



BIG STORIES OF THE BIBLE 42

THE BEGINNING OF JESUS' MINISTRY

Scripture: Matthew 3

Open: Greet, Praises, Requests, Pray

Supplies: Geodes, hammers, chisels, rock, water, 2 cups

Ask:

- What did we learn about last week? (The birth of Jesus)
- Do you know any stories about Jesus during his childhood? (Allow for answers, some may know the story of when he was lost and his parents found him at the Temple)
- Other than that story, we don't know much about the childhood of Jesus. At about age 30, his ministry began.
- Does anyone know what happened before Jesus fully began his ministry? (He got baptized and tested in the wilderness).
- Today, we're going to look at the baptism of Jesus. Who can tell me what baptism is? (Allow for answers)

Read: Matthew 3:1-12

Explain:

So here we have John the Baptist. He was related to Jesus and just a little bit older than him. Later, Jesus said that he was the man who was prophesied about by Isaiah as the one that would prepare the way for the Messiah.

Define:

- Prophesied: This just means that Isaiah told about it before it would happen. About 700 years in advance, actually.
- Messiah: This means the anointed one. Jesus is the anointed one who was to come, that God promised to his people. Another word for Messiah is Christ. So when we say Jesus Christ, it isn't his last name, it means Jesus, the anointed one.

Ask:

- What was John doing? (baptizing)
- What did it say he was baptizing for? (Repentance)
- Does anyone know what repentance means? (It means to turn around. Think of if you were going the wrong way on a one-way street. You would have to turn around before you caused a crash. When we aren't following God, we're going the wrong way. In order to follow him, we have to turn around completely, and go back to him. We have to repent.

Play a Game:

This is a spinoff of Mother May I? Have one person be the "Tempter," and have the kids ask things like "May I tell 3 lies?" The tempter will say yes, and they take 3 steps forward. At some point in the game, yell, "Repent!" and have the kids run back to the starting line. If they get caught by the Tempter, they have to sit down. Play until one is left standing.

Explain:

Repentance is still a part of the Christian walk. God wants us to turn from our evil and sinful ways and follow him. When John was baptizing, he was calling the people to turn from their ways and prepare their hearts for Jesus. The people would get baptized to show that they were going to do this.

Read: Matthew 3:13-17

Explain:

Jesus' baptism was different. He didn't need to repent, and John knew it. But Jesus did to fulfill all righteousness. See, Jesus was always doing the will of the Father, and this was his will.

Now, we don't get baptized for repentance exactly, and we don't get baptized like Jesus, we get baptized for another reason: to show that we believe in the death and resurrection of Jesus. To show that we have died to our old way of life and been raised to new life in Christ (so there is an aspect of repentance in our baptism now).

It is a symbol that our lives belong to God, and he is changing us from the inside out.

Object Lesson:

Take out a rock and a geode. Place both in water.

Baptism is a little like this. This is a rock placed in water. There is nothing special about this rock. In the water, it might clean up the outside, but it doesn't do anything else.

But this is a special rock (hold up the geode). This rock is either a sedimentary rock or an igneous rock. When formed, little holes were made all throughout the rock. Now, when water gets in, it leaves behind minerals and flows out. Over time, these minerals grow crystals.

This is a little like salvation. Jesus is the Living Water. When we allow him into our lives as Lord, his living water flows through us, depositing his Spirit. His Spirit begins to change us and reform us. He begins to grow within us out of the new life we have in Christ. Water on the outside doesn't do anything. The water of baptism doesn't save you. Instead, baptism is a symbol to show the change that the living water is already making in your life. It is meant to show your love and obedience to Jesus as your Lord, and to proclaim that you are a follower of Christ, forgiven, washed of your sins, and raised to new life. Life more beautiful than geode crystals.

Smash the geodes

Ask:

This can be a hard subject to understand. Does anyone have any questions about what baptism is, what it means, or why we do it?

If anyone would like to be baptized, please talk to me or another adult after class so we can talk more in depth.

Comic Book Bibles:

Have the kids color the story of the baptism of Jesus or John the Baptist in their comic book Bibles.

Memorize: Matthew 3:11

Close in Prayer

