

A NOTE TO PARENTS

After the Twelve Days of Christmas, the feast of the Epiphany ushers in a new season of the Church's year. Like the season that follows Pentecost, the Epiphany season is sometimes known simply as "Ordinary Time," or "Green Time" from the color of the vestments and altar hangings during these weeks, and its Sundays are not "the first (or third, or whatever) Sunday of Epiphany," but "the first Sunday after Epiphany." This hair-splitting distinction hints that in these weeks we begin to be about a kind of business that is workaday rather than celebratory—business that we are undertaking over the long haul.

In this season we begin to look at the hard work and the teaching ministry of our Lord, which begins (as does our own work of ministry) with Baptism. The Baptism of Jesus is always the focus on the First Sunday After Epiphany; and its celebration, with white vestments, postpones "green time" by one week. Baptism is always, and rightly, an occasion of great celebration. But we misunderstand it if we do not bear in mind that it is only the beginning of a long season of hard work—as a wedding, with white gown, flowers, and cake, is only the beginning of the long, hard work that is the marriage. Today's New Testament reading tells us that God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and power to do God's work, and in the coming weeks we will begin to discover what that work is—and what is its cost to Jesus, and to us.

Jesus was baptized by John, when he was about thirty years old and ready to respond to God's call with his whole being. Since we last heard of John in Advent, when we were waiting for "baby Jesus," and since most baptisms today are celebrated for infants, make sure your children understand that today, as we speak of Jesus' baptism, we are no longer talking of Baby Jesus but of a grown-up Messiah who is setting out to do God's work. What is that work? What has your child drawn on the reverse of this page? What other work can you think of that Jesus did? What is the work that we are called to do as Jesus' followers, baptized with his Spirit into his new life?

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JUNIOR

Year A
1st SUNDAY
after EPIPHANY

*Jesus left his home in Galilee, and
went to be baptized by John.*

MATTHEW 3:13



John was by the river Jordan, baptizing people to get them ready for God's Kingdom.



When Jesus came to him, John said, "How can I baptize you? It should be the other way around."



Jesus said, "Do it this way for now. Later, it will be different."



Jesus saw God's Spirit coming down like a dove. He heard God's voice saying, "You are my beloved Son."



When Jesus grew up, he began to do God's work. He began to understand that he was the MESSIAH, the special chosen leader who would save God's people and set them free.

The Bible says that God's SPIRIT gave Jesus the power to do God's work. In church, we call God's Spirit "the Giver of Life." Draw something that Jesus did to give us life.