

What Do I Do When Things Fall Apart?

Year 1, Unit 1

dwel[®]



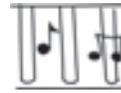
DIVE

Dear Family,

This year our group will experience the true story of God’s love shaping our lives! It can be hard to hear the Good Shepherd’s voice over the buzz of screens, smart phones, and social media; that’s why our time together is so precious. Each week we’ll hit the “pause” button in our busy lives so we can dive into God’s story and listen, imagine, wonder, create, discover, and grow!

For the next six weeks we’ll be exploring what it means to belong to Jesus and reflecting on our need for a Savior. We will dive into these stories, pairing them with important teachings from the Reformed/Presbyterian confessions:

Week 1: Acts 16:16-25. Belonging to Jesus (Paul and Silas in Prison)



Week 2: Acts 16:25-40. What We Need to Know (Earthquake, Jailbreak, and the Jailer’s Conversion)



Week 3: Genesis 4:1-16. In Need of Forgiveness (Cain Kills Abel)



Week 4: Genesis 3. The Way We Are (Adam and Eve Sin)



Week 5: Genesis 6-9. Our Just and Loving God (Noah and the Flood)



Week 6: Luke 1:76-77. Jesus, Our Savior (John Prepares the Way for Jesus and Baptizes Him)



Pass it On

Here are two ideas for talking about faith with your young teen:

- Pull out some old photos of yourself as a child, teen, or young adult and have fun together laughing at your hairstyles and clothes. Talk about how old you were when you came to know in your heart that you belong to God. What was that like for you?
- Young teens have turbulent lives! The next time a crisis erupts, take a minute to share how your relationship with Jesus has given you comfort during a difficult time.

If talking about faith doesn’t come naturally to you, start small. Even a brief conversation can leave a lasting impression!

Sincerely,

P.S. Check out www.NurtureKidsFaith.org for more faith-building ideas for home!

Memory Challenge Cards (NIV)

Session 1 Memory Challenge

If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

—Romans 14:8, NIV

Session 2 Memory Challenge

“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.”

—Acts 16:31a, NIV

Session 3 Memory Challenge

Jesus replied: “Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

—Matthew 22:37-39, NIV

Session 4 Memory Challenge

If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

—Romans 14:8, NIV

Session 5 Memory Challenge

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

—1 John 1:9, NIV

Session 6 Memory Challenge

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

—John 3:16, NIV

Memory Challenge Cards (NRSV)

Session 1 Memory Challenge

If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

—Romans 14:8, NRSV

Session 2 Memory Challenge

“Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.”

—Acts 16:31a, NRSV

Session 3 Memory Challenge

Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

—Matthew 22:37-39, NRSV

Session 4 Memory Challenge

If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.

—Romans 14:8, NRSV

Session 5 Memory Challenge

If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

—1 John 1:9, NRSV

Session 6 Memory Challenge

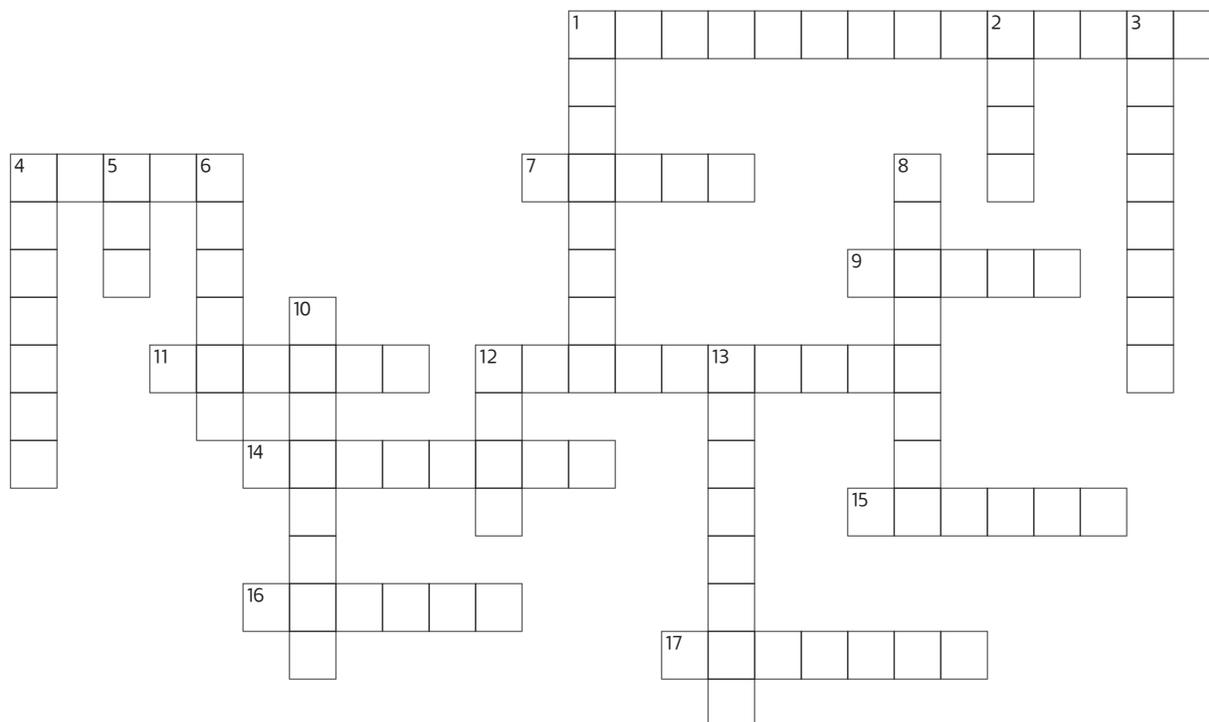
“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”

—John 3:16, NRSV

Prisoners of the Bible

The answers to this cross-word puzzle are all prisoners or captives mentioned in the Bible. Look up each Scripture passage and write the name of the prisoner mentioned in it.

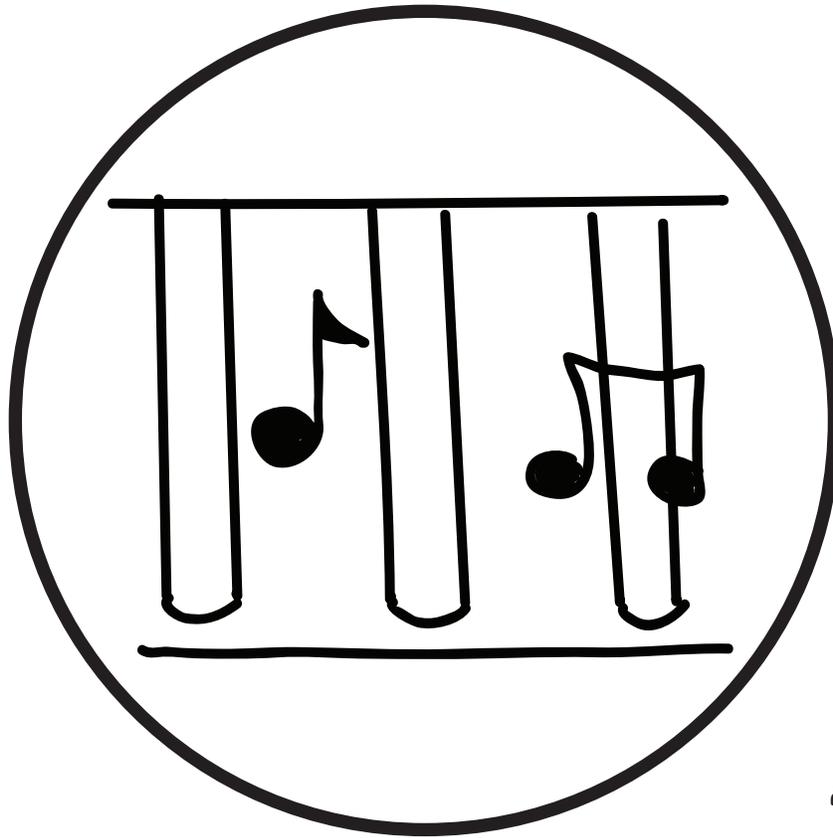
- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Mark 6 | 1. Jeremiah 37 |
| 4. Acts 16 | 2. Acts 16 |
| 7. Acts 4 | 3. Daniel 1 |
| 9. Matthew 26 | 4. Acts 6 |
| 11. Genesis 37 | 5. Genesis 14 |
| 12. 2 Kings 24 | 6. Judges 16 |
| 14. 2 Kings 23 | 8. Daniel 1 |
| 15. 2 Kings 17 | 10. 2 Kings 25 |
| 16. Daniel 1 | 12. Acts 4 |
| 17. Daniel 1 | 13. Acts 5 |



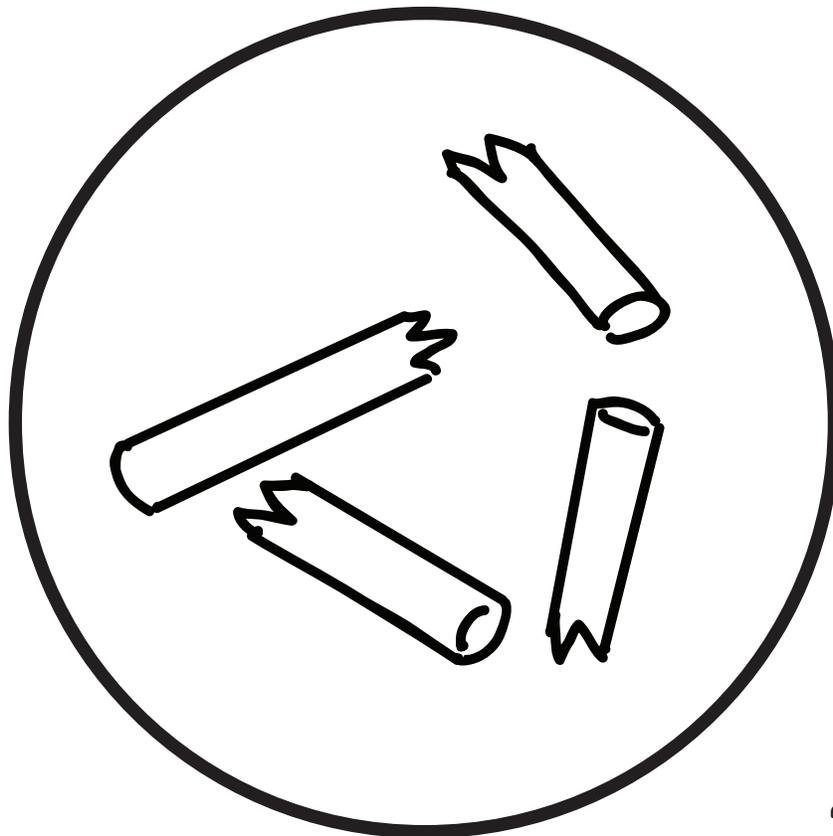
The Persecuted Church Today

Like Paul and Silas from today's story, many Christians around the world are imprisoned or in danger because they believe in Jesus and want to tell others about his love. You can help by praying that they will be strong and courageous as they share God's love, and that Jesus will protect them and fill them with peace. Visit www.idop.org and look under "Resources" to download a prayer map that will help you pray for Christians in specific countries around the world.

Pray also for those who don't yet know Christ—that the Holy Spirit will work in the hearts of teens, preteens, kids, and adults so that they can come to know Jesus as Savior and Lord.



Dive
Year 1, Unit 1, Session 1



Dive
Year 1, Unit 1, Session 2

Spontaneous Skit of Acts 16:25-34

(adapted from *The Message*)

Our scene takes place in the middle of the night.

PAUL and SILAS **were locked up** in a JAILHOUSE.

Even though all the other PRISONERS were **trying to sleep**, PAUL and SILAS were **wide awake, praying, and singing** songs to God.

Then, without warning, came a huge EARTHQUAKE! The whole JAILHOUSE shook and almost fell down! The doors to the JAILHOUSE **flew open** and the PRISONERS **ran around loose**.

The JAILER was lying outside on the ground, **sleeping and snoring**—but when he heard the sound of the EARTHQUAKE, he **leapt to his feet and looked around frantically**.

When he saw that the JAILHOUSE doors were wide open, he **groaned** with despair.

The JAILER pulled out his sword from the sheath at his side and, figuring he was as good as dead anyway, was about to do himself in.

Sudden, he **heard** a voice. It was PAUL, trying to **stop** him.

PAUL said, **“Don’t do that!** *(Pause for actor to repeat.)*

We’re all still here! *(Pause.)*

Nobody’s run away!” *(Pause.)*

The JAILER **got a torch and ran inside**. **Badly shaken**, the JAILER **collapsed** in front of PAUL and SILAS.

The JAILER **led PAUL AND SILAS out of the jail** and asked, **“Sirs,** *(pause for actor to repeat)* **what must I do to be saved, to really live?”** *(Pause.)*

PAUL and SILAS **said together**, **“Put your entire trust in the Master, Jesus.** *(Pause for actors to repeat.)* **Then you’ll live as you were meant to live—and everyone in your household included!”** *(Pause.)*

They went on to spell out in detail the story of the Master—the **entire family** heard the story and believed. The JAILER and his **entire family** had put their trust in God; **everyone in the house** was in on the **celebration**.

(End the skit in celebration—encourage the group to clap, whistle, and cheer!)

Story Character Nametags

Paul	Silas
Jailer	Prisoner
Prisoner	<i>Earthquake</i>
<i>Earthquake</i>	Jailhouse
Jailhouse	Jailer's family
Jailer's family	

Cain and Abel

Adam slept with Eve his wife. She conceived and had Cain. She said, "I've gotten a man, with God's help!"

Then she had another baby, Abel. Abel was a herdsman and Cain a farmer. Time passed. Cain brought an offering to God from the produce of his farm. Abel also brought an offering, but from the firstborn animals of his herd, choice cuts of meat. God liked Abel and his offering, but Cain and his offering didn't get his approval. Cain lost his temper and went into a sulk.

God spoke to Cain: "Why this tantrum? Why the sulking? If you do well, won't you be accepted? And if you don't do well, sin is lying in wait for you, ready to pounce; it's out to get you, you've got to master it."

Cain had words with his brother. They were out in the field; Cain came at Abel his brother and killed him.

God said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?"

He said, "How should I know? Am I his babysitter?"

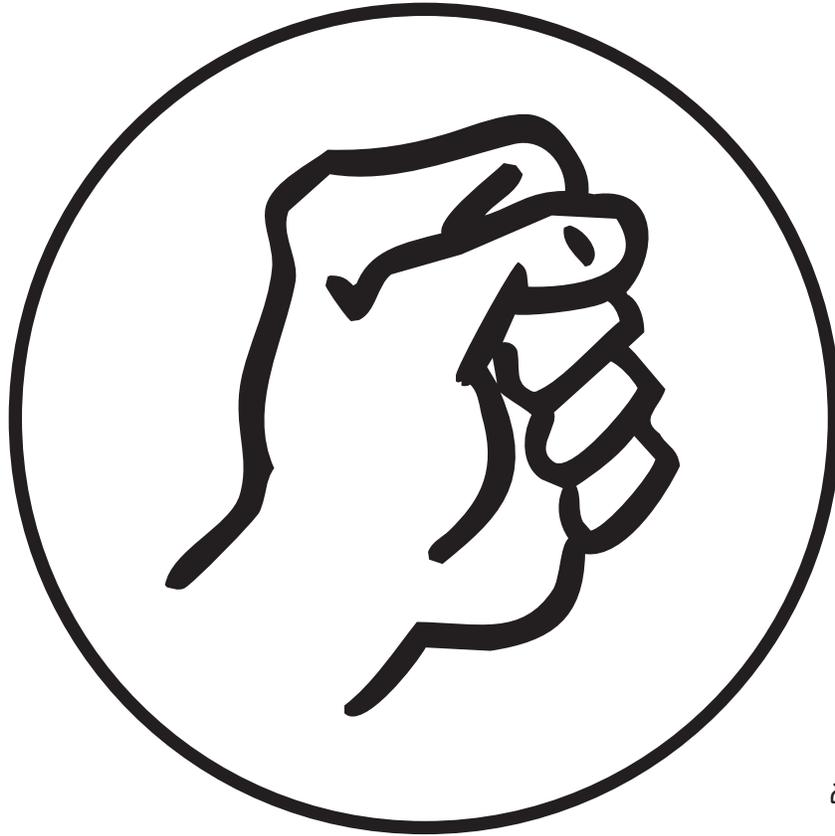
God said, "What have you done! The voice of your brother's blood is calling to me from the ground. From now on you'll get nothing but curses from this ground; you'll be driven from this ground that has opened its arms to receive the blood of your murdered brother. You'll farm this ground, but it will no longer give you its best. You'll be a homeless wanderer on Earth."

Cain said to God, "My punishment is too much. I can't take it! You've thrown me off the land and I can never again face you. I'm a homeless wanderer on Earth and whoever finds me will kill me."

God told him, "No. Anyone who kills Cain will pay for it seven times over." God put a mark on Cain to protect him so that no one who met him would kill him.

Cain left the presence of God and lived in No-Man's-Land, east of Eden.

—Genesis 4:1-16, *The Message*



Dive
Year 1, Unit 1, Session 3



Dive
Year 1, Unit 1, Session 4

Story Station Table Tents

Print or photocopy pages 65-66 onto colorful cardstock. Cut them apart at the dotted line and then fold each one down the center to create table tents for each station.



Station 2

Station 2



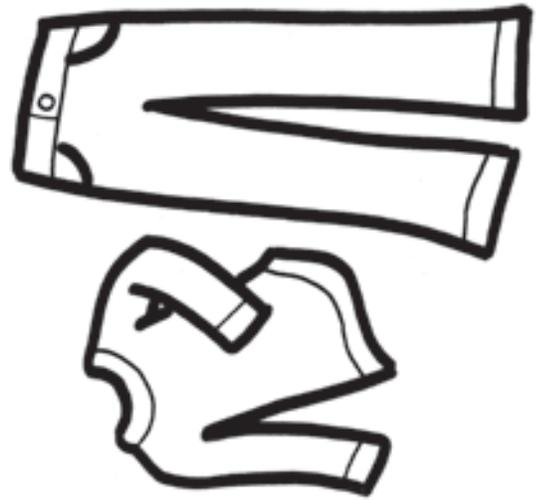
Station 1

Station 1





Station 5



Station 5



Station 4



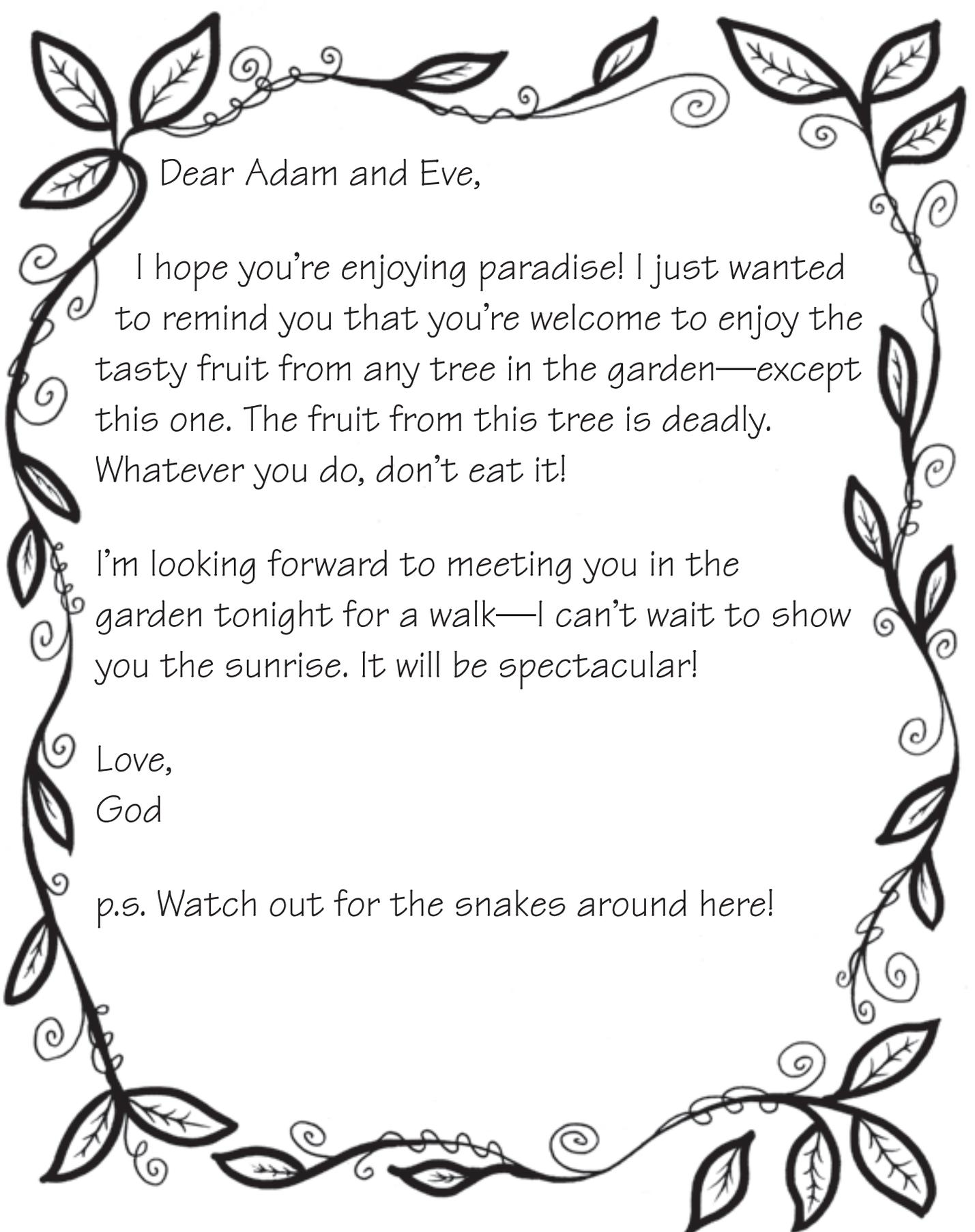
Station 4



Station 3



Station 3



Dear Adam and Eve,

I hope you're enjoying paradise! I just wanted to remind you that you're welcome to enjoy the tasty fruit from any tree in the garden—except this one. The fruit from this tree is deadly. Whatever you do, don't eat it!

I'm looking forward to meeting you in the garden tonight for a walk—I can't wait to show you the sunrise. It will be spectacular!

Love,
God

p.s. Watch out for the snakes around here!

Making Rain

Use the directions on this page to make “rain.”

Ask each person to find a partner. Each pair should stand next to their partner to form a semicircle around you. Explain that everyone will need to be very quiet and listen for the sound of the storm as it approaches and moves away.

Start on one side of the semicircle, showing the first pair a motion that they should imitate. The first motion is rubbing your hands together. After you’ve signaled the first pair to start rubbing their hands together, move slowly to the second pair, so that they know they can start rubbing their hands together, then move on to the next pair, until every pair is rubbing their hands together.

Next, you’ll begin again with the first pair, giving them a new hand motion to imitate: finger snapping. Work your way slowly around the semicircle, signaling each new pair to begin snapping their fingers (they should continue rubbing their hands together until you signal them to begin snapping their fingers instead). Continue this pattern of moving around the semicircle until you’ve worked your way through all the motions listed here:

- Rub hands together
- Snap fingers
- Slap hands on legs
- Stomp feet (fairly softly)
- Stomp feet (very hard)
- Slap hands on legs
- Snap fingers
- Rub hands together
- Fold hands together (to silence them)

Tip

If you have time, your group may enjoy doing this a second time—it sometimes sounds even better after you’ve practiced it one time through! If your group is small, simply skip the pairs and move slowly from person to person instead.

The Flood Story

Reader's Note: Narrator 1 relays much of the judgment that comes in this story; Narrator 1's tone should be sad and weary. Narrator 2 describes the grace-filled portions of the story; Narrator 2's voice should reflect more hope and promise. God's voice should reflect both sorrowful judgment and mercy.

Narrator 1

God saw that human evil was out of control. People thought evil, imagined evil—evil, evil, evil from morning to night. God was sorry that he had made the human race in the first place; it broke his heart. God said,

God

I'll get rid of my ruined creation, make a clean sweep: people, animals, snakes and bugs, birds—the works. I'm sorry I made them.

Narrator 2

But Noah was different. God liked what he saw in Noah.

This is the story of Noah: Noah was a good man, a man of integrity in his community. Noah walked with God. Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Narrator 1

As far as God was concerned, the Earth had become a sewer; there was violence everywhere. God took one look and saw how bad it was, everyone corrupt and corrupting—life itself corrupt to the core. God said to Noah,

God

It's all over. It's the end of the human race. The violence is everywhere; I'm making a clean sweep.

Build yourself a ship from teakwood. Make rooms in it. Coat it with pitch inside and out. Make it 450 feet long, seventy-five feet wide, and forty-five feet high. Build a roof for it and put in a window eighteen inches from the top; put in a door on the side of the ship; and make three decks, lower, middle, and upper.

I'm going to bring a flood on the Earth that will destroy everything alive under Heaven. Total destruction. But I'm going to establish a covenant with you: You'll board the ship, and your sons, your wife and your sons' wives will come on board with you. You are also to take two of each living creature, a male and a female, on board the ship, to preserve their lives with you: two of every species of bird, mammal, and reptile—two of everything so as to preserve their lives along with yours. Also get all the food you'll need and store it up for you and them.

Narrator 2

Noah did everything God commanded him to do. Next God said to Noah,

God

Now board the ship, you and all your family—out of everyone in this generation, you’re the righteous one.

Take on board with you seven pairs of every clean animal, a male and a female; one pair of every unclean animal, a male and a female; and seven pairs of every kind of bird, a male and a female, to insure their survival on Earth. In just seven days I will dump rain on Earth for forty days and forty nights. I’ll make a clean sweep of everything that I’ve made.

Narrator 2

Noah did everything God commanded him.

Narrator 1

Noah was 600 years old when the floodwaters covered the Earth. Noah and his wife and sons and their wives boarded the ship to escape the flood. Clean and unclean animals, birds, and all the crawling creatures came in pairs to Noah and to the ship, male and female, just as God had commanded Noah. In seven days the floodwaters came.

It was the six-hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month that it happened: all the underground springs erupted and all the windows of Heaven were thrown open. Rain poured for forty days and forty nights.

Narrator 2

That’s the day Noah and his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, accompanied by his wife and his sons’ wives, boarded the ship. And with them every kind of wild and domestic animal, right down to all the kinds of creatures that crawl and all kinds of birds and anything that flies. They came to Noah and to the ship in pairs—everything and anything that had the breath of life in it, male and female of every creature came just as God had commanded Noah. Then God shut the door behind him.

Narrator 1

The flood continued forty days and the waters rose and lifted the ship high over the Earth. The waters kept rising, the flood deepened on the Earth, the ship floated on the surface. The flood got worse until all the highest mountains were covered—the high-water mark reached twenty feet above the crest of the mountains. Everything died. Anything that moved—dead. Birds, farm animals, wild animals, the entire teeming exuberance of life—dead. And all people—dead. Every living, breathing creature that lived on dry land died; he wiped out the whole works—people and animals, crawling creatures and flying birds, every last one of them, gone.

Narrator 2

Only Noah and his company on the ship lived. The floodwaters took over for 150 days.

Then God turned his attention to Noah and all the wild animals and farm animals with him on the ship. God caused the wind to blow and the floodwaters began to go down.

The underground springs were shut off, the windows of Heaven closed and the rain quit. Inch by inch the water lowered.

Narrator 1

After 150 days the worst was over. On the seventeenth day of the seventh month, the ship landed on the Ararat mountain range. The water kept going down until the tenth month. On the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains came into view.

Narrator 2

After forty days Noah opened the window that he had built into the ship. He sent out a raven; it flew back and forth waiting for the floodwaters to dry up. Then he sent a dove to check on the flood conditions, but it couldn't even find a place to perch—water still covered the Earth.

Noah reached out and caught it, brought it back into the ship.

He waited seven more days and sent out the dove again. It came back in the evening with a freshly picked olive leaf in its beak. Noah knew that the flood was about finished. He waited another seven days and sent the dove out a third time. This time it didn't come back.

In the six-hundred-first year of Noah's life, on the first day of the first month, the flood had dried up. Noah opened the hatch of the ship and saw dry ground. By the twenty-seventh day of the second month, the Earth was completely dry.

God spoke to Noah:

God

Leave the ship, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives. And take all the animals with you, the whole menagerie of birds and mammals and crawling creatures, all that brimming prodigality of life, so they can reproduce and flourish on the Earth.

Narrator 2

Noah disembarked with his sons and wife and his sons' wives. Then all the animals, crawling creatures, birds—every creature on the face of the Earth—left the ship family by family.

Noah built an altar to God. He selected clean animals and birds from every species and offered them as burnt offerings on the altar. God smelled the sweet fragrance and thought to himself,

God

I'll never again curse the ground because of people. I know they have this bent toward evil from an early age, but I'll never again kill off everything living as I've just done.

For as long as Earth lasts,
planting and harvest, cold and heat,
Summer and winter, day and night
will never stop.

Narrator 2

God blessed Noah and his sons: He said,

God

Prosper! Reproduce! Fill the Earth! Every living creature—birds, animals, fish—will fall under your spell and be afraid of you. You're responsible for them. All living creatures are yours for food; just as I gave you the plants, now I give you everything else. Except for meat with its lifeblood still in it—don't eat that.

But your own lifeblood I will avenge; I will avenge it against both animals and other humans.

Whoever sheds human blood,
by humans let his blood be shed,
Because God made humans in his image
reflecting God's very nature.
You're here to bear fruit, reproduce,
lavish life on the Earth, live bountifully!

Narrator 2

Then God spoke to Noah and his sons:

God

I'm setting up my covenant with you including your children who will come after you, along with everything alive around you—birds, farm animals, wild animals—that came out of the ship with you. I'm setting up my covenant with you that never again will everything living be destroyed by floodwaters; no, never again will a flood destroy the Earth.

Narrator 2

God continued,

God

This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and everything living around you and everyone living after you. I'm putting my rainbow in the clouds, a sign of the covenant between me and the Earth. From now on, when I form a cloud over the Earth and the rainbow appears in the cloud, I'll remember my covenant between me and you and everything living, that never again will floodwaters destroy all life. When the rainbow appears in the cloud, I'll see it and remember the eternal covenant between God and everything living, every last living creature on Earth.

—Genesis 6:5–9:16, *The Message*

Entering the Ark

After so much preparation, it's time to board the ark. You step onto the ramp and breathe in deeply, smelling the strong scent of lumber. The wood feels sturdy beneath you. Overhead, the sky looks dark and threatening. Thick clouds are crowding out the sun and the wind is picking up. Suddenly it hits to you—*this is really going to happen!* The storm is already beginning. . . . But you and your whole family will have a safe shelter. What is it like to walk through the ark's entrance? What thoughts come to mind? What do you say to God in that moment?

(Pause)

Night after night you fall asleep to the sound of the beating rain. But tonight you're jolted awake by a terrifying crash. You feel the power of the water against the ship. The ark's support beams sound like they're breaking as the rising tide carries the ship forward. The force knocks you to the ground. But the commotion that follows is even more frightening. Roars and moans come from every animal on the ship. Wild noises echo through the decks. In a moment of panic you wonder, "Will I really survive this storm?" But as the commotion dies down your mind turns to all of people and animals that didn't survive. Everyone and everything that was on the outside. By now you're sure they've all been swept away. They are gone forever. How do you feel as you think about all the destruction? How do you think God feels?

(Pause)

Its day 125 now, and the rain has stopped. But the boat is still swaying in the waves. What do you spend your day doing? Is there a chore you especially dread? What hopes do you have? What doubts? It seems like you've been adrift forever. Finish this sentence in your mind, "If I *ever* get off this boat, I will . . ."

(Pause)

The ark has been still for a while now, and the last dove that Noah sent hasn't come back! It must have found a place to perch! Freedom is so close you can taste it! You can't wait to smell the fresh air and run through the grass. You hope there will be grass! You realize you've made it! God has protected you and your family—you're all safe! You'll be walking on dry ground soon! What do you say to your family as you prepare to leave? What have you learned about God during this journey? What have you learned about yourself?

When the door finally opens, you are overwhelmed by the view! There are colors and smells you haven't seen in nearly a year! The ground bears the scars of the flood, but there is new life budding and blooming as well! You worship God with a grateful heart, offering a sacrifice. You can hardly believe that God spared your life and the lives of your family! God blesses you and promises to never destroy the world again with a flood. Your heart fills with hope! What words do you use to worship God? What songs do you sing to praise him?

(Pause)

Then it dawns on you—this is a whole new beginning! God is giving you and your family the chance to start all over again, to build a whole new life. With God's help, you can fill the earth and rule it with goodness and love instead of sin and violence. Wow! You sit down on a patch of grass in the sun and wonder about what that will mean for your life. How will you live now? What will you do to help make this world the kind of place God always wanted it to be?

(Pause)

Rain Sticks

The rain stick is a musical instrument that originated in South America. Traditionally, rain sticks are made from the wood skeleton of a cactus. First, the thorns are pulled off and then pushed back through the soft flesh of the cactus. Then the cactus is left in the sun to dry—with the thorns on the inside. Later, the hollow cactus is filled with small pebbles, and the ends are sealed with pieces of wood.

The rain sticks your group will create are made of less natural materials like duct tape and nails, but they'll still produce the sound of rain when turned upside down!

Supplies

- Cardboard tubes, 1 per person (paper towel tubes or wrapping paper tubes cut in half will work great)
- Markers
- 1" (2.5 cm) nails, approximately 30 per person
- 1-2 rolls of duct tape or more, depending on your group size and your duct tape color preferences.
- Cardstock, 1/3 sheet per person
- 1-2 bags of dry rice and/or small beans (uncooked)

Instructions

1. Paper tubes have a spiral seam. Use a marker to draw dots about half an inch (or the width of your thumb) apart, all the way down the spiral seam of the tube.
2. Poke a nail all the way in at each dot. (Make sure the nails don't poke through the other side of the tube.)
3. Wrap duct tape around the tube to hold the nails in place (and to make the tube shiny or colorful).
4. Cut two circles of paper just a little bigger than the ends of the tube. Tape one of the circles over one end of the tube. Cover the circle with tape so the whole end of the tube is sealed shut.
5. Put a handful of rice or beans into the open end of the tube. Cover the open end with your hand, and turn the tube over. Add more rice or beans until you like the sound. (Beans will make a harder sound, and rice will make a softer sound.)
6. Put the second circle of paper over the open end of the tube, and seal that end shut with tape.
7. Your rain stick is complete. Turn it over and listen to the rain!

© Exploratorium, www.exploratorium.edu. This copy has been adapted from this page of the Exploratorium website: http://www.exploratorium.edu/frogs/rain_stick/index.html. It was originally adapted from *The Science Explorer*, a book of science activities for families from the Exploratorium, published by Henry Holt & Co., ©1996. The Science Explorer series is available at the Exploratorium Store.



Dive
Year 1, Unit 1, Session 5



Dive
Year 1, Unit 1, Session 6

The Baptism of Jesus

Use this script, taken from Matthew 3:1-17, to share today's story.

Narrator: In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying,

John: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

Narrator: This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'"

John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them:

John: You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Narrator: Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying,

John: I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?

Narrator: Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Story Scenes

Story Scene 1

In this story scene, John encourages people to repent and baptizes people who admit they are sinners and want to start living in a fresh, clean way.

Diving into the Story

Look up Luke 3:1-14 in your Bibles and read those verses together to hear Luke’s account of what happened at the river.

- **Who are some of the people that are coming to be baptized?**
- **What advice is John giving them?**

Look up the word “repent” in the dictionary and read the definition as a group. Talk about how this definition applies to this story. How do you think the people who were coming to John felt about their lives?

Creating Your Story Scene

Prepare a scene that captures the emotion of John’s message and the attitude of the people who were coming to listen to him and to be baptized. Talk together about how their faces would look and what their body language would say. If you have a very small group consider doing two freeze frames—one of John sharing his message, and a second that shows the people who are listening and responding.

When each group is finished preparing, you will have the chance to share your scene and describe it. Choose a spokes-

person for your group who will talk about what it means to repent and how you designed your scene to capture John’s call to repentance and the people’s response.

Story Scene 2

In the story scene, some people think John is the savior they’ve been waiting for. But John’s response is clear—it’s not me; I can’t save you from your sins. But get ready, because the Savior is coming!

Diving into the Story

Look up Luke 3:15-18 in your Bibles and read those verses together to hear Luke’s account of what happened at the river. Then talk about these questions:

- **In this passage, how does John measure how he compares to Jesus?**
- **John says Jesus will offer a new baptism. What seems to be the difference between what John can offer and what Jesus will offer?**

In your scene John compares Jesus to a farmer who is going to sift grain. To “winnow” means to separate. In those days farmers would toss crushed stalks of wheat into the air while the wind was blowing. The light husks and straw (called chaff) were blown aside by the wind, while the heavy grain fell down into a pile on the floor. The farmer would gather and store the grain and would use the chaff for fuel in the household fire.

John is using this word picture to suggest that the “chaff” is the people who refuse to turn away from their sins and will

therefore be sifted out and destroyed. The “wheat” is the people who repent and are saved. The bottom line: John’s message is serious, and it still applies to us today. John can’t save us, and we can’t save ourselves. Jesus is the only one who has the power to wash away our sins when we repent and turn to him!

Creating Your Story Scene

Now that you’ve explored the story in a little more depth, you are ready to share it. Prepare a scene that captures the serious message that John is proclaiming. Though Jesus was not actually standing next to John as he spoke, you may want to include Jesus in your story scene so that you can present the picture of Jesus that John describes.

When each group is finished preparing, you will have the chance to share your scene and describe it. Choose a spokesperson for your group who will talk about the message John shared, his description of Jesus, and how your group captured those in your story scene.

Story Scene 3

In this story scene, Jesus is God’s perfect, sinless Son—both truly human and truly God. But when he goes to see John at the river, he gets in line with all the sinners to be baptized.

Diving into the Story

Look up Matthew 3:13-15 and Luke 3:21-22 in your Bibles and read those verses together to hear both Matthew and Luke’s account of what happened at the river. Then read the following paragraph and discuss the questions below.

A story about a man who lives in the wilderness and eats bugs is strange enough, but then there’s another twist. Jesus, the one John said would come to baptize people with fire and the Holy Spirit, is now asking to be baptized. What’s going on here? Isn’t Jesus supposed to be doing the baptizing? John’s baptism is all about turning away from sin, but Jesus doesn’t have any sin to turn away from—he’s perfect! You can see why John is confused.

- **If you were John, what would you do?**
- **Why would a sinless savior want to be baptized just like a sinner? (Check out what Philippians 2:5-8 says about Jesus’ attitude.)**

This story shares a powerful truth about Jesus: Even though he is God, he made himself nothing so that he could take away our sins. He got in line with the rest of us humans—the screw-ups, the sinners, the lost, and the lonely. And his baptism sent us a big message: *I’m here for you. I’m going to take care of this mess you’re in.* That’s good news!

Creating Your Story Scene

Now that you’ve explored the story in a little more depth, you’re ready to share it with others. Prepare a scene that will capture the heart of Jesus as he stood there with everyone else at the river. How do you think he was interacting with the other people that were there? How do you think he looked as he approached John to be baptized? If you need to, make more than one story scene to express this portion of the story.

When each group is finished preparing, you will have the chance to share your scene and describe it. Choose a spokesperson for your group who will talk about the scene you've created and share what you've discovered about the importance of this moment.

Story Scene 4

In this story scene, when Jesus comes up out of the water, God's voice breaks through, saying, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased," and the Holy Spirit comes down to rest on Jesus, like a dove.

Diving into the Story

Look up Matthew 3:16-17 and Luke 3:21-22 in your Bibles and read those verses together to hear both Matthew's and Luke's accounts of what happened at the river. Then discuss these questions:

- **Talk about why those words were important for Jesus to hear. Do you think they were important for the crowd to hear too?**
- **Do you think Jesus ever doubted that God loved him and was pleased with him?**

Every Christian baptism echoes the baptism of Jesus. At our baptism God sends the same message to us: *You are my child, and I love you!* God also sends us the Holy Spirit to make us grow in faith so that we can believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and become more and more like him throughout our entire lives.

Each baptism is a sign of the good news of the gospel: just as water has the power to wash dirt off our bodies, Jesus' death and resurrection have the power to wash us clean of sin and make us ready to live for God!

Creating Your Story Scene

Now that you've explored the story in depth, you're ready to share it with others. Prepare a scene that will capture this moment between God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that included John and the whole crowd. You may want to make more than one freeze frame to capture all that's happening in this moment. Talk about how you imagine Jesus' face looked as he heard his Father's voice. Do you think the crowd was surprised, frightened, amazed? How will you show God's Spirit descending like a dove?

When each group is finished preparing, you will have the chance to share your scene and describe it. Choose a spokesperson for your group who will talk about the scene you've created and share what Jesus' baptism tells us about our own baptism.



dwell®

www.DwellCurriculum.org

Year 1

Unit 1 What Do I Do When Things Fall Apart?

Unit 2 What's the Covenant All About?

Unit 3 Who Is God?

Unit 4 Who Is Jesus?

Unit 5 Who Is the Holy Spirit?

Unit 6 What Is the Church?

Year 2

Unit 1 What Is Being a Christian All About?

Unit 2 What's with All the Rules?

Unit 3 Can't We All Just Get Along?

Unit 4 Who's Number 1?

Unit 5 Does What I Do Make a Difference?

Unit 6 What Do I Say When I Pray?


**FAITH
ALIVE**®
Christian Resources

www.FaithAliveResources.org

RELIGION / Christian Ministry / Youth

ISBN 978-1-59255-648-9



036115