

Let's do this

Matthew 3.13-17

Jesus arrives in Galilee and is baptized by John in the Jordan river. Although John is reluctant at first, because he thinks Jesus should be the one to baptize him, he agrees. The Spirit descends on Jesus like a dove and a heavenly voice calls him God's Beloved Son.

Now read **Matthew 3.13-17** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

This is one of the few events in the life of Jesus that is referenced in all four gospels, and it is the first time we read of Jesus as an adult. In coming to John for baptism, Jesus demonstrates an attitude of humility, setting the tone for his ministry that lies ahead. We also learn of God's attitude towards Jesus – he is 'well pleased' with his 'Beloved'.

GO OUTDOORS

In the passage, images from nature – of a river and a dove – help us to learn about God's attitude. Go for a walk in the natural environment near where you live, and look out for things that give you a glimpse of God's love for the world. You could take some art materials to sketch or paint what you see.



Athletes train and mentally prepare for a race. How can you get into the right mindset for your faith journey?



You will need a square piece of paper. Make an origami dove – there are instructions at <https://make-origami.com/origami-dove/> or you can search for step-by-step videos online. You could write on it 'You are my Beloved'. Stick your dove on your bathroom mirror or near your sink, so that each time you wash, you are reminded that you too are the beloved of God. Think about how starting each day with this reminder will affect how you see other people.

WATCH



View the scene from The Lion King when Simba meets Rafiki (1:02:30-1:06:30 in the 1994 version, 1:23:06-1:26:29 in the 2019 version, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71_p8P_PVXo). When Rafiki reminds him to whom he belongs ('You're Mufasa's boy!'), a complete change comes over Simba and he changes his attitude towards his past and future. In what ways are we changed when we remember that we belong to God? Take a moment this week to send someone a text, a card or letter, to remind them that they are God's beloved child.



Many people will be returning to work or school after the Christmas holidays around now. Think about what sort of attitude people should start the new year with. Take it in turns to say a word to describe a good attitude to have – how many can you come up with before running out of ideas?

Pray



You will need a plate, a washable pen and soapy water. Think about times when you have had a negative attitude towards someone or something. Draw or write something on the plate with a washable pen to represent each of these times. Ask God's forgiveness as you wash the plate in soapy water. When it emerges completely clean, remember that God always offers you a clean start.

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

John the Baptist was offering people a baptism for the forgiveness of their sins and to have a new start with God. Many people came out of the cities and towns and travelled to the river Jordan to hear John preach, and to go down into the water to be baptized by him.

When the time was right, Jesus travelled from his home in Galilee and went to meet John. He wanted to be baptized too. When John understood that this was what Jesus wanted, he tried to stop him. John said to Jesus, 'I need to be baptized by you, so why have you come to me?'

Jesus answered him, 'This is the right moment for me to be baptized. In this way, we will begin to put God's plan into action.' When John heard this, he agreed.

Jesus and John went down into the water and John baptized Jesus. Just as Jesus came up out of the water, the sky was opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God come down like a dove and settle on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved. I am very pleased with him.'

Matthew 3.13-17



Did you know?

- John the Baptist and Jesus were relatives.
- When people were baptized, they were lowered down into the water as a sign they were making a fresh start.

Matthew 3.13-17 (NRSV)

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?' But Jesus answered him, 'Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfil all righteousness.' Then he consented. And

when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.'