

Theme

Jesus' baptism marked the beginning of his ministry. Our baptism marks the beginning of our new life in Jesus.

Scripture

When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." Luke 3:21-22 (NIV)

It is the beginning of a brand new year. Some people like to make New Year's resolutions or promises to themselves about what they plan to accomplish in the new year. The number one resolution that people make is, "I am going to lose weight. I know that it usually makes my top ten list of things I would like to accomplish in the new year.

Even if you don't make any New Year's resolutions, this is an exciting time. It is a time that we can forget our past mistakes and look forward to new opportunities that lie ahead of us. It is a time of new beginnings.

Jesus experienced times of new beginnings in his life too. One of those times was when he was baptized. There were a couple of very important things that happened when Jesus was baptized. First of all, the Bible tells us that the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove and landed upon him. The second thing was that God spoke and said, "You are my Son. I love you and I am well-pleased with you."

This event marked the beginning of Jesus' ministry here on earth. Up until that time, he had not performed any miracles, but with God's stamp of approval and with the spirit of God upon him, Jesus began to perform great miracles. From this new beginning, many people began to understand that Jesus was truly the Son of God and they began to follow him.

Our own baptism represents a new beginning for us as well. When we are baptized, it shows the world that just as Jesus rose from the dead through the glory of God the Father, we also live a new life in him. (Romans 6:4) God may not always be well-pleased with us, but I think that He looks down with an approving smile when he sees us trying to walk with Jesus.

New beginnings — God gives us opportunities for new beginnings. Let us make the most of them as we live a new life in Christ through the power of his Holy Spirit.

Dear Father, thank you for new beginnings. Help us to make the most of them — not through our own strength — but through the power of the Holy Spirit that dwells within us. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

PROUD OF ME PICTURE:

Give each child a piece of construction paper. Have various cut outs of circles, rectangles, triangles and squares for children to have fun forming a picture of themselves on the construction paper. Suggest to children that they write IS JESUS PROUD OF ME? The children will draw a face, hair, and other features on the "child" to make it look like themselves. Have a discussion about things that make Jesus proud of us as HIS children!



The Baptism of Jesus

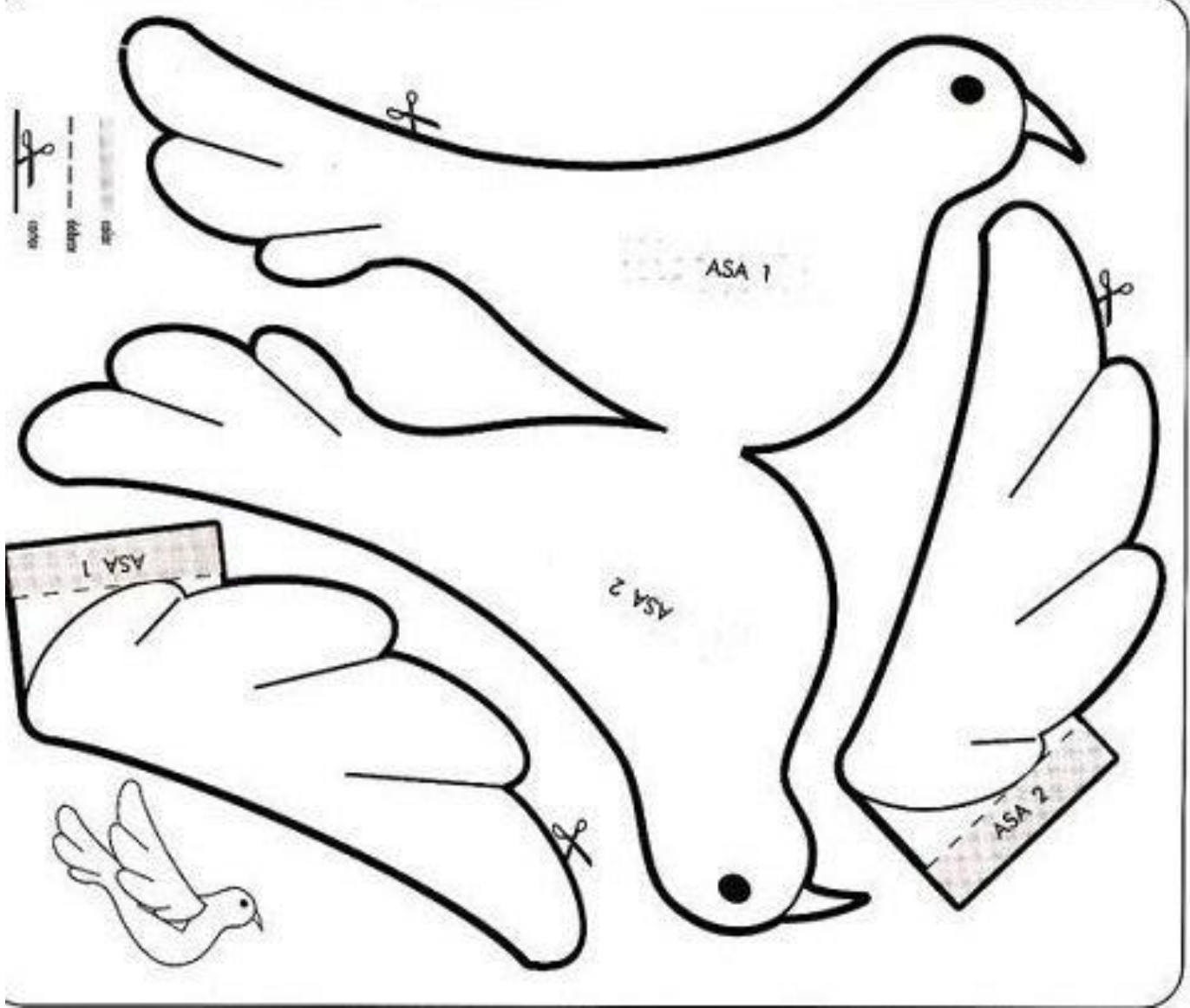
When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. Luke 3:21 (NIV)

Words are taken from Luke 3:15-17, 21-22 (NIV).



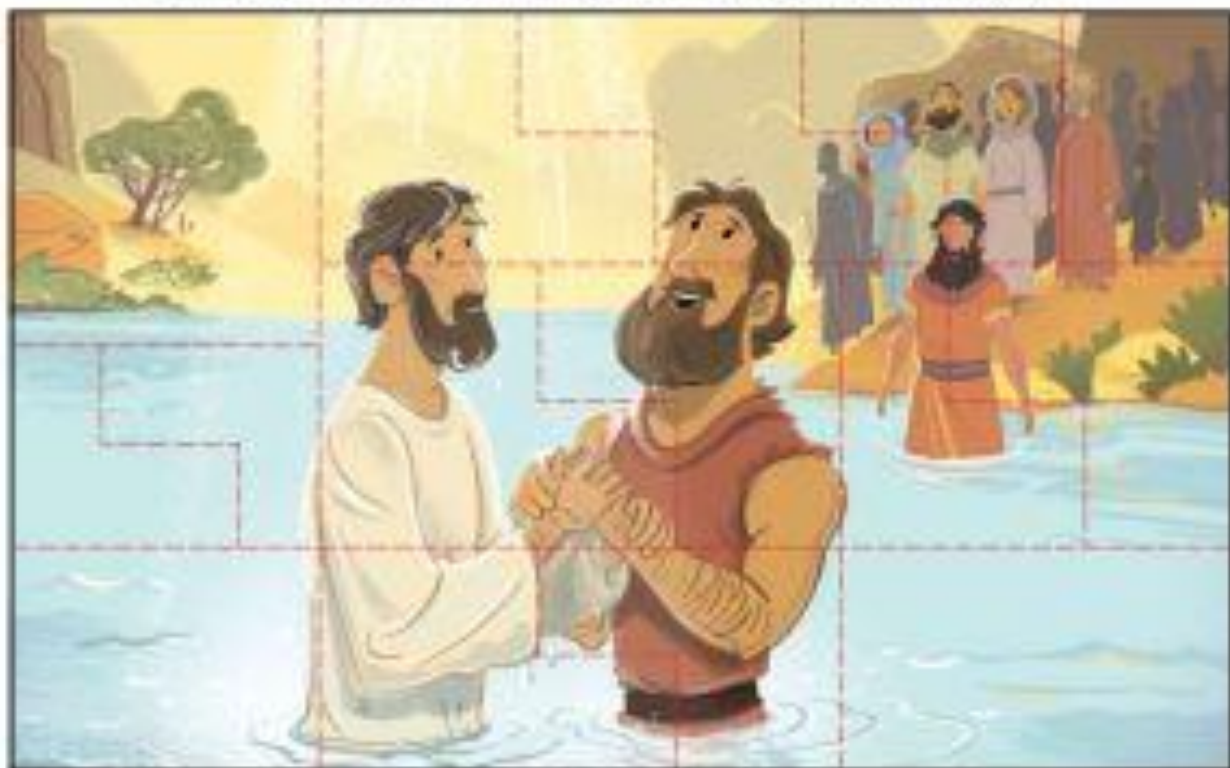
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 B A P T I Z E U Z V F V L D S

Spirit opened people	John Jesus praying	voice dove heaven	Christ powerful Holy	fire water baptize
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Jesus' Baptism Jigsaw Puzzle

Cut the puzzle apart on the red lines, mix the pieces up, and put the picture back together.



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Jesus' Baptism Spot the Differences

Compare the picture on the top with the picture on bottom. Circle the 11 things that are different.

