

Teen Devotion

Year B – First Sunday after Epiphany From the River to the Mountain



One truth shared: Our baptisms connect us to Jesus our Savior and empower us to live to serve him alone.

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Romans 1:1-11

It Begins With Baptism

“I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit!” These words, which are spoken every time there is a baptism in Christian churches, are filled with the very power of God and backed by the supremacy of his Holy Word. What a blessing it is to watch the Holy Spirit at work in baptism as water combines with the Word to create saving faith in someone, assuring them that they are God's and he is theirs.

The Epiphany season is one in which Christ reveals himself throughout his ministry on earth as the true Son of God and the Savior of the entire world. That “revealing” begins in earnest with his baptism in the Jordan River.

Christ's baptism in the Jordan River not only allows us to better understand who he really is, it gives us an opportunity to cherish who we really are in him alone. Our baptisms are the beginning of a new life—connected to Christ and children of the Most High. This connection equips us to say NO to the sin that threatens us at every juncture and empowers us to say YES to following our Lord in life. This connection strengthens us to live to his glory, assured that we will be in heaven with him some day.

Jesus Christ of Nazareth was not just some good dude who lived a humble life, served a lot of people, and did some noble things. He is so much more! He is the almighty Lord of all things and the Savior of our souls. Remember that this Epiphany season. Live that truth always as you seek to serve only him.

Prayer: Thank you, Almighty God, for cleansing me of my sin and calling me your own. Remind me of my baptism daily and help me seek to serve you alone in all I think, say, and do. Amen.

Foundation Teen Facilitators Guide

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From the River to the Mountain

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It Begins With Baptism

Starting the Discussion: *This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

- What are some ways in which you celebrate your birthday?
- What are some ways in which you celebrate your baptismal day?

Connecting: *This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they've looked at it.*

Let's discuss some ways in which our baptismal days are really much more of a reason to celebrate than our birthdays.

Digging In: *Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- The account of Jesus' baptism is found in Mark 1:4-11. Let's read it.
- What jumps out at you as important in this Mark section?
- Let's look again at the Romans 6:1-11 passage that was the basis for the devotion. What does this section tell us about Jesus? What does it tell us about ourselves?
- In what ways do our baptisms give us "new life" in Christ Jesus?
- The apostle Paul ends this Romans section by writing, "In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus." What encouragement do these words give Christian young people in today's godless society?

Conclusion: *Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the "connecting question" above.*

Okay, so our baptismal dates are really important to remember because we know the faith that was created in our hearts on that day. Let's come up with some ways we can celebrate it then.