

Tearing Apart the Heavens - Follow Me!

Prayer: God of all righteousness, we need the life and grace that you alone can give. Open the heavens to us and pour out your Holy Spirit so that we may live as your beloved children; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

The Scripture we read is the story of John the Baptist and Jesus. The ice breaker invites Youth to experience the feeling of something being torn. The discussion encourages them to experience the baptism of Jesus and to be reminded of their own baptism.

Ask Youth to find (or provide them with) one sheet of 8.5 x 11 printer paper. The color does not matter; however, the size of the paper must be 8.5 x 11. Tell students they are going to compete to see who can tear the paper into the most pieces. Give students 30 seconds to tear the sheets of paper into as many pieces as possible. Count the number of pieces and award a winner! *Note: If there is a tie, give Youth another 10 seconds; repeat until there is a winner.*

Our scripture reading today is the story of John the Baptist and the beginning of the gospel of Jesus. While the Youth read the scripture, have them pay attention to the person of John the Baptist. What was he like?

Read Mark 1:4-11.

DISCUSSION:

- ◆ The scripture we just read has two main characters. Who are they and what do we know about them? [1]
- ◆ What was John doing before he baptized Jesus? [2]
- ◆ Remembering back to what John looked like from verse 6, how would you feel about John baptizing you?
- ◆ John says in verse 7, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals.” Who is he referring to? What does this tell us about the person?
- ◆ What do you know about baptism? (Make a list on posterboard or use a sheet of 8.5 x 11 paper.)
- ◆ Do you remember your baptism? If you have not been baptized, have you ever seen anyone baptized? What was it like?
- ◆ How would you feel if you heard a “voice from heaven” after your baptism as Jesus heard after his?
- ◆ What would you do if you had witnessed what happened at Jesus’ baptism with the “heavens being torn” and the “spirit descending on him like a dove” (v. 10)?
- ◆ Most of the story of Jesus’ ministry takes place after this baptism. How might remembering your baptism help you to live out your faith every day?

As we enter this new year, let us remember our baptisms. If you want to be baptized, let’s find some time to talk with Pastor Clarissa! We are going to enter into this new year with a new perspective on life—one that looks back at our baptism and remembers how the power of the Holy Spirit has always been at work in our lives.

Prayer: God of all wilderness wanderers, you sent John to prepare the way for Jesus Christ, your beloved son. Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us so that, like John, we may proclaim the time to turn from sinfulness and the good news of your grace; through Christ, the water of life. Amen.

T Y Y J K E W N U P D N O I D
D Z J J V S E U G J Z X F X G
V Q V O C X P Y I A E R J M I
O A L I H W F I M S L S D W F
I O M K F N U A R Z H I U P X
C M X X B F L E T I U P L S X
E H S O N Z F T J N T Z W E U
A I K R Z X I J S Y B E L R E
K U A D P S L O B Y A T T K P
C O W S D K L R K C P W H F Q
Y P D E G A G D W I T A E L M
E E S O R P M A E M I T A B S
B N K U V H D N B M Z E V P G
S E W R L E Z O A H E R E A Z
T D P L E A S E D O D L N N Z

GALILEE	HEAVEN	VOICE	LOVE	JESUS
OPENED	DOVE	JOHN	PLEASED	SON
JORDAN	WATER	FULFILL	BAPTIZED	SPIRIT

[1] John the Baptist and Jesus

[2] John was preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins to the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem. (v. 4-5)