*

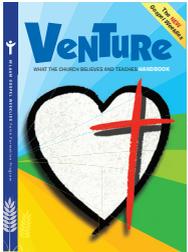
## Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- Sunday Gospel • Jesus Brings Heaven to Earth (page 4)** Proclaim the Gospel by dividing and reading the parts: John, Narrator 1 and 2, and the Voice.
- Discuss the Think questions on page 4.** *Answers: 1. The heavens splitting show that God is let loose in our world through Jesus. 2. The voice is God. God acknowledges Jesus as his Son; God is pleased with Jesus as he begins to fulfill his mission on earth. 3. Like Jesus, Branson's Baptism is witnessed by the community of believers. Open-ended.*
- Catholic Faith Word • Baptism (page 4)** Ask your child to read aloud this week's definition.



**Connecting Gospel and Doctrine • We Join Jesus' Family at Baptism**

**(page 4)** Read aloud this summary of Sunday's Gospel concepts. We join two families at our Baptism—the Church on earth, and Jesus' holy family in Heaven. Then discuss the *Think* questions. **Answers: 1–2.** *Open-ended; the idea is to think about the importance of the promises we make and those our parents and godparents made on our behalf at our Baptism.*



**Open the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to pages 19–20.**

Invite your child to read both pages silently. Explain that you will have a quiz show-type game afterwards. Plan to have some kind of small reward (like a snack or small treat) for questions answered correctly. Ask the following based on the reading:

- Who can administer Baptism?
- What kinds of sins are forgiven at Baptism?
- Can you be baptized more than once?
- What is the indelible spiritual mark on your soul?
- Can someone who is not baptized go to Heaven after they die?

*Once you have completed this section of the lesson, close the handbook and return to VenTure, page 5.*

**Our Catholic Faith • Jesus Is the Servant of God (page 5)**

Have your child read the text on page 5 silently and then answer the questions on the right. **Answers: 1.** *Above all, Jesus will bring justice; he will be a humble peacemaker; he will care for those who are hurt or imprisoned.* **2.** *God expresses that he is well-pleased with his servant, Jesus.*

## Live the Gospel

- Living the Gospel • Baptism Is About Belonging to God (pages 6–7)** The introductory part of this activity is meant to help kids realize what it means to belong to a group, like a swim team. Read aloud the opening paragraph, and ask your child to complete the team's characteristics. Do the same with God's Group in the middle column. Save the right column and the prayer service on page 7 to conclude the lesson.
- GodTalk • Questions About God, Faith, and the Church (page 8)** Read this feature aloud together. The questions represent a cross section of questions asked by children, but adults are often curious about these as well.
- Closing Prayer (pages 6–7)** Fill a bowl of water and place it on a table. Return to the right column on page 6—Celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism. Read aloud these introductory paragraphs. Explain that page 7 is a prayer service modeled on the *Order of Baptism of Children*. (Since you most likely are not gathering at church, you can skip the part about knocking on the church door.) Take the part of Leader yourself, and encourage your child to respond loudly and clearly to each question. Pray the Lord's Prayer to conclude your lesson.



## Parent Resources

For weekly videos, assessments, and more, scan this code or go to [pflaumweeklies.com/family](https://pflaumweeklies.com/family)  
Visit [www.usccb.org/bible/readings](https://www.usccb.org/bible/readings) to read this Sunday's Scripture