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 **Matthew 3; Luke 3:21-22**

**Leader Guide for Grades 3 & 4**

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**Teachers Dig In**

**Dig In to the Bible**

- Read: Matthew 3; Luke 3:21-22
- In This Passage: John the Baptist shows up to prepare the way for Jesus. He travels around baptizing people and preaching that they need to repent and prepare their hearts for Jesus. When Jesus comes, John the Baptist baptizes Jesus. At Jesus' baptism, the skies open and God the Father announces that Jesus is his Son.
- Bible Point: Jesus is God's Son.
- Summary Verse: "And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy' " (Matthew 3:17).

**Dig Deeper**

- You'll Be Teaching: *Jesus is God's Son.* Kids may hear a lot of things about who Jesus is: that he's not real; that he was just a teacher; that he didn't come back to life after he died. They need to know the important truth of who Jesus is: God's own Son, sent in human form to show them who God is.
- Think About: What does the fact that Jesus is God's Son show you personally about God's character? How has Jesus made a difference in your life?

**Dig In to Prayer**

- Pray that the kids in your group will want to know Jesus and be more like him as God's children.

**Quick Tip**

- When kids answer questions, be sure to accept all answers in a nonjudgmental way by thanking kids for sharing. Avoid praising your favorite answers or dismissing those that you don't agree with. If an answer is really off base, consider asking the rest of the kids what they think about the topic.

## This Lesson at a Glance



### OPENING

Kids share about a topic related to the lesson.

#### Supplies

- Bible

#### Easy Prep

- Do an online search to learn how to say "Happy birthday" in sign language.



### CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Kids follow instructions and draw John's message.

#### Supplies

- Bible
- "Pass On the Message" handout (1 copy) (download [here](#))
- paper
- pencils or markers

#### Easy Prep

- Dress in an unusual outfit the kids will consider "weird." This could be as simple as putting on a silly hat or wearing your shirt inside out or backward.
- Cut apart the "Pass On the Message" handout. You'll need 1 message for every 3 or 4 kids.



### TALK-ABOUT VIDEO

Kids watch a video and discuss today's Bible Point.

#### Supplies

- "John Baptizes Jesus" teaching video (watch or download [here](#))



### OBJECT LESSON

Kids part pepper with dish soap.

#### Supplies

- Bible
- clear bowl
- cotton swab
- liquid dish soap
- water
- a shaker of ground pepper

#### Easy Prep

- Fill a bowl with water.
- Coat one end of a cotton swab with dish soap.



### DEEPER BIBLE

**Kids explore the Trinity by mixing paint.**

### Supplies

- Bible
- blue, yellow, and white washable paint, each in a separate bowl
- paintbrushes (1 per child)
- disposable paper bowls (1 per child)
- paper
- wet wipes



### MUSIC VIDEO

**Kids sing songs of praise to God.**

### Supplies

- "This Is the Day" (watch or download [here](#))
- "'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus" (watch or download [here](#))
- "No, Not One" (watch or download [here](#))



### HIGH-ENERGY GAME

**Trios race to transport a balloon.**

### Supplies

- inflated balloons, 1 for every 3 kids



### LOW-ENERGY GAME

**Kids remember and copy others' actions.**



### CRAFT

**Kids make dove outlines using fingerprints.**

### Supplies

- white paper
- "Dove Outline" handout (1 per child) (download [here](#))
- scissors
- washable blue ink pads
- markers
- wet wipes



### LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

**Kids hear that they are God's beloved children.**

### Supplies

- Bible



### TAKE-HOME

**Kids receive a take-home page about the lesson.**

### Supplies

- this week's "Dig In @ Home" handout (1 per child) (download [here](#))

### Easy Prep

- Add your church announcements to the "Dig In @ Home" handout.

*\*Marked supplies can be reused from Core Bible Discovery*

Let's keep kids safe! You can help by using supplies as instructed for only ages 3+, purchasing child-safe items, and being aware of allergy concerns.



## OPENING Welcome

[5 min]

### Supplies

- Bible

### Easy Prep

- Do an online search to learn how to say "Happy birthday" in sign language.

### Welcome

Thank kids for coming.

Just for fun, have kids give a foot-five (a high-five with a foot) to two friends.

Make announcements.

Introduce new kids.

Celebrate birthdays by saying "Happy birthday" in sign language.

Collect the offering.

### Introduce the Lesson

Say: **Today we'll learn about a man named John the Baptist. When John baptized Jesus, God let everyone know that Jesus is God's Son.**

### Share

Say: **When we say that Jesus is God's Son, it means that Jesus is just like his Father, who is God.**

Tell about a way *you're* like your parents.

Have kids get in pairs and tell about ways *they're* like their parents. Be sensitive to adopted or foster children. Kids may be like their parents in non-physical ways, such as in the hobbies they prefer or the talents they have.

### Summarize

Open a Bible, and say: **Today we'll explore how Jesus is God's Son, and what that means to us. We'll dig into the Bible to find out. The Bible is God's message to us. It's an extraordinary way God talks to us. God can talk to you here today!**

Pray, praising Jesus because he's God's Son.



## CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

### John the Baptist Announces Jesus (Matthew 3; Luke 3:21-22)

[20 min]

#### Supplies

- Bible
- "Pass On the Message" handout (1 copy) (download [here](#))
- paper
- pencils or markers

#### Easy Prep

- Dress in an unusual outfit the kids will consider "weird." This could be as simple as putting on a silly hat or wearing your shirt inside out or backward.
- Cut apart the "Pass On the Message" handout. You'll need 1 message for every 3 or 4 kids.

#### Weird But Important

Ask kids to describe the outfit you're wearing.

Say: **I'm dressed a little weird today! What's something you like to do that others might think is a little bit weird? I'll go first!** Tell about a quirk you have or a funny thing you do that other people might think is weird. Then invite kids to take turns talking with a partner about something they do that others might think is weird. Allow about two minutes for kids to share.

Say: **Today we're learning about a man called John the Baptist, who was Jesus' cousin. John was someone you might think of as a weird guy. He dressed funny, ate bugs, and lived out in the wilderness. Weird! But he had an important message, and a lot of people listened to it. He was there to get people ready to see that Jesus is God's Son. Let's read what the Bible says about him.**

Read aloud Matthew 3:1-6.

Say: **John got his name "John the Baptist" because he baptized people—which means he put their heads under water for a second or two as a way for people to show that they were sorry for the wrong things they had done.**

**The reason John was doing all of this was to get people ready for Jesus. For thousands of years God had communicated his love for people through his actions. People talked about God and they could read about God, but they still didn't really get who God was. So God sent his Son, Jesus, to help everyone understand. Let's explore more about what that means.**

#### Follow the Teacher

Have everyone stand. Say: **I'm going to read a list of motions, and you'll need to do them all in order.**

Read through the following list of motions quickly. Don't repeat yourself and don't model the actions—just read the list.

- **clap three times**
- **spin around**
- **jump**

- do jazz hands
- kick your right leg, then your left leg
- nod your head

Ask: • **What happened?**

- **What would make it easier to follow my instructions?**

Read the list again, this time doing the motions as you read it and pausing for kids to copy you.

Ask: • **What's the difference between the two times I read the list of actions?**

Say: **When you could only hear me but couldn't watch me, it was harder to follow along. Think about people who had read about God or talked about him but had never seen him.**

Ask: • **How would being able to see Jesus help people understand who God is?**

Say: **God had shown himself to people through miracles and through messengers, but they couldn't see God. So God sent his Son, Jesus, so we could know who God is.**

### **Talk About It**

Say: **Jesus is God's Son, and by getting to know Jesus, we can learn more about God the Father.**

Have kids form groups of three or four to discuss this question.

Ask: • **What could someone learn about your family by getting to know you?** Give an example from your own family, which could be a physical trait like hair color, a personality trait like politeness, or an attribute like a good sense of humor.

### **Learn John's Message**

Say: **John the Baptist wanted people to be ready for Jesus, and he had some important things to say to get people ready for Jesus. He told people who thought they were automatically going to heaven that even *they* had to turn to Jesus, God's Son. He shared different messages with people to help them know how to get ready for Jesus.**

**Let's dig into some of John's messages by drawing them.**

Have kids stay with their groups of three or four. Give each group a different message from the "Pass On the Message" handout. It's okay if some groups have the same message. Distribute paper and pencils or markers.

Say: **Talk in your group about the message on your paper, and think of a fun way to draw this that might pass the message on to others. As you're talking and drawing, also talk about this: How does this message help people get ready for God's Son, Jesus?**

Allow time for kids to draw and talk, and then invite each group to share its artwork and answer to the question: How does this message help people get ready for God's Son, Jesus?

### **Jesus' Baptism**

Say: **John baptized a lot of people and wanted them to turn to God. But then one day *Jesus* asked John to baptize *him*. At Jesus' baptism, something very special happened.**

Read aloud Matthew 3:16-17.

Say: **Before Jesus did any miracles, or taught anyone, or did anything else that we would think of as amazing, God told people who Jesus was. Jesus is God's Son! Jesus is God's Son, and he brings God great joy. He came to**

**earth to show us who God is and how much God loves everyone. The more we get to know Jesus, the more we get to know God!**



## TALK-ABOUT VIDEO

### John Baptizes Jesus

[10 min]

#### Supplies

- “John Baptizes Jesus” teaching video (watch or download [here](#))

#### Tip

- Don’t have internet in your classroom? That’s okay! You can download the videos before class using the “download” button at the link provided, or purchase DVDs [here](#).

#### Discuss and Watch “John Baptizes Jesus”

Say: **We’re learning about a guy named John who was a little bit different from other people—and who had a pretty amazing experience with Jesus. Let’s watch this video to see John’s story.**

Watch “John Baptizes Jesus.”

Ask: **John shared the message “Prepare the way for the Lord’s coming! Clear the road for him!” What do you think this means?**

After several kids have shared their thoughts, say: **John wanted everyone to have their hearts ready for Jesus. He wanted them to start thinking about what they were doing and how they were living. But it sounds like he was a little surprised when Jesus came and wanted to be baptized. Jesus said that this was what God wanted, so John agreed to baptize Jesus.**

**It must have been amazing when the sky opened up and a dove came down and landed on Jesus! And it must have been *really* amazing when everyone heard God’s voice say, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.”**

Ask: • **Why do you think God wanted everyone to hear this message?**

• **Jesus is God’s Son. When we get to know Jesus, we get to know God.**

**What do you know about Jesus that is also true about God?**

Say: **It’s exciting to know that we can get to know God by getting to know Jesus. We know for sure that Jesus loves us—and that means God loves us, too!**



## OBJECT LESSON

### Part the Pepper

[10 min]

#### Supplies

- Bible
- clear bowl
- cotton swab
- liquid dish soap
- water
- a shaker of ground pepper

#### Easy Prep

- Fill a bowl with water.
- Coat one end of a cotton swab with dish soap.

#### Experiment With Pepper Water

Have kids gather around the bowl of water.

Say: **There are some hard things in our world today. What are some you can think of?** Kids may think of things like bullies, crime, disease, sadness, and so on.

As each child shares an idea, let that child add a sprinkle of pepper to the water.

Say: **Today we are learning that Jesus is God's Son. Even though these bad things are in our world, Jesus helps us in the middle of them.**

Stick the cotton swab coated in dish soap into the water. The pepper will part and move to the outside edge of the bowl.

Say: **What we saw with this cotton swab is kind of like when Jesus came into our world. What just happened?**

#### Talk About It

Ask: • **What's different about your own life because Jesus is in your life?**

Say: **Because Jesus is God's Son, he can and has conquered the bad things in our world. That doesn't mean the bad things are all gone yet, but it does mean he can help you push them aside and that he helps us in the middle of our troubles.**



## DEEPER BIBLE

### How Can Jesus Be God's Son?

[15 min]

#### Supplies

- Bible
- blue, yellow, and white washable paint, each in a separate bowl
- paintbrushes (1 per child)
- disposable paper bowls (1 per child)
- paper
- wet wipes

#### The Same Person?

Read aloud Matthew 3:16-17.

Say: **These verses talk about God in three different ways. There's a person (Jesus), a Spirit like a dove, and a voice from heaven calling Jesus his Son. Does that mean we worship three gods instead of one? How can Jesus be God and God's Son at the same time? Let's grapple with that.**

#### Mixed Together

Have each child use a paintbrush to dab a little of each of the three different colors of paint in a bowl. Then have kids mix these colors together thoroughly.

Ask: • **How many colors are in your bowl?**

• **Could you separate your paint back into the three original colors?**

Say: **The color in your bowl was made out of three totally different colors.**

**You saw the three colors, so you know there were three—but now they're all just one color and you can't split them apart. That's kind of like God. There's just one God, but there are three different parts that make up who he is. One of those parts is Jesus, who is God's Son.**

Read aloud Hebrews 1:3.

Say: **This is really hard to understand, and that's okay! Even adults have a hard time understanding how one God can have three parts.**

Allow time for kids to share what's confusing about the concept of the Trinity. Don't try to answer all their questions unless you feel confident in doing so. It's okay to admit that even you have a hard time understanding this concept.

Say: **Even though it's confusing, we can believe that Jesus is God's Son.**

#### Painted Message

Have kids each use the paint they mixed to paint a sign that says Jesus is God's Son.

Say: **When you see your sign this week, remember that there are three parts to the color you used to make your sign. And remember that there are three parts to God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus is God's Son.**



## MUSIC VIDEO

### God Has Given to Me

[10 min]

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#### Supplies

- “This Is the Day” (watch or download [here](#))
- “Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus” (watch or download [here](#))
- “No, Not One” (watch or download [here](#))

#### Tip

- Don’t have internet in your classroom? That’s okay! You can choose your own worship songs from our Best Of Dig In Music DVD [here](#).

#### Sing Songs to God

Sing the three songs in any order.



## HIGH-ENERGY GAME

### Balloon Race

[10 min]

#### Supplies

- inflated balloons, 1 for every 3 kids

#### Race With Balloons

Have kids form groups of three. If possible, groups should be same-gender. Have trios line up on one side of the room.

Say: **Your trio's job is to get the balloon across the room and back. You all have to be a part of carrying it, and no one can use their hands. If you drop it, you may use your hands to pick it back up.**

Have trios race across the room with their balloons. If you have more trios than can play at once, have a few races and then have the winners compete against each other.

Play a few rounds, asking trios to think of a new way to transport the balloon each round.

#### Talk About It

Ask: • **What did your trio do to work together?**

• **In what ways did you have to think individually? What required you to think as a group?**

Say: **Thinking as a group could be one way to think about what we call the Trinity—one God in three persons. But that doesn't mean we worship more than one God. We worship one God that has three parts: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus is the Son part of that identity.**

Ask: • **What are some unique things about God the Son, Jesus, that aren't true about God the Father or God the Holy Spirit?**

• **In what way are the three parts of God really all the same?**

Say: **It can be hard to understand the Trinity—the idea that God has three parts. But our game can help you understand. You were all one group, accomplishing one goal. But sometimes you had to do things individually. Jesus is the only part of God that came to earth in human form, as God's Son. But Jesus is still God, and he works with the Father and the Holy Spirit to accomplish the same goals.**



## LOW-ENERGY GAME

### Clap, Snap, Stomp

[10 min]

#### Repeat Actions From Memory

Ask: • **What are some things you do the same way your parents do them?**  
• **If someone watched you for a whole day, what would they see in your appearance, actions, or words that would remind them of your parents?**

Say: **Let's play a game to discover how we see others and learn from them.**

Have children stand in a circle. Be sure you join in and play, too!

Choose a child to start the game by picking an action to do: clapping, snapping, or stomping a single time.

Going to the left, have the next child in the circle repeat the first child's action and then choose one of the three actions to add.

Continue on around the circle until each child has had a turn to repeat all the previous actions and add an action at the end.

Play until you've gone all the way around the circle at least once. If you have fewer than 10 kids, play until you have a pattern of at least 10 motions. Continue around the circle one or two more times as time allows.

#### Talk About It

Say: **Each of you helped continue the pattern by repeating it around the circle. You had to do the same actions as the people before you.**

Ask: • **What are ways the actions and words of Jesus help us understand more about his Father?**

Say: **Jesus is God's Son. He came to earth to show us what God is like. Just as you sometimes say or do things the way your parents do, Jesus can remind us of his Father, because Jesus is God's Son.**



## CRAFT Dotted Doves

[20 min]

### Supplies

- white paper
- "Dove Outline" handout (1 per child) (download [here](#))
- scissors
- washable blue ink pads
- markers
- wet wipes



### Like a Dove

Say: **When Jesus was baptized and God said that Jesus is his dearly loved Son, the Spirit of God came down from heaven like a dove. We're going to make beautiful white doves in a bright blue sky to remind us of that special moment.**

Give everyone a "Dove Outline" handout to cut out.

### Bright Blue Sky

Have kids place their dove cutouts on their white papers and hold them in place while they press their fingertips on the blue ink pad. They'll use their fingers to make blue dots to cover the entire paper around the dove, making sure they get the blue dots right up next to the dove so the shape will be recognizable when they remove

the dove cutout.

After kids have covered their papers in blue dots, they can lift up the dove cutout to see the white dove underneath.

Say: **The dove gives you a reminder of Jesus' baptism when God said, "This is my dearly loved Son." In your dove, write "Jesus is God's Son."**

Allow time for kids to write the Bible Point in their doves.

### **Talk About**

Ask: • **What do your fingerprints show about who you are?**

• **What do you know about Jesus? How does knowing Jesus help you know God better?**

• **How is Jesus like God's fingerprint?**

Say: **At Jesus' baptism, God's Spirit appeared like a dove and God's voice could be heard by everyone, saying, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy." God wanted everyone to know that Jesus was more than a regular man—Jesus is God's Son.**



## LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

### Children of God

[5 min]

#### Supplies

- Bible

#### All Children of God

Say: **Today we learned that Jesus is God's Son. And because Jesus is God's Son, he made a way for *us* to be God's children, too!**

Read aloud Galatians 3:26.

Say: **God said that Jesus is his Son, with whom he is pleased. When we have faith in Jesus, we become part of God's family! Take a moment to quietly pray about that, and think about what being a child of God means to you.**

Allow time.

#### Bless Children

Move from child to child, putting your hand on each child's head and saying: **[Name of child], you are God's beloved [daughter/son].** If you have a lot of kids, have other volunteers or helpers assist with this blessing. Or have kids pass on the blessing after you've blessed them.

Thank the children for coming, and tell them you're looking forward to seeing them next week.



## TAKE-HOME Dig In @ Home

[0 min]

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### Supplies

- this week's "Dig In @ Home" handout (1 per child) (download [here](#))

### Easy Prep

- Add your church announcements to the "Dig In @ Home" handout.

Distribute a copy of the "Dig In @ Home" handout to kids as they leave, or email it to parents during the week.