



Lesson #4

What is Baptism?



**Scripture Reference: Matthew 3:1-17 and 28:19
2 Cor. 5:17**



Goal: We follow Jesus in baptism.

One of the most touching services which takes place in the life of the church family is that of baptism. Whether you are a spectator or a baptism candidate, it is an exhilarating experience, one wrought with joy from Heaven. But to a child who doesn't fully understand what is going on, it can be confusing or even frightening. This lesson is designed to help children comprehend the history, symbolism, and mechanics behind baptism. By taking part in the interactive activities listed, the children will also be able to verbalize what an ordinance is.



Opening Activity:

(For this activity, you will need floor space large enough for the children to spread out without touching each other, a blackboard, an eraser, and chalk.)

Play the game "Simon Says" with the children. Have the children spread out. Call out a variety of actions for the children to do, prefacing some of them

with “Simon says...” The children are to mimic only those Simon tells them to do. If they do anything Simon doesn’t tell them to do, they are out of the game and must sit down. Play until only one person is left standing. If the game goes quickly, you may choose to play it again allowing one of the children to call the actions.

Say: **In the game of Simon Says, Simon tells us specific actions we are to do. In the Bible, Jesus tells us some specific or special actions we are to do, also. We call these actions *ordinances*. Write word on blackboard. Our denomination believes there are three important ordinances in the Bible. They are important because they are things that Jesus did, and He tells us to do them, too. Today we’re going to learn about one of those ordinances – Baptism.**



Bible Experience:

(For this activity, you will need colored chalk, a blackboard, an eraser, and a Bible.)

Gather the children around the blackboard. Ask one child to come up and draw a stick figure man. Say: **Jesus was about 30 years old when He began traveling around teaching people about God. But before Jesus started His ministry, God sent another man to prepare the people’s hearts. This man’s name was John. He was often called John the Baptist.** Point to stick figure on blackboard. **We can read about John in the book of Matthew in the Bible. In Chapter 3, verses 1-2, it says...**Open Bible to Matthew 3:1-2 and read it. Lay the open Bible on your lap as you continue the story.

Have another child draw a row of stick figures below the figure of John the Baptist. **Crowds of people came to hear John the Baptist preach. He told them they needed to repent. To repent means to turn. He told them they needed to turn from the evil things they were doing and to live for God. After listening to John, many people did turn away from their sins. Matthew 3:5-6 tells us...** Read the verses.

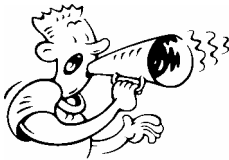
Have someone draw a simple river close to John on the blackboard. **After the people confessed or admitted they had sinned and wanted to turn their lives around, John would baptize them in the Jordan River.** Point to river. **Being baptized was a way of showing the rest of the world that they were going to live for God now. The people would walk into the river with John, and he would dip them down into the water and bring them back up again.**

It was almost like he was washing away the old persons and making them clean and new persons.

But John the Baptist knew it wasn't him who made the people clean, nor was it the water that made them clean. Only Jesus could make them clean. John was getting their hearts ready to meet Jesus. The teacher draws a stick figure beside John to represent Jesus. **So you can imagine how surprised John was one day to look up and see Jesus standing beside him. Jesus asked John to baptize Him! Matthew 3:13-15 says... Read passage.**

Have someone draw clouds above John and Jesus and another person draw a bird in the air. **John agreed to baptize Jesus. Matthew 3:16-17 tells us what happened when Jesus came out of the water. Read two verses.**

Conclude by saying: **God was pleased with Jesus for being baptized. Our denomination believes God is pleased when we are baptized, too. It is a special way of showing the people around us that we have asked God to forgive our sins and are choosing to live our lives for Him now.**



Life Application:

(For this activity, you will need a Bible. You will also need to make arrangements with the pastor ahead of time for him to come speak to your class about the mechanics of baptism. If your church has a baptistery, you may choose to hold this portion of the lesson there.)

Say: **Earlier today we learned a new word, the word ordinance. Who remembers what an ordinance is? a special action Jesus did and told us to do also Before Jesus returned to Heaven, He told His disciples... Read Matthew 28:19. Our denomination believes being baptized is part of being a disciple or follower of Jesus. The pastor has come today to talk to about how he/she baptizes people and to answer any questions you may have about baptism. Turn the class over to the pastor.**



Closing Activity:

(For this activity, you will need the attached butterfly pattern, card stock or poster board, assorted colors of fun foam, jumbo craft sticks, markers, pencils,

tacky or craft glue, scissors, black pipe cleaners, self-adhesive magnetic strip, and a Bible.

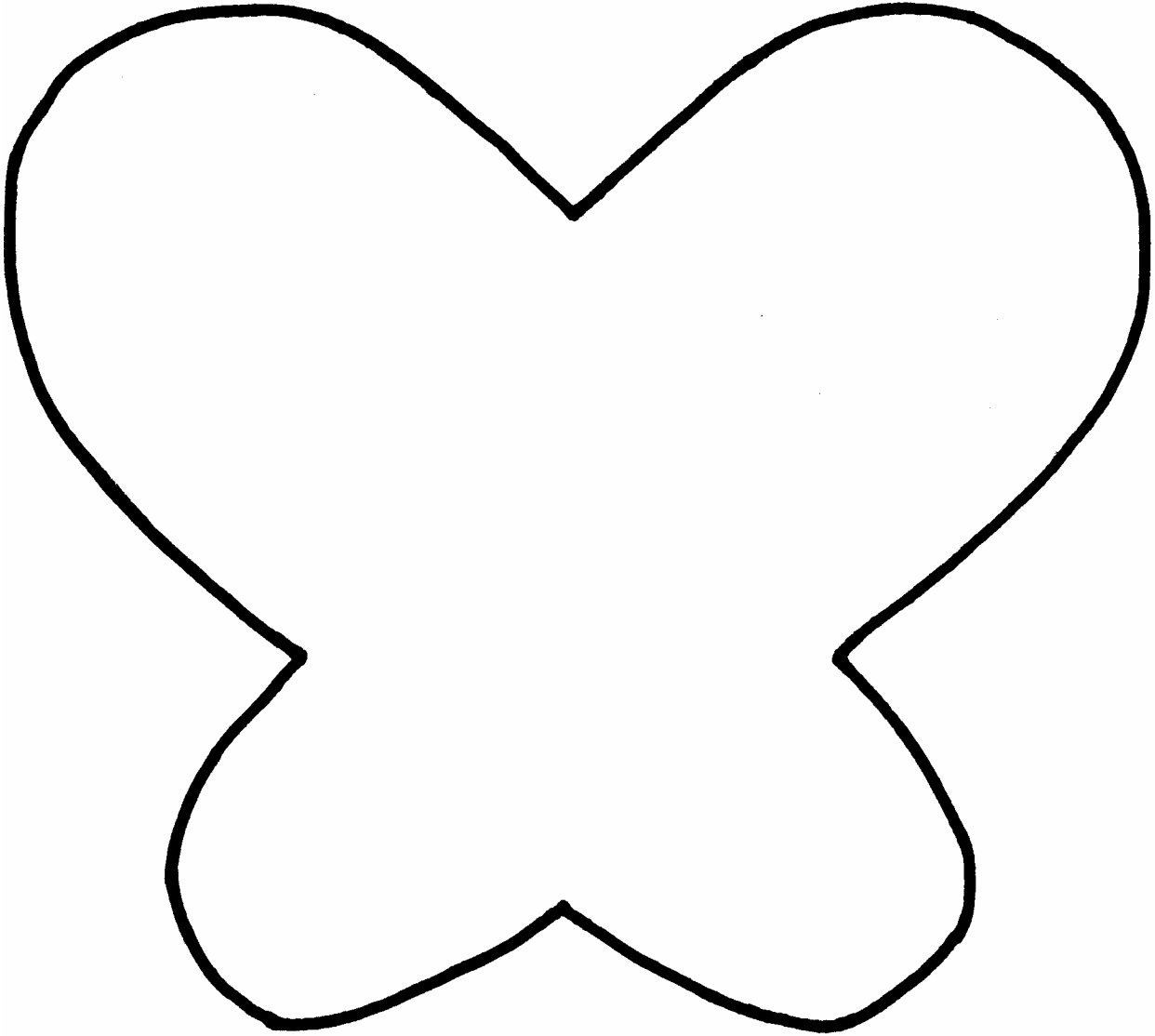
Ahead of time, trace the butterfly pattern onto card stock or poster board a few times and cut them out for the children to use as patterns. You may want to make a sample butterfly for the children to use as a guide.)

Lead the children in making butterfly magnets. The children may trace the butterfly pattern onto whatever color of fun foam they wish and cut them out. Use a craft stick for the main body and pipe cleaners for antennae. The main body may be decorated with markers and the wings with smaller geometric shapes of contrasting fun foam. When finished, place a couple strips of self-adhesive magnet on the back.

Say: **When a butterfly emerges from its cocoon, the old is gone; the new has come. The caterpillar is no more; it is a new creation, a butterfly. In the same way, when a person is baptized, it shows the world that the old is gone, and the new has come. . Second Corinthians 5:17 in the Bible tells us... Read verse. The old life of sin is gone; a new life for God has begun.**

Next week we will learn about another ordinance Jesus gives to us.

Butterfly Pattern



Sample

