

# SUNDAY FEBRUARY 21<sup>ST</sup>

LENT 1



## Gospel reading: Mark 1: 9 – 15

Jesus goes into the wilderness

### All around the world

Lord Jesus, all around the world  
people are facing difficult times.

Please protect them from harm  
and help them build their faith in you.

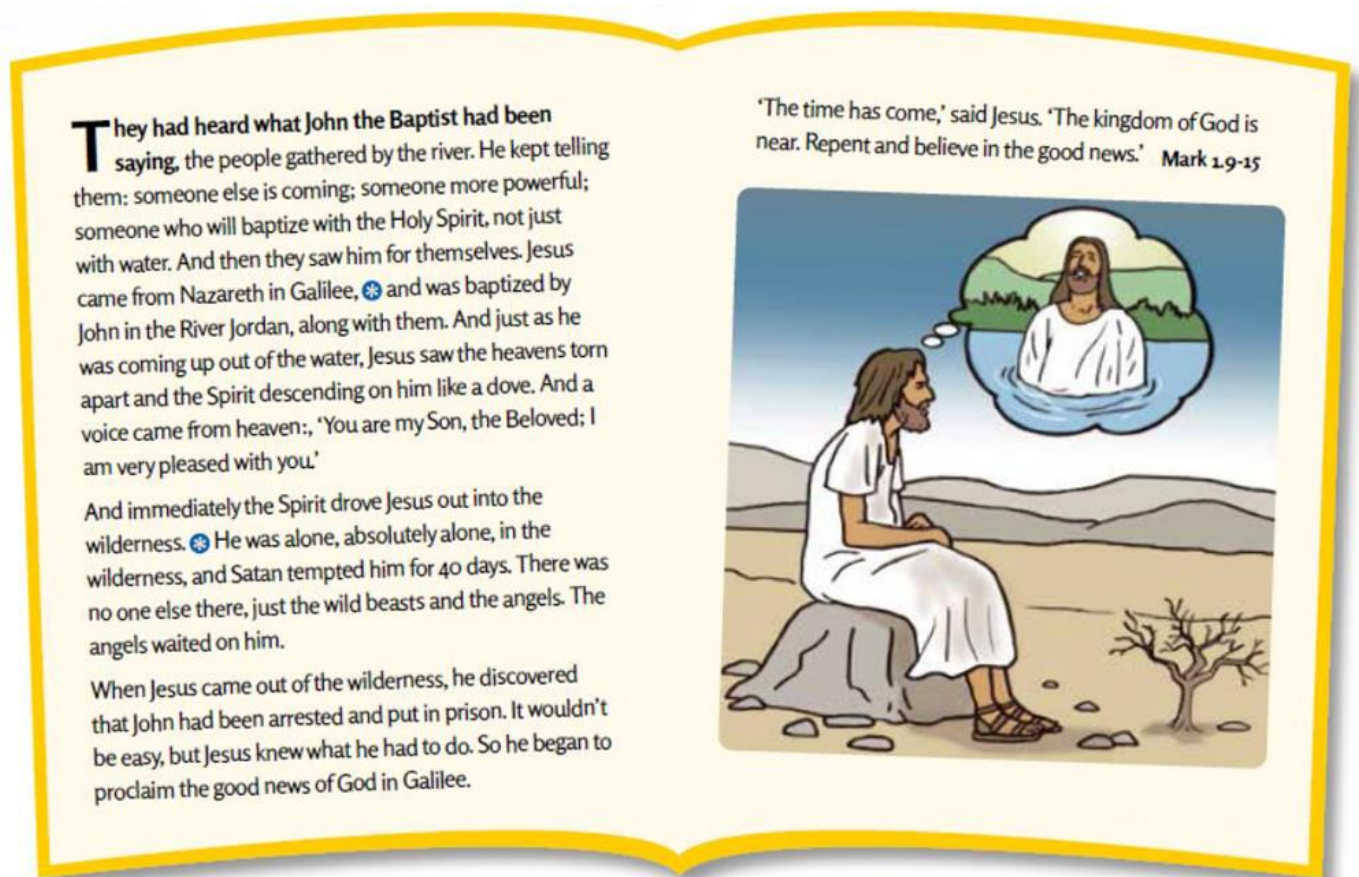
Amen.

## Mark 1.9-15

In Mark's typical style, it is 'immediately' after Jesus' baptism that he is 'driven' into the wilderness. The baptism shows God's affirmation of Jesus as God's beloved Son. This is in stark contrast to the tough temptations Jesus then faces in the wilderness. But Mark, by placing them in this way, indicates that Jesus' baptism prepared him not only for his future ministry but also to endure the temptations.

This experience places knowing who he is before what he does. Thinking about our identity, both our own individuality and our identity as a child of God – knowing God, and that we are loved by God – may help us cope with our difficult 'wilderness' experiences, whatever their nature might be.

**This week we explore being ready to face the wilderness of today's world.**



Talk about how neither Nazareth nor Galilee were very important places at this time.

Therefore, people probably wouldn't have thought Jesus was the 'powerful' person John had told them about.

Explain that the word 'wilderness' means a wild area or desert where you can't grow food.

Imagine you are on the banks of the River Jordan when Jesus was baptised. How did it feel? What questions would you ask

## Beloved

### Mark 1.9-15

Where, after a description of the eccentricity of John the Baptist and a sense of the power of his preaching, Mark relates the story of Jesus coming to John to be baptized. God is seen in the form of a dove and a voice from heaven pronouncing love and approval of Jesus. Jesus then spends 40 days and nights in the wilderness, before returning to Galilee and starting his own campaign to declare the good news of the kingdom.

Now read **Mark 1.9-15** see p.2 for text.

### A note on the passage

Mark intends us to read these two passages together so that Jesus' baptism is clearly seen as preparation for his time in the wilderness. Knowing he is, "Beloved" in God's eyes, helps him to get through this time of testing. How aware are you of your Identity in God? What has helped you get through tough times?

## MIRROR PRAYER

Set aside 10 minutes each day for this imagination prayer exercise using a mirror. Find a comfortable seated or lying position and close your eyes. Imagine being baptized by John in the river. Try to awaken all your senses as you imagine. What can you see, hear, smell, taste and feel? As you imagine coming up out of the water, open your eyes and look in the mirror, as you think about God's voice speaking words of love and approval over you. Take a moment to write down what you imagined God saying, and come back to it throughout the day.



## FAIR TRADE

Both John and Jesus preached that the kingdom of God was near. When the Bible talks about the kingdom, it's the idea of everything being as God intended it. One way that our society often isn't the way God intended it is in the area of people getting paid fairly for the goods they sell. 22 February – 7 March is Fairtrade Fortnight. As you shop during this time, consider swapping some items for Fairtrade alternatives. Most major supermarkets will stock Fairtrade bananas, tea, coffee and chocolate, but you may find other options as well.

## PADDLE

Baptism is an outward sign of an inward grace – we show the power of God in our lives by symbolically dying to old ways of life as we go under the water, and rising to new life in Jesus as we come back up. Find a place when you can go into some water – it might be a river or beach where you can have a paddle, some puddles on the street or just have a bath or shower! As you go into the water, reflect on what it would mean to leave behind old ways of behaving, and as you come out, imagine entering the new life that Jesus offers.

## LENT GARDEN OF RESPONSES

Lent is a time when people will often give something up for these few weeks before Easter to reflect on Jesus and his journey to the cross. Other people take on a new habit for Lent – like daily acts of kindness.

Over the course of Lent this year, create a garden of responses. You can either do this by putting soil in a tray and placing particular objects there as directed; or take a large piece of paper and make a 'garden page' by drawing, writing, cutting and sticking. If you live with others, you could build your 'garden' together.

Make a list of the ways you see God's kingdom – in the actions of others, in nature, etc. Either paint or write the words, 'God's kingdom is near' on a rock or stone, and place it in your garden tray, along with the list of the ways you see God's kingdom; or write the words decoratively, alongside your list on your garden page.



**You will need:** paper and a pencil.

- Draw round your hand to make a dove shape. You will need to stretch your fingers one way (as the body and wing) and your thumb the other way (as the head).

- Add features (feathers, eye etc.) to the dove and words/drawings about yourself. Try and keep in a meditative frame of mind, with your ears open to hear God's words of approval for you, his beloved child.

## Activities

### Being prepared

#### Think about how to face difficult situations at home or school

**You will need:** A picture of hiking equipment, e.g. tent, boots, rucksack, sleeping bag, stove, dried food, first aid kit.

Show the children the hiking equipment picture and ask each person to decide which is the most important item to take on a trip into the wilderness and why.

Talk about, draw or show a picture of what is needed for a day in your life at the moment and see how things are different.

Talk about how these pieces of equipment are similar or different from the things they need for a day in their ordinary lives. Ask: What might you need to 'survive' a day in school or at home?

#### A reminder that we are affirmed by God

**You will need:** plain wooden picture frames, paint and paintbrushes (or marker pens), other craft materials. Or pieces of card or a photo to have by you and smaller pieces of card to write/draw the words on.

Ask the children what encouraging and affirming words God might use to describe them, e.g. beloved, precious, daughter/son.

Encourage everyone to decorate their frames with the positive words they have chosen, as well as pictures or designs.

Let the children place a photograph of themselves in the frame, to remind them how precious God thinks they are.

If you don't have a spare frame make one from card or just look at a photo. You can make little cards with the words on to stand by the photos.

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What does it feel like when someone says something encouraging to you?

What words might describe Jesus' feelings when he heard God's voice calling him 'beloved'?

How can we remind ourselves who God says we are when we face difficult circumstances or decisions?

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This picture is for you to colour



## Prayers

*Response line:* **You are my beloved. I am pleased with you.**

Dear God,

we pray for those who don't like themselves very much;  
may they hear you say:

**You are my beloved, I am pleased with you.**

We pray for those who feel as if they don't belong anywhere;  
may they hear you say...

**You are my beloved. I am pleased with you**

We pray for one another, that in our sad moments  
we may hear you say...

**You are my beloved. I am pleased with you**

**Amen.**

### All around the world

Lord Jesus, all around the world  
people are facing difficult times.

Please protect them from harm  
and help them build their faith in you.

Amen.

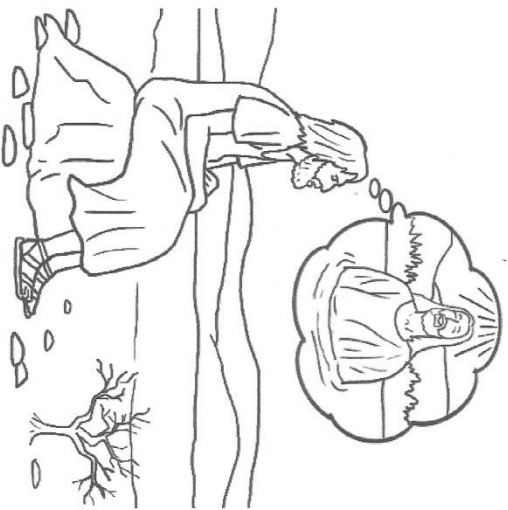
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# ROOTS Activity Sheet

21-27 February 2021  
Lent 1

## Mark 1.9-15

After his baptism by John, Jesus is sent into the wilderness by the Spirit, where he is tempted by Satan for 40 days.



God prepared Jesus to get through the wilderness.



Draw the things you might need to be ready to go into the wilderness.



God was making Jesus ready for what came next, when he was baptized by John in the river. Can you fit some of the key words from today's story into the word 'ready'?

r e a d y

you, beloved, water, baptism, Jordan

## Write

Make a list of all the qualities that make you who you are, inside the box.

God loves me because...