

BIBLE TIME LINE ASSEMBLIES

12. JESUS IS BAPTISED

Bible Base: Luke 3: 1-22; John 1: 29-34

Key Christian Belief: As one of us, Jesus is able to take our place.

Aim: To help children understand that Jesus came to take the blame for the wrong things we have done.

You will need:

- the attached PowerPoint presentation

Introduction

Ask the children to imagine that you are a chat show host and you are about to introduce your special guests. See if the children can guess who you are talking about from your introduction each time. For example...

‘Ladies and gentleman, tonight we have with us one of the greatest football players of all time. He’s the leading goal scorer from the Premier League this season. It’s...’

‘Tonight I am thrilled also to have on the show one of my favourite female singers. Her new single is at the top of the download charts at the moment. Please welcome...’

‘And finally our special guest star this evening is one of the nation’s favourite actors. Star of several smash hit films including... Let’s give a great big round of applause for...’

Then ask if anyone else would like to come up to the front to introduce someone famous and see if we can guess who it is. Allow one or two children to have a go and suggest that they each have a career ahead of them as chat show hosts.

Ask the children now to listen as you tell them what someone else once said to introduce a famous person to a large crowd of people and see if they can guess who the famous person was. Bonus points if they know who the one introducing Him was too!

‘Look! Here he is! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’

It was John the Baptist who said this to introduce Jesus to a large crowd of people. Today we are going to think about what be meant by this and what we can learn about Jesus from it.

Story

John’s job was to prepare the way for Jesus and to get people ready for His arrival as their King. John told people that the King was on His way and that in order to be ready for Him, God wanted them to stop doing what was wrong and start doing what was right. He told them all to stop being greedy and to start sharing what they had with others. He told tax collectors to stop charging people too much and to start charging only the proper amount. He told soldiers to stop bullying people and to start treating them fairly.

And if any of them were willing to change their ways, John would baptise them in the river Jordan. John would plunge them beneath the water for a few seconds and then bring them back up out of the water again. This was a way for the people being baptised to show everyone that they were ready to start a new life and leave the old one behind.

One day Jesus came to John to be baptised. Knowing that Jesus hadn't done anything wrong, John wondered why He should be baptised. He didn't need to make a new start! But Jesus wanted to show that He had become one of us and was now on our side.

Suppose one day that a famous footballer comes to watch your team play. When one of your team is injured, this famous footballer puts on your team's football kit and comes on to the pitch to play on your team. In the second half, he scores the winning goal that sees your team through to the next round. Wouldn't that be great?

In a way that's what Jesus was doing when He was baptised. He was showing that He had chosen to become one of us and to be on our side. It was as if He was coming on to the pitch, wearing our colours. He wanted John and everyone watching to know that as one of us He was even willing to share in the blame for all the wrong things we have done. When He was baptised it was not to show that He was sorry for the wrong things He had done and ready to make a new start, but to show that He had come to take the blame for the wrong things we have done and to help us make a new start.

So John baptised Jesus in the river Jordan and as He was coming up out of the water a voice from heaven said: 'This is my Son whom I love. Listen to Him.'

A few days later when a large crowd had gathered to watch what John was doing, John saw Jesus coming towards him through the crowd and said: 'Look - here He is! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'

Exploring Christian Belief

It may not be so obvious to us, but the people listening to John knew exactly what he meant. Every year, the Jewish people had to confess their sins to the High Priest in the Temple and ask God's forgiveness. And as they did so, they had to bring a lamb with them. The lamb would be killed and its blood sprinkled on the altar as an offering to God. Only then would God be ready to forgive them.

John was saying that, like those lambs, Jesus had come to give His life for us, so that we can be forgiven for all the wrong things we have done.

The lambs that the people brought each year to the Temple had to be perfect. Nothing less would be good enough for God.

Jesus the Lamb of God was perfect in every way. He never said, did or thought anything wrong. And because He was perfect, He was able to take the blame for the wrong things we have done and give His life for us on the cross, so that we can be forgiven.

Jesus came to be one of us and to take our place - like a substitute coming on to the pitch to take the place of another player. He was able to do what no one else could have done. And because of this we can be friends of God not just for a year but forever.

No wonder then that when John saw Jesus coming towards Him He pointed Him out and said: 'Look - here He is! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'

Reflection / Prayer

Conclude with a prayer thanking God that Jesus came to be one of us and to give His life for us in order that we might be forgiven.