

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.

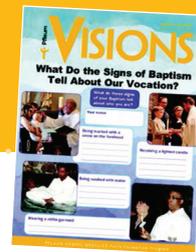
Share Experiences

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

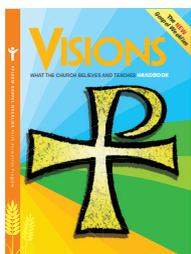
- Pray together** "Loving God, Father Creator, you have opened the heavens and sent your Son among us. We are your beloved sons and daughters. We want your words to grow in us so that we can help build a community of love on earth as in heaven. Amen."
- Cover Activity • What Do the Signs of Baptism Tell About Our Vocation? (page 1)**
Together with your child, identify what is happening in the four photos. Respond to the questions. *Possible answers:* Sign of the Cross—the person will be a follower of Jesus, and share the life of the Trinity; water—died and risen to new life with Jesus; oil—a sign of strength and of likeness to Jesus; candle—the person will be a child of light keeping the light of Christ burning brightly; white garment—a sign that the person is a new creation.
- Article • The Gospel According to Mark, First to Share the Good News (pages 2-3)**
Look at the art together. Point out the symbols of Mark; the scroll and pen show Mark is a writer, the lion represents the tone of his Gospel, the dove symbolizes how the Holy Spirit inspires Mark. Look at the photos and captions of the region of Galilee in Israel. This is where Jesus begins his public ministry. Take turns reading the article aloud, switching as you reach the bold type.
- Discuss the Talk questions on page 3.** *Answers: 1. Jesus the Christ the Son of God. Christ means Messiah. 2. The disciples who witnessed Jesus' life, Death and Resurrection have died or grown old. Mark realizes the Christian community needs a written record to travel through time. Mark wants Christians to remember Jesus' power to heal and inspire and to know the fear and failure Jesus and his followers lived through. Mark collects the stories from oral traditions about Jesus' teachings and actions. 3. Calls followers, preaches, casts out a demon, heals people who are sick, and prays. 4. What Jesus does his first week, he continues to do throughout his ministry. 5. In his teachings and actions, Jesus reveals what God is like. Jesus reveals God's love.*

Discover Gospel and Doctrine

- Sunday Gospel • Jesus Brings Heaven to Earth (page 4)** In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus is baptized by John the Baptist. Make the Sign of the Cross together. **Ask:** In whose name do we pray when we make the Sign of the Cross? *God the Father, Jesus his Son, and the Holy Spirit.* Invite your child to notice the presence of all three in the Gospel. Proclaim the Gospel by inviting your family to read aloud the parts of John the Baptist, Narrator, and Voice.
- Discuss the Talk questions on page 4.** *Answers: 1. This tear tells us the heavens have opened. God is not distant but among us in Jesus, who is filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus shows us God's love. 2. The Spirit inspires Jesus' whole ministry, including his healing, preaching, and freeing of people. 3. The voice comes from the heavens; it's God's voice, speaking as Jesus' Father and calling him "my beloved Son." The voice blesses all Jesus does.*



- Connecting Gospel and Doctrine • We Are Blessed with Saving Signs (page 4)** Read this summary of how Baptism introduces us to the Holy Trinity. The signs of Baptism, especially those of water and light, remind of us of Jesus' saving love.
- Answer the Talk questions on page 4.** *Answers: 1. Open-ended; you may have a special gift from a godparent, your child's Baptismal candle or white stole. 2. Open-ended; a cross or Bible are both appropriate gifts for a new Christian. 3. Open-ended; our godparents have promised to encourage and guide us in our Christian faith. They may model this through regular Mass attendance, prayer, service, or loving acts.*
- Catholic Faith Word • Holy Trinity (page 4)** Read aloud the definition and remind your child that Catholics are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.



- Open** the *What the Church Believes and Teaches* handbook to page 22. Read the section on Baptism. **Ask:** Why does a person receive this sacrament only once? *Through Baptism, we are born into new life, to become adopted children of God.*
Once you have completed this section of the lesson, close the handbook and return to Visions, page 5.

- Our Catholic Faith • Baptism Calls Us to Live Like Jesus (page 5)** Work with your child to read and complete the feature together.

Live the Gospel

- Living the Gospel • We Live Sacramental Lives (pages 6-7)** Have your child read this section independently and respond to the two questions. Read the Baptismal Promises section aloud with your child. You can take the Leader roles and your child can read "All." Then reverse the roles and have your child ask you the Leader questions. Do the same for the Justice and Peace Pledge on page 7. Encourage your child to carry the card or keep it someplace safe.
- Catholic Faith Word • Sacraments of Christian Initiation (page 6)** Read aloud this week's bonus definition.
- Puzzle • Sacraments Are Signs (page 8)** Have your child complete the puzzle. *Answers: ACROSS: 1. blessing; 3. Peace; 5. Reconciliation; 7. catholic; 9. love; 11. welcome; 13. anoints; 14. praise; 15. seven; 16. initiate; 17. sorry; 18. Matrimony. DOWN: 1. bread; 2. sacrament; 4. Confirmation; 6. oil; 8. Holy Orders; 10. Eucharist; 12. Baptism. Items used in Baptism: water, candle, Chrism*
- Closing Prayer** Return to page 53 in *What the Church Believes and Teaches*, and together pray the Prayer to the Holy Spirit.



Parent Resources

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