

# The Right Choice

Matthew 3; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 97-113

**S**ara, a young missionary child, lived in Russia. Even though she was small, she begged to be baptized. So she studied the Bible with her parents every day.

The big day finally came! Sara and some friends were baptized in a cool Russian river on a sunny Sabbath afternoon. Some people who did not know Jesus watched. They listened to the singing. They heard the prayers. They were curious.

That day Sara and her friends told some strangers about God's family. How? Sara chose to be baptized. A long time ago Someone else told others about God's family when He chose to be baptized.

**T**he hot noonday sun sparkled on the river as the people listened to John's powerful words.

"Repent," he told them. "God's kingdom is close. Turn from your sins and be baptized. Let God know that you choose to follow Him."

Many people came to hear the preacher by the river. Some came because they really did want to give their lives to God. Others were just curious. John was a no-nonsense kind of preacher. He wore simple clothes, ate simple food, and preached a simple message.

One day John was

surprised and pleased to see Jesus making His way toward the river. He knew all about Jesus. For months he had been telling people to get ready for the Messiah to come. And now He was here!

"John, I have come to be baptized," Jesus spoke softly.

John was so surprised he could hardly talk! "What? Me? Baptize You? Oh, Jesus, YOU need to baptize ME. I should not baptize You!"

Jesus smiled. "John, baptize Me as you have baptized others. It is the right thing to do!"

John smiled. "Then, of course I will!"

Jesus slowly walked into the water. John followed. He smiled at Jesus, then looked at the crowd. He took hold of Jesus' hands, laid Him under the water, and pulled Him out.



## The Message

I tell others I belong to God's family when I choose to be baptized.

## Memory Verse

**"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased"**

(Matthew 3:17).



When Jesus came up out of the water, He knelt beside the riverbank. Jesus knew that sin had made people's hearts hard. He knew that many of them wouldn't understand His

mission of love. So He talked to His Father about it.

Suddenly Jesus was surrounded by beautiful light straight from God's throne! He looked up. The Holy Spirit, in the form of a lovely dove, came down on Jesus. Then God's glorious voice rang out! "This is My Son, whom I love! With Him I am well pleased!"

Many people watched Jesus being baptized in the Jordan River that day. They saw the light from heaven surrounding Him. That wonderful day made their faith grow!

When Jesus was baptized, He didn't have any sin to wash away. He was baptized as an example for us. Every day, you can spend time getting to know Jesus better. You can thank Him that you are part of His family. And you can choose to follow Jesus' example some day soon.

Baptism is a special time when we show everyone that we have given our lives completely to Jesus. God is so happy that we choose to be part of His family. He says, "You are My child, whom I love! I'm so pleased with you!"



## S A B B A T H

**DO** If possible, go with your family near a body of water and read your lesson story together. Imagine Jesus getting baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. How does that make you feel? Where would you like to be baptized? Ask Jesus to help you as you think about baptism.

**READ** Read Matthew 3:17 in your Bible.

John the Baptist ate poor people's food. The way he lived reminded people of Elijah.



## S U N D A Y

**READ** During family worship, read and discuss Matthew 3:1-12. Why did Jesus ask John to baptize Him? Why should you want to be baptized?

**DO** Unscramble the following words that are in the Bible reading: tenrpe dnraoJ vierr twrea dbpazeti\*

**MAKE** Make a mobile with dove cutouts. Write one word of the memory verse on each dove. Attach the doves to strings and the strings to a coat hanger. Hang your mobile in your room.

\* Answers: repent, Jordan, river, baptized, water, baptize

## M O N D A Y

**READ** With your family, read and discuss Matthew 3:13-17. How do you think Jesus felt about what God said? How would you feel if God said that to you? Are you His child? Why?

**DO** Look at a Bible map to find the Jordan River. What can you learn about it?

**DO** Teach your memory verse to your family.

## T U E S D A Y

**READ** For worship, read and discuss Romans 6:3, 4. What does this text teach us about baptism?

**DO** Using a pen or water-soluble markers, list mistakes that you have recently made. Put the paper under some water and watch them all disappear. Jesus will forgive us for mistakes whenever we ask Him. But when we are baptized, it lets others know that we are serious about asking Jesus for His power to trust and obey Him always. Jesus is always ready to give His power to do right. Ask Him today.

**DO** Say your memory verse together. Are you God's child? How do you know? Thank Him for loving you.

## W E D N E S D A Y

**READ** During worship, read how Luke describes Jesus' baptism in Luke 3:21, 22.

**DO** Christians use the dove as a symbol of the Holy Spirit because of Jesus' baptism. Make a picture of a dove. Cut it out and hang it where you will see it often. It will remind you that the Holy Spirit is your helper!

**DO** Look at your dove mobile from Sunday as you say your memory verse. Thank God for the Holy Spirit.



# T H U R S D A Y

**READ** During family worship, read and discuss Jesus' command in Matthew 28:19, 20. How can you help Jesus? Name at least three ways. Then tell Him about it in prayer.

**THINK** Think about when you would like to be baptized. If you are ready, talk with your parents and your pastor about joining a baptismal class.

**DO** Say your memory verse to an adult.

# F R I D A Y

**DO** During family worship, act out this week's Bible story. To act out the dove part, read Matthew 3:16. Hold up your dove from Wednesday. Then say your memory verse.

**DO** Ask your family members to tell about their baptism and what it means to them. Make plans to celebrate the baptismal dates of every family member. Ideas: Serve a favorite meal; have a "Re-birthday Cake" with one candle for every year since the baptism. Sing "Happy Re-birthday to You" and blow out the candles. If possible, look at pictures of the baptism. Thank God for each person and their dedication to Him.

## The Right Choice

# PUZZLE

Directions: Answer the following to find out how Jesus publicly proclaimed His faith in God.

- |   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1. Where did Jesus kneel?   | — — — — — <b>B</b> — — — — — |
| 2. Name of river where Jesus was baptized.                                  | — — — — — <b>A</b> —         |
| 3. Means "to turn from sin."  | — — — — — <b>P</b> — — — — — |
| 4. What does baptism require?   | — — — — — <b>I</b> — — — — — |
| 5. In addition to the dove, what came from heaven after Jesus was baptized? | — — — — — <b>L</b> — — — — — |
| 6. Who appeared in the form of a dove?                                      | — — — — — <b>S</b> — — — — — |
| 7. Why was Jesus baptized?  | — — — — — <b>M</b> — — — — — |

1. Riverbank, 2. Jordan, 3. repent, 4. water, 5. voice, 6. Holy Spirit, 7. example