

REACH COMMUNITY CHURCH

Main Lesson, Activity & Discussion | Week 38 | September 20, 2026

Lesson Title	Jesus Is Baptized: God Revealed as Trinity
Primary Scripture	Matthew 3:1-17
Timeline	Beginning of Jesus' public ministry
Big Idea	There is one God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and Jesus the Son came to save us.

MEMORY VERSE

"This is my Son, whom I love." Matthew 3:17

MAIN LESSON NARRATIVE | Read Aloud to the Children

Before we begin, I want you to picture a river.

Maybe you have stood beside a river before and watched the water move past you. Some rivers move slowly and quietly, while others rush over rocks and around bends. If you stand beside one long enough, you begin to notice that the water never seems to stop moving.

Today we are going to the Jordan River, a real river in the land where Jesus lived.

Something happened there that helps us understand one of the biggest truths in the whole Bible. It is a truth so big that even grown ups can spend years thinking about it, but God has told us enough that even a child can know what is true.

Before we get to the river, though, we need to meet a man named John.

John was sometimes called John the Baptist because God had given him a special job. John was preparing people for Jesus.

People were coming to John because he was telling them something they needed to hear.

Matthew 3:2 tells us John said:

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

There is a word in that sentence that you may have heard before.

Repent.

What does that mean?

Repenting means recognizing that we have sinned and turning toward God. Sin is anything we think, say, or do that goes against God and His good ways.

Suppose you tell a lie and later you know what you did was wrong. Repentance is more than saying, "I wish I had not gotten caught." It means agreeing with God that the lie was wrong and turning to Him for forgiveness.

All of us need that.

Maybe your sin has been lying. Maybe you have been cruel to someone. Maybe anger came out of you in words meant to hurt. Maybe you knew the right thing to do and chose the wrong thing anyway.

Adults need forgiveness too.

Every one of us has sinned, and none of us can make ourselves perfectly clean before God.

That was why people were coming to John. They were confessing their sins, and John was baptizing them in the Jordan River.

Then someone came walking toward the river who was different from every other person who had ever come to John.

His name was Jesus.

Now here is an important question.

If people were being baptized while confessing their sins, why did Jesus come to be baptized?

Did Jesus have sins that needed to be forgiven?

No.

The Bible tells us that Jesus never sinned. Hebrews 4:15 says Jesus "has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet he did not sin."

Jesus knew what temptation felt like. He knew what it was to be offered a wrong choice.

But Jesus never chose sin.

Not once.

That matters more than we may realize right away, because if Jesus were a sinner like us, He would need a Savior too. Instead, Jesus is the sinless Savior who came for us.

John knew that Jesus was different.

Listen to what happened when Jesus came to him. Matthew 3:13 and 14 says:

"Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?'"

John was basically saying, "Jesus, I am the one who needs You. Why are You coming to me?"

And John was right about something very important.

John needed Jesus.

So do we.

Jesus answered John in Matthew 3:15:

"Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness."

Jesus was not being baptized because He had done something wrong. He was obeying His Father and doing what was right as He began the work He had come to do.

So John baptized Jesus.

Now picture the river again.

Jesus comes up from the water, and something remarkable happens.

I want us to listen very carefully to exactly what the Bible says, because we do not need to make anything up. What God tells us is already wonderful.

Matthew 3:16 and 17 says:

"As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'"

There is our memory verse.

Can we say this part together?

"This is my Son, whom I love." Matthew 3:17.

Again:

"This is my Son, whom I love." Matthew 3:17.

Now let us look carefully at what God has shown us.

Who is standing there in the Jordan?

Jesus, the Son.

Who descends upon Jesus?

The Holy Spirit.

Who speaks from heaven?

The Father.

Father.

Son.

Holy Spirit.

All three are present in the same moment.

This is one of the places in the Bible that helps us understand what Christians call the Trinity.

That word may sound difficult, but what we mean by it can be said simply:

God is one God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Can you say that with me?

God is one God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

That does not mean there are three gods.

There is only one God.

The Father is God. Jesus the Son is God. The Holy Spirit is God. The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is not the Father.

They are three distinct Persons, and there is one God.

You might be thinking, "How does that work?"

That is a fair question.

In fact, it is a very good question.

There are some things about God that are bigger than our minds can completely understand. That should not frighten us. We are not expected to know everything God knows.

Think about how much there is that you do not understand yet.

There are probably things you are learning in school now that seemed impossible a few years ago. There are things adults are still learning too.

If God created everything that exists, should we really expect Him to be so small and simple that we could understand absolutely everything about Him?

We cannot.

But we can understand what He has told us.

And God has told us that there is one God.

He has also shown us the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

At Jesus' baptism, we do not see one Person pretending to be three different people. Jesus is not throwing His voice into heaven while somehow turning Himself into the Holy Spirit.

The Son is in the river.

The Spirit descends.

The Father speaks.

And there is still only one God.

Sometimes people try to explain the Trinity by comparing God to water that can be liquid, ice, or steam. Other people use an egg or a three leaf clover.

We are not going to do that.

God is not an egg, and He is not water changing from one form into another.

We do not need a clever trick to explain God.

We can simply say what the Bible tells us:

God is one God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And when there is something we do not completely understand, we can say, "I do not know everything about this, but I trust what God has told us."

That is not weak faith.

That is honest faith.

Now I want you to notice what the Father says about Jesus.

Listen again:

"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." Matthew 3:17

Our memory verse says:

"This is my Son, whom I love." Matthew 3:17.

Those words tell us something important about Jesus.

Jesus did not become the Son of God that day.

The Father did not look at Jesus and decide, "You have done such a good job that I am going to make You My Son."

Jesus was already God the Son.

Long before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the Son existed with the Father.

The Bible tells us in John 1:1:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

A few verses later, John explains that the Word became human and lived among us.

That is Jesus.

Jesus is not just a good man who became important.

Jesus is God the Son who came to us.

And that brings us to something I do not want us to miss.

Why did He come?

Why did the Son of God become human?

Why did He stand in that river?

Why was He beginning this work?

The answer has everything to do with you and me.

God made us, and God is perfectly good and holy. But we have sinned against Him.

Sometimes we try to fix that ourselves.

We may think, "I will just be really good tomorrow."

Doing what is right is important, but tomorrow's obedience cannot erase yesterday's sin.

Suppose you deliberately broke your neighbor's window and then said, "It is okay because tomorrow I am going to clean my room."

Cleaning your room would be good, but the broken window would still be broken.

Our sin has left us guilty before a holy God, and we cannot save ourselves by piling good deeds on top of our wrong ones.

We need someone who can actually rescue us.

That is why Jesus matters.

Jesus is God the Son, and He lived the life we have not lived. He never sinned.

Then Jesus willingly went to the cross.

The sinless One took the punishment sinners deserved.

First Peter 3:18 says:

"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."

The righteous for the unrighteous.

Jesus is the righteous One.

We are the sinners He came to rescue.

Jesus died for our sins, but He did not stay dead.

He rose again.

That means when we turn from our sin and trust Jesus, God forgives us and gives us new life. We are not saved because we were good enough. We are saved because Jesus is enough.

The Jesus standing in the Jordan is already beginning the work that will lead Him toward the cross and the empty tomb.

And look again at who is there.

The Father.

The Son.

The Holy Spirit.

God is showing us who He is while Jesus begins the mission that will lead to our rescue.

Maybe you are wondering what any of this has to do with Monday morning.

It has quite a lot to do with Monday morning.

Maybe you make a mistake at school this week and feel ashamed afterward.

You do not have to hide from God and pretend you did nothing wrong. You can tell Him the truth, because Jesus came to save sinners.

Maybe someone asks you a question about God that you cannot answer.

You do not have to panic or make something up. You can say, "I do not know, but we can see what the Bible says."

Maybe you feel alone.

You can remember that the God who made you is not far away. Through Jesus, those who trust Him are brought into a real relationship with God, and the Holy Spirit is with those who belong to Christ.

Maybe you are frightened about something and you pray, but the problem does not disappear right away.

Trusting God does not mean we are promised that nothing painful will ever happen. Jesus Himself would walk from the Jordan toward suffering and the cross.

But suffering would not have the final word.

Death would not have the final word.

Jesus rose.

That means our hope is not that life will always be easy. Our hope is that Jesus is alive, God is faithful, and nothing can stop Him from finishing what He has promised.

There is one more thing I love about this moment beside the Jordan.

Jesus had not yet preached the Sermon on the Mount.

He had not yet fed thousands of people.

He had not yet calmed a storm.

He had not yet raised the dead.

And the Father says:

"This is my Son, whom I love."

The Father loves the Son.

Jesus would perfectly obey His Father all the way to the cross, and He would do for us what we could never do for ourselves.

So when you hear the word Trinity, I hope you do not think only of a difficult word on a church worksheet.

Think about the Jordan.

Think about Jesus coming out of the water.

Think about the Spirit descending.

Think about the Father speaking.

And remember what God has told us:

God is one God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Most of all, remember the Son.

Jesus came for sinners.

Jesus lived without sin.

Jesus died for our sins.

Jesus rose again.

And everyone who turns from sin and trusts in Him can be forgiven and receive new life.

Let us say our memory verse one last time:

"This is my Son, whom I love." Matthew 3:17.

That Son has a name.

His name is Jesus.

And Jesus is our Savior.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS WITH SUGGESTED ANSWERS

1. Why were people coming to John at the Jordan River?

They were hearing John call them to repent, confessing their sins, and being baptized. Matthew 3:1-6.

2. Did Jesus need to be forgiven for sin? Why not?

No. Jesus never sinned. Hebrews 4:15 tells us that He was tempted as we are, but He did not sin.

3. Why was Jesus baptized?

Jesus told John it was right "to fulfill all righteousness." He was obeying the Father and beginning His public ministry. He was not being baptized because He needed forgiveness.

4. What happened when Jesus came up from the water?

The Holy Spirit descended like a dove, and the Father spoke from heaven about His Son. Matthew 3:16-17.

5. What does the word Trinity mean?

God is one God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

6. Does the Trinity mean Christians believe in three gods?

No. There is only one God. Scripture reveals the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as distinct Persons, and each is truly God.

7. Was the Holy Spirit actually a dove?

No. Scripture says the Spirit descended like a dove. The Holy Spirit is a Person, not a bird.

8. What did the Father say about Jesus?

"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." Matthew 3:17.

9. Why does it matter that Jesus never sinned?

Jesus could save us because He had no sin of His own. He is the righteous Savior who died for unrighteous sinners to bring us to God.

10. What should we do when someone asks us a question about God and we do not know the answer?

We can be honest. We can say that we do not know and then look at what Scripture actually says. We never need to make up an answer to defend God.

11. What is our hope when something hard does not immediately get better?

Our hope is not that God promises an easy life. Our hope is that Jesus died for us, Jesus rose again, God is with His people, and God will finally make all things right.

12. What is the big truth we want to remember today?

There is one God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and Jesus the Son came to save us.

HANDS ON ACTIVITY | What Does the Bible Actually Say?

Purpose: Help children remember what Matthew 3 actually reveals about Father, Son, and Holy Spirit without relying on misleading Trinity analogies.

Supplies: One sheet of paper or construction paper per child; crayons, colored pencils, or markers; Bibles.

Instructions: Give each child a sheet of paper and ask them to turn it sideways. Across the top, have them write: **JESUS IS BAPTIZED, MATTHEW 3:16-17.**

Ask them to divide the page into three large spaces. In the first space, write **THE SON**, then: **Jesus was baptized and came up from the water.** In the second, write **THE HOLY SPIRIT**, then: **The Spirit of God descended like a dove and came upon Jesus.** In the third, write **THE FATHER**, then: **The Father spoke from heaven: "This is my Son, whom I love."**

Across the bottom of the entire page, write in large letters: **ONE GOD.** Then write beneath it: **God is one God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**

Children may decorate the page with a river, water, sky, or the words of the memory verse, while teachers remind them not to draw the Holy Spirit as though He actually is a bird. Matthew says He descended **like a dove.**

When everyone is finished, point to each section and have the children respond together:

Teacher: **The Father is God.**

Children: **The Father is God.**

Teacher: **Jesus the Son is God.**

Children: **Jesus the Son is God.**

Teacher: **The Holy Spirit is God.**

Children: **The Holy Spirit is God.**

Teacher: **How many Gods are there?**

Children: **One God!**

Teacher: **Who is our Savior?**

Children: **Jesus!**

Finish by saying the memory verse together: **"This is my Son, whom I love." Matthew 3:17.**

TEACHER CLOSING

Children, there are things about God that are bigger than our minds, and we never have to pretend otherwise. God has not told us everything about Himself, but everything He has told us is true.

At the Jordan River, God gave us a beautiful glimpse of who He is. The Father spoke. The Son stood in the water. The Holy Spirit descended. There is one God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And the Son standing in that river is Jesus, the Savior who came for us.

When we sin, we can come honestly to Jesus. When we are frightened, we can trust Jesus. When we have questions, we can bring those questions to Jesus and His Word. When life hurts, we can remember that the cross was not the end of Jesus.

He is alive.

And because Jesus is alive, sin, suffering, fear, and death will not have the final word for those who belong to Him.

Takeaway Truth: There is one God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and Jesus the Son came to save us.

Memory Verse: "This is my Son, whom I love." Matthew 3:17.