

**Resources for the Sunday Readings
Advent 4
Picture Reflection (p1), Five Question Bible Study (p2)
and All Age Activity (p3&4)**

Picture Reflection – prepared by Brenda



The whole world changed
Mark 1: 4-11

- In our story today we heard how Jesus' baptism was the start of something that would change the whole world. What would you like to say to Jesus at his Baptism as he starts his new beginning?
- How can we be part of God's continuing story by re-shaping ourselves and our community in God's service both now, during the pandemic, and in the time beyond?
- Imagine yourself in front of a blank canvas...How would you feel?
- What would you like to draw?
- When have you experienced a fresh start as a gift from God in your life?

Five Question Bible Study prepared by Vicky

GOSPEL - The Baptism of Christ **Mark 1:4-11**

Context:

A week ago we celebrated the visit of the Magi to the stable in Bethlehem to kneel in worship before the Christ child. Today we have jumped ahead 30 years to the very beginning of Jesus ministry. The passage is from the beginning of Mark's gospel as Mark doesn't include any stories about Jesus' birth.

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, '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. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

This is the first information we have about Jesus as an adult and it's a defining moment as the Holy Spirit descends on him and God's voice proclaims him as God's son, the beloved etc. After this the Spirit drives Jesus into the wilderness for 40 days and then he goes to Galilee and begins his ministry of preaching, teaching and healing. So this event is very much a beginning. In the account we are given quite a bit of detail about John the Baptist but we are told very little about Jesus, and Jesus is also passive here, and simply receives the gift of the Holy Spirit and the words confirming his identity.

1. How do you think this experience shaped Jesus ministry?
2. What are the significant moments in your journey of faith? How have they shaped your faith?
3. What does baptism mean to you?
4. Imagine God saying these words to you 'You are my son/daughter, the beloved; with you I am well pleased'. Baptism is a sign of God's love for us and his commitment to us and when we are baptised we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and our identity as his beloved child. What does it mean to you to hear God saying these words to you? How does it shape your life?
5. Why do you think Jesus was baptised? John proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins and Jesus was without sin. Have a look at the other gospel accounts of this and see how they interpret it – Matthew 3:13-17, Luke 3:15-22, John 1:29-34

All Age Activity

Create a story card reminder to illustrate the main characters



You will need: copies of the story card (see below) pens or pencils.

- Cut out the template and fold to make doors that open. Think about the story as a new beginning for Jesus, like a door opening or a new chapter.
- Draw on the outside of your door: John the Baptist on one side, and a crowd of people on the other.
- Now open your door and draw the scene of Jesus coming up out of the river in the centre, with the dove above him inside the top semi-circle.

