

BAPTISM: THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

Leader Guide

youth  RESOURCE

LEADER NOTE

This study is designed to be done as a standalone study, particularly on a Sunday when there may be a baptism happening in worship. The hope is that such a study will encourage meaningful conversation about how young people can deeply understand their Baptismal Faith. In order to understand Baptism, I believe we need to go back to the beginning and talk about original sin. Without a proper understanding of our sinful condition, we cannot truly appreciate the gifts that we are given in baptism.

OPENING PRAYER

OPENING DISCUSSION

Ask the students to list the top 3 gifts they have ever received. As you formulate the list, look for similar things. Maybe it's tech, or money, or clothes. You will probably have one or two students that give a stock "bible answer" because they are sitting in a Bible study. You can take a few moments to find out if this a genuine answer or if they are only giving the "right" answer.

Once you have your list, ask what makes these gifts so great. One you've worked through their answers, ask them what eventually happens to those gifts. The answers will vary, but what happens is that they eventually wear out or the students lose interest in them. Tell them that today we are going to discuss a gift that never wears out and keeps on giving to us.

SCRIPTURE STUDY

Begin by reading Genesis 3. This is a longer section of Scripture so you may want to take pauses and vary the speaker. When you are done reading together, here are a few key things to highlight in this section.

How does the serpent approach Adam and Eve?

First, I like to talk about how the devil approaches Adam and Eve. He approaches them with a question, and not just an all-out attack on the validity of what God has told them. The devil picks at the foundation of Adam and Eve's faith in God and what God said. This is what the world today does;

it picks away at the foundation of our faith. If you pick away enough small pieces, then what happens? The whole foundation crumbles.

What promises does the devil make to Adam and Eve?

- You will not surely die...(verse 4)
 - The devil conveniently left out a word here. It should say, you will not die yet..
 - You see, the devil knew that sin would bring death to the world.
- You will be like God
 - No one is like God.

What is the problem with these promises?

These promises are misleading and empty. Just like the promises of this world.

What are some promises that the world gives to us?

Students may give answers about success, fame, money, etc. This can lead into a discussion about how those things are fun to have, but they ultimately can leave us empty and wanting more.

What came into the world through this deception by the devil?

Original sin has now entered the world. Original sin is that sin that is inherited from Adam and Eve. When you are born, it is into sin and that sin would have led to death if God hadn't stepped in.

What were the consequences of original sin?

- Pain in childbirth (3:16)
- Cursed ground: Adam now had to work the ground and deal with weeds, thistles, etc. (3:17-18)
- Death (3: 19)

What promise does God give to us in Genesis chapter 3?

Genesis 3:15- This is our first promise of a savior in Scripture and it sets the foundation down for the rest of the amazing things we will be talking about today. Notice that God's promise of a Savior came before he handed down the consequences to Adam and Eve.

Next, read Matthew 3:13-17. When you do, work through the questions below.

What is the exchange between John and Jesus?

It's important to note here that John the Baptist recognizes that he's not worthy to be baptizing Jesus, and in fact would have Jesus Baptize him. Jesus answers that this must be done to "fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15, ESV). This is important to note because we are seeing the fulfillment of God's promise back in Genesis 3.

Did Jesus need to be Baptized?

No, He is God. He is perfect. There is no need for him to be Baptized.

Why did He do it then?

Jesus' Baptism is a part of fulfilling all righteousness in His obedience to the Father's will, even if He did not need it for forgiveness. It is also meant as an example for all believers that Baptism is of the utmost importance.

What happens immediately after Jesus is Baptized and why is it significant?

This is one of the rare instances where we see all three persons of the Trinity present at one time. We have Jesus there in his human form, we see the Holy Spirit descend in the form of a dove, and we "see" the Father through the voice from heaven.

APPLICATION

This is a great time to prompt student's memories or experiences, especially if they have just seen a Baptism happen in worship. You may even want to consider walking over into the sanctuary (if that is possible) and using hymnals and the font to help bring the application home

What is Baptism?

- In the broadest sense of the term, to baptize something means "to wash with water". When we talk about baptism, we are combining that water with the Word of God.
- Baptism is also a sacrament, which means it must meet three requirements:
 - a. Instituted by God, see Matthew 28:19-20
 - b. Visible and Invisible Element
 - i. The visible element is the water
 - ii. The invisible element is the Word of God
 - c. It offers forgiveness of sins, see Acts 2:38

Who should be Baptized?

Everyone, including infants. When we look at Matthew 28:19-20, we see that Jesus says to baptize "all nations". This includes infants. They are plagued with original sin just the same as adults.

What do you remember or know about your Baptism?

Not every young person is going to know much about their baptism if they were Baptized as an infant. In fact, you may have some students who have not been Baptized. However, this is a great chance for you to hear stories that may have been told to the youth or memories a young person might have of their Baptism.

Why do we need Baptism?

Read Romans 3:23. Here we see all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, a reminder of the effects of original sin.

Read Mark 16:16. Here we are reminded the only way to heaven is through belief and baptism.

What gifts do we receive in Baptism?

- Read Acts 11:16. In baptism we receive the Holy Spirit. The Bible is clear here that John Baptized with water, but we will be Baptized with the Holy Spirit.
- Read 1 Corinthians 12:3. We receive faith from the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit working in our hearts, we are incapable of confessing faith in Jesus. Even the faith that saves us is a gift from God!
- Read Titus 3:5-7. Through faith we receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Be sure to note the imagery in Titus of the spirit being "poured out" on us. When you think of pouring something there is this idea of being completely covered. This verse always recalls the idea that we are completely covered by God. That original sin is covered in faith, repentance, and forgiveness from God.

How does knowing you are Baptized change your everyday life?

Help students focus on how the gift of faith from the Holy Spirit gives them a unique identity, as a member of the family of God. This identity is not ever changing like other identities may be. It also means that living out their faith may make them different than those around them. This is also a great place to talk about living out their vocations

OPPORTUNITY FOR CONNECTION

If you are able, consider contacting your pastor and seeing if he is available to come in for a short time during this Bible study. Give him a chance to talk to the youth about the joy and privilege he has in performing Baptisms. He may give a unique perspective and have stories to share. This can be especially powerful if the pastor has been around for a longer amount of time and may have baptized some of these teens.

FINAL DISCUSSION

In the beginning of the lesson we talked about the greatest gifts you have ever received. We also talked about how those gifts can wear out over time or we move on from them to something better. At the end of the lesson we talked about the gifts we receive in Baptism.

The difference in these gifts is that the ones we receive in baptism never wear out and you will never find anything better. Think about this radical gift that God gives us in baptism. We receive faith through the work of the Holy Spirit. That faith then entitles us to be heirs of eternal life. Through our faith we receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life. That forgiveness of sins isn't a one time offer either. No matter how many times we sin, God is there waiting for us to repent so that he can shower us in forgiveness once again. This is why baptism is the gift that keeps on giving.

CLOSING PRAYER