

An rfour.org Children's Time Message

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Written for January 7, 2024

First Sunday After Epiphany

Lectionary Year B

Scripture: [Mark 1:4-11](#) [**Summary:** *Baptism Is Just The Beginning*]

Supplies Needed: No supplies needed

ASK (a.k.a. *The On-Ramp*)

- Good morning!
- I have a question for you. What do you think you do more times during a whole week – Do you wash your whole body (that is, taking a bath or shower) more or do you wash your hands more?
- Why do we wash our hands more often, do you think? [*because hands get dirtier in a shorter amount of time; because it is easier / faster to wash our hands than our whole bodies*]
- Those are good answers. But before we continue, let me be clear that our hands do *not* get dirty because we are using our hands incorrectly; instead, that's just how it works, right? When we use our hands, they just get dirty.
- But what would happen if we chose to never ever wash our hands? [*We'd be more likely to get sick, right? And we'd be more likely to get others sick, too, don't you think?*]
- So let's keep washing our hands, ok?

TELL (a.k.a. *The Freeway*)

- I ask about washing our hands vs our whole bodies because in today's scripture reading, Jesus is baptized and it is the only time he is baptized.
- The way that Jesus was baptized, it was like he took a really quick bath.
- And, it is one of the ways that Jesus chooses to pay attention to God.
- But in the following story (one that we didn't read today), Jesus finds himself in the wilderness where he has three chances (or temptations) to **not** pay attention to God

- In that story, we see how Jesus chose to pay attention to God in a different way than baptism – by saying verses from the Bible as a way to keep his mind on God.
- And, in other stories, we see Jesus chooses to pray as a way to pay attention to God.
- In still other stories, we see how Jesus attends worship as a way to pay attention to God.
- These are the different ways that Jesus pays attention to God. Some of those ways are like washing our hands. Those ways happen quickly and often.
- And other ways are like taking a bath. Those ways happen less often, but take more time.

SHARE the Good News (a.k.a. *The Destination*)

- And guess what? We can choose to pay attention to God in the same ways that Jesus did.
- Jesus' baptism is the choice to keep making those smaller choices of how to pay attention to God each day.
- In fact, that's mostly what Jesus does during his ministry: He teaches his disciples how to pay attention to God in the same ways that he did.
- Then, as we learn to and choose to do those every day actions that help us pay attention to God, then we will also be the (cleaned) hands and bodies that share God's healing, love, and words of hope with those around us – in the same way that Jesus did.
- That's the good news for today.
- Let's pray. This is a repeat-after-me prayer.

CLOSING Prayer

Dear God,

Dear God,

Thank you for Jesus...

Thank you for Jesus...

...who shows us...

...who shows us...

...how to pay attention to you...

...how to pay attention to you...

...so that we can better share...

...so that we can better share...

...your love, hope and words...

...your love, hope and words...

...with those around us.

...with those around us.

Thank you and Amen.