



The Sign of the Promise

SUPPLIES Needed



TO PRINT:

- Large Memory Verse to hold up (1 copy)*

TO GATHER:

- Hymnal/lyrics for songs* (*Optional: guitar or music to sing along with*)
- Basket for offering*
- A copy of *The Good Shepherd's Pasture* by Elizabeth Harwell (optional)

OPTIONAL:

- Kid's Activity Sheet (1 copy/child)
- Elements of Worship Icons* (*Found in the introduction section.*)

*These items will be needed every week.

LEADER'S Review

In this last lesson, we will look at how Jesus's Church continued after His ascension into heaven and what role baptism played in the early days of the Church.

This is a good lesson to emphasize the importance of each child believing the truth of the gospel. Pray that the Holy Spirit will begin now or will continue to work in the heart of each child. Leading a child to Christ has no "magic" formula. We simply present God's story and count on God's promise to be their Redeemer, drawing them unto Himself as His Spirit works in their hearts. We cannot know when the regenerating work begins. It is more difficult to know the moment of regeneration than it is to know the moment of physical conception. We teach these young children with the hope that regeneration may have already taken place in their hearts. We hope they are "in the womb" of spiritual growth until that day when they will cry out like the people at Pentecost, the Philippian jailer, and Lydia, "What must I do to be saved?"

In her children's book, *The Good Shepherd's Pasture: A Story of Your Baptism*, Elizabeth Harwell uses the images of the good pasture as an analogy for the visible church and our children as sheep who belong in the pasture with us and their Good Shepherd. Their baptism is a sign of their membership in this pasture, and we sing the Good Shepherd's song over them. She ends the book with this:

"We will keep singing until, one day, you hear His voice rising above our voices. We will watch the delight on your face as you repeat the love song you hear. And then, Little One, run with remembrance. Remember the promises you were given at your baptism: Jesus knows you and He loves you."





(Confession of Faith—Continued)

137. Q: What sign is used in the Lord's Supper?

A: Eating bread and drinking wine to remember the suffering and death of Jesus

138. Q: What does the bread represent?

A: Christ's body sacrificed for our sins

139. Q: What does the wine represent?

A: Christ's blood shed for our sins

140. Q: Who may rightly partake of the Lord's Supper?

A: Those who repent of their sins, trust in Christ, live a godly life, and profess their faith before the Church

Reading of the Word

Read scripture. (2-4 minutes)

Acts 2:37–41 (Peter's First Sermon)

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."⁴⁰ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation."⁴¹ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

Acts 16:13-15 (Conversion of Lydia)

And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together.¹⁴ One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.¹⁵ And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

Acts 16:25-34 (Conversion of the Philippian Jailer)

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them,²⁶ and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened.²⁷ When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.²⁸ But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here."²⁹ And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas.³⁰ Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"³¹ And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

(Reading the Word—Continued)

³² And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. ³³ And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. ³⁴ Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

Prayer

Pray that the Holy Spirit will work in the hearts of the children. (1 minute)

Dear Jesus, thank You for sending Your Holy Spirit to be our Helper. Help us, Holy Spirit, to repent of our sins, to have faith, and to follow Jesus the same way Lydia and the Philippian jailer did so long ago. Help us to live only for Jesus. In His name we pray. Amen.

Hearing the Word

Teach the lesson to the children using the text below as a guide. (4-6 minutes)

We have been studying the sacraments of the church. What are they? (*Communion/the Lord's Supper and Baptism*). Last week, we talked about the sign of baptism and the story of Jesus' baptism. Let's review:

Review Questions:

- Who came to prepare the way for Jesus? (*John, who baptized Him*)
- What was the sign John saw to make sure he knew that Jesus was the Son of God? (*The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus as a dove.*)
- What does the sign of baptism mean? (*Baptism marks us as followers of Jesus. It's a sign of the inward work of the Holy Spirit: His cleansing of our heart from sin. It's a sign that we belong to the covenant family of God and all His promises are available to us.*)

When Jesus went up into heaven after He had risen from the dead, He told His disciples to “Go into all the world, teach the gospel, and baptize.” In other words, He was saying that they were left on earth to tell His story, teach His people how to live, and mark believers with His sign of baptism. Forty days later, the Holy Spirit came. Do you remember the story? Our “Reading of the Word” today begins right after the Holy Spirit had come and Peter preached the Word to the people. The people heard the truth of the gospel and cried out, “What shall we do?” Peter's response was the same as John's: “Repent and be baptized. Turn away from your sin and obey Jesus by taking on the sign of baptism.” This was the beginning of the Church as we know it!

The book of Acts tells us the history of the Church's beginning, and today we are going to look at two very important baptisms at the beginning of that history. Once, when Paul and Silas went to a new town, they found people gathered to pray and joined them. Lydia was a businesswoman in the town, and she listened to Paul tell about Jesus. She immediately wanted to be baptized and follow Jesus. She invited Paul and Silas to her home, and they baptized her whole household. Lydia believed the promise. It's the same promise given to Abraham: “I will be your God and I will be God to your children after you—even those yet to



(Hearing the Word—Continued)

be born. You will be My people. I will never leave you or forsake you.” Lydia helped the church in her town get started by providing a place for them to meet and hear the good news about Jesus. Lydia believed and she wanted all her friends and neighbors to believe, too.

Paul and Silas had traveled to a foreign country where people had not yet heard about Jesus. Many people, like Lydia, listened and began to follow them, but some people hated them and wanted them to stop teaching the truth about Jesus. They put Paul and Silas in prison to make them stop. Paul and Silas did not stop but continued to sing and praise God even in prison. Late at night, while they continued to sing and preach, a strong earthquake shook the jail. It was so strong the prison gates were opened, and the prisoners’ chains fell off! When the prison guard woke up and saw what had happened, he thought that his prisoners must have escaped. He was worried about his punishment, so he drew his sword to take his own life, but Paul and Silas stopped him. No one had run away like the prison guard had feared. The prison guard could not believe his eyes and immediately fell down and asked the question, “What must I do to be saved?” Paul said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved...” The prison guard and his entire household were baptized that night.

These stories of the beginning of the Church show us how important baptism is. This sacrament is a sign commanded by Jesus: It marks people out as belonging to Jesus. If you were baptized as a baby, this was the sign of Jesus being given to you! Because your parents are following Jesus, they have given the rest of their household the sign of the promise: God is the God of your family, and He will never leave or forsake you! This sign was given to you as a reminder of what Jesus can do in your heart. Your parents are looking forward to the day that you believe and follow Jesus, too. If you were baptized later, after you repented from sin and believed in the promise, the sign is the same! We only have one baptism. If the sign of baptism is given after salvation, it is still a sign that points to the work of Jesus and not our own work. Praise God! He can wash our hearts clean through the work of the Holy Spirit and by the righteousness of Jesus!

ACTIVITY #1: Read *The Good Shepherd’s Pasture: A Story of Your Baptism* aloud to the children. Talk with the children about how we are like sheep and need the Good Shepherd.

ACTIVITY #2: Have the children act out Paul and Silas in the Philippian jail. Choose students to play Paul, Silas, and the jailer. The other students can be prisoners in the jail. If the students can read, make copies of the script for the three main characters. If your students are not readers, narrate the scene for them as they act it out.



Benediction

Recite the following verse. (1 minute)

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all (2 Cor. 13:14).

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