

# 1st Sunday after Epiphany

Jan. 1, 2024-  
Jan. 7, 2024

**SCRIPTURE:** Mark 1:4-11

**THEME:** It Begins with Baptism

**SONG:** CW21 377/CW93 89 - To Jordan's River Came Our Lord

**VISUAL:** A starting line

## OBJECT LESSON

How does a race begin? (Take student answers.) Racers line up at a starting line (show image if needed). A line is needed to start the race to make it fair for all runners. If everyone could choose where to start the race, every racer would try and get an advantage to help them win. Imagine racing in the Olympics only to find out that you have to start 10 feet behind everyone else. A line is used to create a fair starting point for everyone, so all runners know where the race begins.

## BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus was ready to start his ministry and its starting line was at the Jordan River. Our lesson today describes the events that happened at the Jordan River. (Read Mark 1:4-11.) John the Baptist was about to complete his job of preparing the way and preparing the people for Jesus to come. The race was about to start. Jesus would use the rest of his life on Earth to bring God's plan of salvation to completion. For that all to start, Jesus would begin with his own baptism.

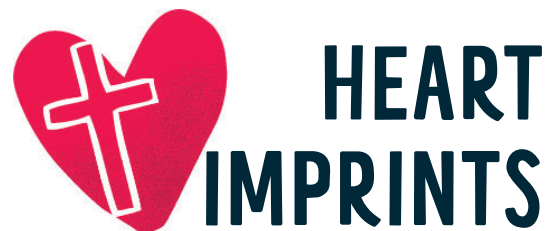
Jesus did not need to be baptized. He was sinless and didn't need to turn from his wrongdoings. Instead, Jesus was baptized by John to serve as a sign that he was the Messiah. John the Baptist's work was now complete with Jesus being baptized. We also read about the other persons of the Trinity being there at Jesus' baptism as well—God the Father speaking from heaven and the Holy Spirit appearing in the form of a dove. What a wonderful, reassuring lesson for believers to read!

## DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

Jesus being baptized seems like a simple Bible story. Yet, the meaning behind it reminds us how powerful our Savior is. Jesus began his ministry with baptism and would ultimately die for all our sins on the cross so we as sinners can go to heaven. Do we have a starting line just like Jesus? Our starting line is simple. Our baptism was the beginning of a new and better life—eternal life—a gift graciously given to us by our truest friend. Jesus' ministry and our eternity with him. It begins with baptism.

## PRAYER

Dear God,  
Thank you for sending your Son to live the life that we can't. We praise you for the mercy and grace you showed us when you brought us into your family of believers at our baptism. Keep us in faith through the power of your Word. In your name we pray, Amen.



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

Jan. 8, 2024-  
Jan. 14, 2024

**SCRIPTURE:** John 1:43-51

**THEME:** The Kindness in His Calling

**SONG:** CW21 375/CW93 81 - Arise and Shine in Splendor

**VISUAL:** A path in a woods

### OBJECT LESSON

How many of you have been hiking before? How important is it to follow a path? (Display image of a path in the woods). Take student responses. The path marks the way to travel so a hiker doesn't become lost. Beyond the path could lay dangers- a steep dropoff, poisonous plants, or the risk of getting lost. Hikers make sure they know where they are going by using maps, compasses, and staying on the path.

### BIBLE TRUTH

The path God has laid out for us as believers is perfection. God demands perfection and we as sinners cannot stay on the path God wants us to be on, but God shows kindness to his people as we hear in our lesson today. Read John 1:43-51.

Jesus approached Philip and said two simple words, "Follow me." Philip knows who Jesus is and immediately runs to Nathaniel and tells him the wonderful news that they have "found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote- Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." While Nathaniel isn't certain that anything good can come out of Nazareth, Philip gives a perfect response: "Come and see." Not only do Philip's words contain an invitation to come meet Jesus, but the promise that Jesus truly is the almighty Lord.

Jesus showed kindness to both Philip and Nathaniel by calling them to be disciples. Both men were sinners. Jesus knew every sin they had committed and still chose to call these men to be his disciples. Jesus shows kindness so that sinners, like Philip and Nathaniel, might be able to answer his call and be with him.

### DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

While we aren't living in Bible times, Jesus calls us to be a disciple too. God knows every sin we have committed and will commit, but still wants us to be his disciples. There is no hiding our sin from our all-seeing and all-knowing God. Yet, Jesus wants us to be with him and to know his love. He reached out to us and found us through baptism and his Word. Our sins are forgiven because of the kindness God showed us in the work of Jesus. We stand secure in his forgiveness, so we can answer his call to follow him. We follow him by listening to his Word and following his commands in our lives, by living as one of his disciples. How do you live your life as a disciple for Jesus?

### PRAYER

Dear God, you daily show us love and forgiveness. Despite our sin, you show kindness by calling us to be your disciples. Help us answer that call and follow you and your Word. In your name we pray, Amen.



# HEART IMPRINTS

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

Jan. 15, 2024 -  
Jan. 21, 2024

**SCRIPTURE:** Mark 1:14-20

**THEME:** Committed to a Lofty Charge

**SONG:** CW21 746 - I Love to Tell the Story (v. 1,7,3)

**VISUAL:** Photos of various careers

## OBJECT LESSON

Whose job is the most important? Can you rank which job is the most essential? (Show photos of people's careers.) How about the President of the United States? A doctor? Firefighter? (Take student answers.) It would be difficult to rank jobs based on how important they are. Many jobs are crucial to everyday life- doctors, teachers, bus drivers, the list goes on. How could we ever decide which one is most important?

## BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus was calling his disciples to follow him. Today's lesson focuses on how lofty- how important- Jesus calling is. Read Mark 1:14-20. Simon and Andrew were doing their job- fishing in the Sea of Galilee when Jesus approached them. His call was the same words we heard from the calling of Philip and Nathaniel, "Come, follow me." Simon and Andrew did not have to spend a couple days thinking about it, but instead instantly left their nets and their fishing jobs behind to become disciples and fish for men.

That was commitment. Simon and Andrew were committed to their new jobs of being disciples. They didn't finish their day of work or even worry about putting their nets and equipment away. Answering Jesus' call was of the utmost importance. This was life-changing work for Jesus' disciples, they were committing to the lofty charge to share the gospel with whoever they could.

## DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

Do you think we have the same lofty charge as Simon and Andrew? Jesus calls us all to be followers, but he also asks some to do it full time- like missionaries, pastors, teachers, and staff ministers. We are Jesus' disciples. Perhaps you might consider studying to be a pastor or teacher. But even if you don't, we can all answer Jesus' call to spread the gospel to those around us who need to hear the saving truth no matter what our career becomes. and you can even do that right now. Who can you share the message of Jesus with?

## PRAYER

Dear God, thank you for giving us the job of spreading your Word. Help us to gladly accept that calling and to faithfully fulfill that call during our time of grace. Give us the strength, patience, and perseverance we need to live the life of a Christian. In your name we pray, Amen.



# HEART IMPRINTS

# 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

Jan. 22, 2024 -  
Jan. 28, 2024

**SCRIPTURE:** Mark 1:21-28

**THEME:** Absolute Authority

**SONG:** CW21 517/ CW93 353 - Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness

**VISUAL:** Judge in a courtroom

## OBJECT LESSON

Why is it necessary to have a judge in a courtroom? (Display image of a judge in a courtroom.) Judges are given authority by the government to decide if people are guilty or innocent based on evidence. When the judge says guilty or innocent, the people listen to the verdict. Yet, the judge does not have complete authority as people can sometimes appeal their cases. A court without a judge would be chaotic as no one would be in authority.

## BIBLE TRUTH

There is one person who has absolute, complete authority- Jesus. Our lesson today shows how absolute that control is. Read Mark 1:21-28. Jesus was teaching in the synagogue and the people were already amazed at how he taught with authority. This was Jesus, the almighty Savior teaching them.

A man possessed by an evil spirit cries out to Jesus, asking if Jesus has come to destroy them. Even an evil spirit knew the almighty power that Jesus had and who Jesus was. Jesus drives the demon out with simple words, "Come out of him!" The demon couldn't deny the absolute authority that Jesus has. The people who saw what happened quickly spread the news about what they had seen. There was no doubt in their minds on who Jesus was. Jesus has absolute authority that is everlasting!

## DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

What joy we have knowing that Jesus has absolute authority! Why would knowing Jesus has absolute authority be such a comfort to believers? It reassures believers that God is always in charge and controls everything. Jesus uses that authority for our blessing and benefit. We receive the blessings, grace, and love that Jesus gives us through faith. We all have stress and worries in this life, but our cares and concerns are firmly held in Jesus' hands. We need not fear the world, for Jesus has absolute authority!

## PRAYER

Dear Lord, thank you for the blessings you bestow on your believers daily. In your absolute authority, you hold and protect your followers throughout their lives. Help us honor you all our days as we live and grow in our faith. In your name we pray, Amen



**HEART  
IMPRINTS**

# 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

Jan. 29, 2024 -  
Feb. 4, 2024

**SCRIPTURE:** Mark 1:29-39

**THEME:** The Devil's Work Undone

**SONG:** CW21 850/ CW93 760 - It is Well with My Soul

**VISUAL:** A fairy tale book (e.g. Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Snow White, etc)

## OBJECT LESSON

We live in a world filled with wonderful books and stories to read. The possibilities are endless when it comes to what you want to read. How many of you like to read funny stories? Scary stories? Animal stories? Fairy tales? What types of fairy tale stories do you know? (Display book images as needed.) Fairy tales are stories that usually have good against evil, magic, and most importantly, a happy ending. Good always wins and the hero or heroine in the story always ends up happy at the end of the story.

## BIBLE TRUTH

Life is full of good against evil. The devil roams around in this world looking for ways to do evil and hurt believers. Our lesson today shows us the power Jesus has over the works of the devil. Read Mark 1:29-39. In our lesson, Jesus hears about his disciple Simon's mother-in-law who is sick in bed with a fever. Jesus didn't stop to talk to people, but instead rushed immediately to the house and healed Simon's mother-in-law. Sickness, illness, even death cannot stop the almighty power of Jesus. She was instantly healed just by Jesus touching her hand.

People talk. People heard what Jesus had done to Simon's mother-in-law and people knew that his almighty power could help them as well. We hear in the lesson of "the whole town gathered at his door." Jesus didn't have to go looking to heal people, the word spread quickly. Not only did Jesus heal many people, but our lesson describes how he "drove out many demons." There is no power stronger than our God!

## DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

The devil wants nothing more than to see God's people suffer in any way possible- physically and spiritually. The devil delights in bad things happening as we hear of God's people suffering in the lesson. But we need not worry as Jesus undoes the devil's work. Jesus healed people and drove out demons. His power is almighty and the devil cannot win. We stand reassured that Jesus is in control and the devil's work is undone. God promises deliverance and will renew our strength. The greatest deliverance came through Jesus' death on the cross to take away our sins. He removes the devil's greatest weapon--his ability to accuse of us sin. Because of Jesus' saving work, we are forgiven. Through this good news of Jesus' saving work, our faith is strengthened so we have a solid foundation when the devil tries to lead us astray. What a wonderful reassurance that Jesus has almighty power- even over the devil!

## PRAYER

Dear Lord, forgive us when we are led astray from your Word. Help us to stand firm in our faith and against the devil. Thank you for renewing our strength and undoing the work of the devil. We rest assured that nothing is stronger than your almighty power and you hold us in the palm of your hand. In your name we pray, Amen.



# HEART IMPRINTS

# 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

Feb. 5, 2024 -  
Feb. 11, 2024

**SCRIPTURE:** Mark 9:2-9

**THEME:** A Glimpse of His True Glory

**SONG:** CW21 713/ CW93 771 - I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

**VISUAL:** Clipart image of a kid sleeping in a bed with a dream bubble

## OBJECT LESSON

Raise your hand if you ever have dreams while you sleep? (Show image of a kid sleeping in a bed with a dream bubble.) What are your dreams about? In dreams you can be a superhero and fly, walk with dinosaurs, or whatever your imagination comes up with. The problem with dreams is that sometimes they seem so real, that when you wake up you can't tell if it was a dream or real life. You get a glimpse of a whole different world and then suddenly you wake up and the dream is over.

## BIBLE TRUTH

Our Bible lesson today is no dream. We hear of Jesus showing his disciples a glimpse of his true glory. Read Mark 9:2-9. Peter, James, and John are led to a high mountain with Jesus. No crowds joined them, this was not a time for Jesus to preach and heal the people. This was a moment just for some of his disciples.

On the mountain, the lesson describes how Jesus was transformed before them. "His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus." The disciples were fortunate enough to see a glimpse of Jesus in his glory. The man (and God) that they had been following could heal people, bring people back from the dead, and he still had more to show them. Peter, James, and John were privileged to experience the wonder of seeing Jesus in his glory.

Trying to make the experience last longer, Peter offers to "put up shelters" for those there. But there was still more as God the Father spoke to them and said, "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" And just as suddenly as it began, the transfiguration was over. But this wasn't a dream, it was real.

## DISCUSSION AND APPLICATIONS

We weren't on that mountain with Peter, James, and John and we didn't see Jesus in his glory. While we would have loved to be there, we see Jesus' true glory when he went to the cross to defeat the devil and rescue us from sin and death. We still see the glory of Christ in the words of the Bible that we study daily. We see Jesus in his dazzling presence and God the Father speaks to us the same words, "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!" God means us! Reading about Jesus' glory at the cross and reading his glorious words shows us how powerful and loving our God is. We await the day until we will see Jesus in his glory!

## PRAYER

Dear Lord, thank you for giving us a glimpse of your glory through your Word. We praise you as our almighty Lord and Savior! Hold us fast until the day when we will join you again in heaven and see you in your almighty glory. In your name we pray, Amen.



# HEART IMPRINTS