

Jesus Begins His Ministry

John 1:1-34

PPT Title

Jesus Begins His Ministry

Main Point: Jesus emptied Himself to come and be our Savior.

Key Verse: *Though (Jesus) was God, He did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, He gave up His divine privileges; He took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being.* - Philippians 2:6-7 NLT

Props: Styrofoam ball "sun" and "moon", faux tree, seashell, several sponges cut in the shape of people (One unmarked sponge slightly wet; the other sponges dry, with a black mark hidden inside - make a slice long-ways in the sponge and color on it with black marker); a clear pitcher of water

BACKGROUND/REVIEW



Say: We just celebrated Christmas. We know the story of Jesus' birth, with Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem. We put a little manger scene in our house so we will remember the way Jesus chose to come into the world. (Lead kids to sing the first verse of "Away in a Manger.") It is a wonderful story and it is really great to celebrate it every year.

Over the next few months, we are going to study the life of Jesus, and what happened when He grew up. I'll be honest. I have a few questions about Jesus. Maybe you do too. Like, how is it possible that He is God **and** man? Did He know everything when He was little? Did His parents really have to teach Him how to walk and talk, or did He just pretend not to know anything so He wouldn't hurt their feelings when they tried to teach Him things? Did He really get hungry? How can God get tired? I have always had a lot of questions about Jesus. Well, the book of John gives us some answers.

There are four books in the Bible that tell the life story of Jesus. They are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. We call these four books the Gospels, which means Good News.



"In the beginning..."

John knew Jesus very well. He was one of Jesus' disciples. He wanted the whole world to know the truth about Jesus. He tells us about the life of Jesus, but it is very different from the other three gospels. Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell us what happened once Jesus was born in that manger. But John backs up; John backs way, way up. John starts with, "In the beginning..." Where have we heard those words before? The creation story in Genesis starts with those same words. John starts his story of Jesus way back at the creation of the world. Was Jesus around back then? Yes, He was.

At the beginning of chapter 1, John calls Jesus by another name. John calls Jesus, "the Word" (John 1:14). The Greek word for this is "logos." Logos means the essence, the truth, the very core of who God is. Just to make it easier to follow, I'll say "Jesus" every time John says, "the Word."

In the beginning, [Jesus] was already there. [Jesus] was with God, and [Jesus] was God. He was with God in the beginning. All things were made through Him. Nothing that has been made was made without Him. - John 1:1-3

The Bible says that God is Spirit (John 4:24). There's no way for me to show you a

Spirit, so let's say that this water represents God's Spirit and Jesus' Spirit. **Show pitcher of water.** In real life, they are not contained at all! **Wet fingers an fling some water out.** **But they were always together.** They always existed, and they were together.



Jesus already existed before the creation of the world. Because He is God, He has no start and no end. He simply always was. He is the Creator of the universe. When He spoke, His words created the light, the sun, and the moon. **Hold up your sun and moon.** His word created the oceans (**hold up seashell**), the mighty oak trees (**hold up tree**), and, best of all, people, like you and me. **Hold up dry sponges, keeping wet one hidden.**

Jesus created all these things, and they were very good. Everything God made was wonderful. But soon, the people had a BIG problem. Every person chose to sin. They chose to do things their own way. They were marked with sin. **Pry open the people and show the black marks inside.** No matter what they tried, the people couldn't do anything to get rid of their sin. It's a huge problem, because that sin separated them from God. So God promised that one day He would send someone who would take away their sin. He would make them clean again! So the people waited for the Savior. They waited for generation after generation after generation. Then, listen to John 1:14:

The Word [Jesus] became a human being. He made His home with us. We have seen His glory. It is the glory of the one and only Son. He came from the Father. And He was full of grace and truth. - John 1:14

Jesus, who is God, became a human being. The Word became flesh (NIV). He was a Spirit, but He took on skin and bones. There is not a perfect illustration about how this happened! It is unlike anything else that we have ever seen. It is a complete miracle, an amazing work of a perfect God.

At just the right time, Jesus became human. **Hold up the pitcher of water, and replace it with the slightly wet sponge.** I don't know how He did it, but Jesus became flesh and blood, just like you and me. **Pinch your arm to show flesh.** Can you all feel your skin and bones?

Listen to this interesting verse. Philippians 2:6-7 says: *Though (Jesus) was God, He did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, He gave up His divine privileges; He took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. (NLT)*

When Jesus came as a baby human, He chose to empty Himself. Somehow, He chose to give up His godly power. **Wring out sponge water into pitcher.** But even so, He NEVER sinned. He grew up in Nazareth. There were lots of other people in Nazareth: little boys, girls, moms and dads. **Hold up the people-sponges next to sponge representing Jesus. Compare all the sponges. They should look very similar on the outside.** Jesus looked like a regular Jewish boy. The Bible says that there was nothing special about the way He looked (Isaiah 53:2). He was not more handsome; He didn't have a halo around His head! But there was one very big difference. Jesus did not have sin. Of course, we can't see sin on the outside of a person, but every other person had sin on the inside.



When Jesus was a boy, growing up in Nazareth, none of His neighbors knew that the Savior of the world was living right beside them!

JOHN IN THE WILDERNESS

Several years later, God sent a special messenger to tell everyone that the Savior was about to step forward! Who knows who that messenger was? John (not the writer of this book, but Zechariah and Elizabeth's son. Do you remember that miraculous story from right before Christmas?)



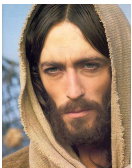
I would have loved to have met John! John is not someone who cared what other people thought of him. Most people do care what other people think. We fix our hair just so, or wear the clothes that we think our friends will like. We don't want people to think we are weird or different from them. But not John! He didn't care about fitting in. He just did what he knew was right. He did whatever God told him to do!

When John was about 30 years old, he started talking about the Savior. He started preaching it - loudly. He went all the way out to the wilderness, on the other side of the Jordan River. If anyone wanted to hear him preach, they had to go way out of town to hear him. Lots of people did. Here's what Mark has to say about John:

And so John came. He baptized people in the desert. [That's why we call him John the Baptist.] He also preached that people should be baptized and turn away from their sins. Then God would forgive them. All the people from the countryside of Judea went out to him. All the people from Jerusalem went too. When they admitted they had sinned, John baptized them in the Jordan River. John wore clothes made out of camel's hair. He had a leather belt around his waist. And he ate locusts and wild honey. [There weren't any grocery stores out there!]

Here is what John was preaching. "After me, One will come who is more powerful than I am. I'm not good enough to bend down and untie His sandals. I baptize you with water. But He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." - Mark 1:4-8

Say: More and more people came out to hear John. The leaders even sent people to find out who John was. They wondered if **he** was the Savior. But John was sure to tell them he was not!



*(One) day John saw Jesus coming toward him. John said, "Look! The Lamb of God! He takes away the sin of the world! **This is the One I was talking about.** I said, 'A Man who comes after me is more important than I am. That's because He existed before I was born.' [Remember, Jesus always existed.] I did not know Him. But God wants to make it clear to Israel who this Person is. That's the reason I came baptizing with water." - John 1:29-31*

Say: John had been telling people that the Savior was coming. When Jesus arrived, John announced that Jesus was the One! Finally, the people knew His name! JESUS. John knew that Jesus was the One because God told him (John 1:33). Isn't it wonderful that John was always listening to God?



Jesus wanted John to baptize Him (Matthew 3:13). Jesus wanted to show everyone who was watching that John's message was true. John did not feel worthy to baptize Jesus, but he obeyed Jesus' request. John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River. And when they came out of the water, the heavens opened, and the Spirit of God came down like a dove and rested on Jesus (Luke 3:21-22).



A voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, and I love Him. I am very pleased with Him." - Matthew 3:17

Pick up the pitcher and pour water into the sponge that represents Jesus. God poured His Spirit out on Jesus (Luke 4:1). So now, we have an amazing thing. Jesus was flesh and blood, but He was filled with the Holy Spirit of God. In the coming weeks, we'll see the amazing miracles that Jesus did because He was filled with God's Holy Spirit.

These are difficult things to understand. Even the smartest grown ups don't fully grasp how any of this happened. Some things are simply done by God, and we just believe that it's true. That is called *having faith*. We can't see it with our eyes, but we know it is true in our heart.

Jesus always existed. He spoke and created everything that exists - including people. 3

The people chose to sin, and they were separated from Him. When the time was perfect, Jesus chose to become a human being. He left heaven. He gave up all of His rights and privileges. Somehow, He emptied Himself of His power. He grew up like all the other kids in his town, except He never sinned. And when the time was right, He came out to be baptized by John the Baptist. At that moment, God filled Jesus with His Holy Spirit, and Jesus' ministry began. In the coming weeks, we will read about the amazing things Jesus did: He healed the sick, made blind people see, made demons flee, and even raised people from the dead! He did all of these things to show people that God has a wonderful, joy-filled, perfect kingdom that they could be a part of by believing in Him.

PPT Verse

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