



# The Spirit of St. Paul's

JANUARY 2025

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN  
[www.stpaulslutheran.ca](http://www.stpaulslutheran.ca)

## PASTOR'S CORNER

Did you make any new year resolutions? Many people do. Some make a resolution to stop doing something they think is harmful and others want to take up something they believe will be beneficial. Usually there are good intentions behind making new year resolutions. People want to improve their lives. They want to make progress and become better. "A new year, a new me" as the saying goes. Behind this thinking is the idea that it is up to us to renew ourselves. While this is the way it works in the world, it is not the way it works in our lives as God's people.

Our old sinful nature makes it impossible for us to make ourselves "new" before God. We cannot clean ourselves up enough or improve enough to be holy and acceptable before God. St. Paul teaches us, "For by works of the law no human being will be justified in His sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). Our holiness before God is His work, not ours. St. Paul makes this clear when he says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17). We are in Christ and we are a new

creation not because of anything we have done, but because of what Jesus has done for us. St. Paul teaches, "because of [God] you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30).

Christ is your righteousness and sanctification and redemption. He creates in you a new heart by claiming you and cleansing you through your baptism. St. Paul says, "We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory

of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

Our newness of life is not based on our ability to keep new year resolutions, or anything else we can do. It is entirely God's grace. So go ahead and take up a new hobby, eat more vegetables, and go for a walk. These things are good for you. But know that they do not make you a "new you." We are made new in Jesus Christ and Him crucified and risen. This is the truth that sets you free.

God's blessings,  
Pastor Keith

## A Mitten Tree Thank-you

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" (Matthew 25:40).

A big thank you to all who donated to the mitten tree once again. This year's donations also included socks and baby items which will keep many people, young and old, warm this winter.

All the donations were donated to the Global Gathering Place whose mission is to engage and support immigrants and refugees to integrate and thrive in Canadian  
*continued next page*



## Reminders

- Please remember that, because we have a number of members with allergies to nuts, any foods brought to church events should be nut-free.
- Also, several have allergies to fragrances. Please consider them when choosing toiletries and whether or not to wear perfumes.
- LWMLC mites and society offerings may be put in the offering plate in an envelope separate from your church offering, mailed to the church or given to society treasurer, Marion Hollinger. Please make any cheques payable to St. Paul's Lutheran Church but mark them clearly as being for LWMLC. Indicate the amount for mites and the amount for society funds.

## Classifieds

Something to sell or give away? Need something? Services to offer to fellow members? Try The Spirit Classifieds first. No cost. Leave your ads at the church office or give them to the editor.

Pastor: Rev. Murray Keith  
 Office Secretary: Sandy Harper  
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 Instagram: [www.instagram.com/stpaulslcc](https://www.instagram.com/stpaulslcc)  
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### *mitten tree, continued*

society. They help refugees and immigrants navigate everything from language, healthcare, and employment, to developing life skills many of us do without thinking (like grocery shopping and taking the bus).

A quick tour of their building gave a peak into their programs including an English language

class, a daycare centre and the main reception area. And of course, they also provide warm winter clothing to their clients.

Thank you to Sherry Gore who acted as contact person and helped deliver the mitten tree items.

Interested in learning more about Global Gathering Place? Just visit their website at <https://globalgatheringplace.com>.

## Get Ready for the 2025 Chili Cookoff Challenge

Mark Sunday, January 26 on your calendar and get your favourite recipe out. The Board of Parish Fellowship is planning the **Great Chili Cookoff Challenge of 2025** and they promise there will be prizes. If you aren't a chili maker, just come and enjoy.



*Good to the last spoonful - 2024*



*Be a judge or just enjoy the chili – from mild to very hot, to sometimes imaginative. Pictured are Keith Wallace and Pastor Keith, two of the judges at the last cookoff.*



## EDUCATION

### KIDS CORNER GROWING HEARTS OF FAITH

One Lord, One faith, One baptism (Ephesians 4:5)

#### HAPPY NEW YEAR, KIDS!!!

2024 is over and 2025 is just beginning! There are no longer any “epiphanies” left to be revealed in 2024, because we would know what they are by now, but there are likely many of them coming in 2025! I wonder what they will be. Whatever they are, whether big or small, frightening or enlightening, God has got us.

The most important “Epiphany” was revealed to the wise men who visited Jesus a couple of years after He was born. After years and years of the Bible prophesying that Jesus would be coming to us here on earth, He finally appeared! Not only did the Jewish people see Him, but so did those who were not Jewish, like the wise men and us! He was revealed to ALL because He came to save us ALL!

Part of God’s plan for this to happen was for Jesus to take on the sins of the world. Many people wonder why Jesus was baptized when He wasn’t sinful like we are. He needed to be baptized to “fulfill all righteousness.” This meant He took on all the world’s sins so when He died on the cross, ALL sin would be paid and we could be forgiven by God for any and all sins we would ever commit!

On January 5 we celebrate Epiphany and on January 12 we remember Jesus’ baptism. Thanks be to God for His wonderful plan of salvation for us and all the people of the world!

The activity sheets at the end of the newsletter will allow you to experience the Epiphany of God’s plan all over again! Also check Ill.ca for this year’s sheets!

God bless you and your families!  
Mrs. Denise Timm  
For the Board of Education and Youth



### CORNER FOR “BIG” KIDS GROWING HEARTS OF FAITH

One Lord, One faith, One baptism (Ephesians 4:5)

#### Jesus’ Baptism – The Joyous Exchange

*Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented (Matthew 3:13-15).*

John sees the problem and quickly objects. Why is Jesus coming out to the land, to the wilderness, to be receive a baptism for repentance? Jesus’ kinsman knows the folly of His relative coming down into the water to be numbered with sinners. He doesn’t belong here because this is a place for sinners. Jesus corrects John and tells him that it is to be done to “fulfill all righteousness.” In so doing, in being numbered with sinners, in fulfilling all righteousness, the Lord Christ makes your baptism a life-giving exchange. The perfect Son of God exchanges your sin for His righteousness so that you have been made right, perfect before God.

Jesus’ baptism is the essential link between the cross, the tomb and your own baptism. That is why St. Paul writes, “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?” (Romans 6:3). This means that in the simple splash of the water and the attached Word of God, you have received all that Christ won for you on the cross. What the Father then says of Jesus, He therefore says of you in Holy Baptism, “This is my beloved child, with whom I am well pleased.” You are God’s own child and you can gladly say it as this assurance brings great comfort and peace to you.

The Baptism of our Lord is not a Sunday to skip because Epiphany doesn’t fall on a Sunday. It provides a treasure trove of teaching opportunities about what it means to be the baptized children of God. From remembering one’s own baptism to putting others in mind of their baptisms, Scripture, hymnody and liturgy provide tools for rooting our identity into being baptized into Christ. For the

*continued next page*

*Joyful exchange, continued*

Christian, it is not speaking about a past event, “I was baptized.” Rather, it is all about one’s identity as a child of God, “I am baptized.”

*Now rise, faint hearts, be resolute;  
This man is Christ, our substitute!  
He was baptized in Jordan’s stream,  
Proclaimed Redeemer, Lord supreme.*

LSB 405

**PRAYER** - Father in heaven, at the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River You proclaimed Him Your

beloved Son and anointed Him with the Holy Spirit. Make all who are baptized in His name faithful in their calling as Your children and inheritors with Him of everlasting life; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

*Fraternally in Christ, President Lee Hagan  
Blog published by: Missouri District The Lutheran Church-  
Missouri Synod, 660 Mason Ridge Center Drive, Suite 100, St.  
Louis, MO 63141 Phone: (314) 590-6200, Fax: (314) 590-6202  
mo.lcms.org/the-joyous-exchange*

## EVANGELISM and PUBLIC RELATIONS

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### CLOTHED AND PROTECTED

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During our Saskatchewan winters, there is no doubt that we need to put on extra layers of clothing to protect us from frigid temperatures and harsh winds. Our Heavenly Father has provided us with special “clothing” to protect us from forces of evil here on earth.

In Galatians 3:24-27 (ESV) Paul writes, “*So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith*

*has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ”* and in Romans 13:12 (ESV) he writes, “*The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.*” It is these words that inspired the following poem.

#### PUT ON CHRIST

Through baptism we put on Christ, as the Armour of Light  
By Whom we can forsake the dark and all the sins of night  
He is the Truth and it is His righteousness that we bear  
As we share His Gospel of Peace with people everywhere  
It is by faith in Christ alone that our souls are set free  
For His death and resurrection has won our victory  
The Holy Spirit sent from God through Christ comes down to fill  
Believers with all that we need to carry out His will  
Christ is the Word Made Flesh who brings the devil to his knees  
And when we pray in Jesus’ Name our Father hears our pleas  
Dear Father God, I look to Christ to fully cover me  
For His Perfection is what fits me for eternity!

*Verla Schmirler – May/June 2021\**

*continued next page*

*Clothed and protected, continued*

Then in Ephesians 6:10-20 ESV, Paul refers to the

whole armor of God that we are given to put on, and it is those words that inspired the following poem.

*THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD*

Dear LORD, Your Word given through Paul, directs Your saints to don  
 The Whole Armour that You provide your Army to put on  
     You say our battle is not fought against mere flesh and blood  
     But against all the forces that spread evil as a flood  
 We fasten first the Belt of Truth – the truth that You declare  
 Throughout Your Word that anchors all those pieces yet to bear  
     Next, the Breastplate of Righteousness allows our hearts to rest  
     That Christ’s own merit makes us “right” with You and ever blest  
 As shoes for our feet, we put on readiness given by  
 The Gospel of Peace Christ presents for us to multiply  
     Then we take up the Shield of Faith that guards us head to toe  
     Against the many flaming darts the evil one will throw  
 The Helmet of Salvation keeps our thoughts and minds secure  
 In knowing Christ’s redemptive work has saved our souls for sure  
     Our only weapon is the Sword of the Spirit – Your Word  
     And freedom to Pray Constantly, knowing that You have heard  
 Having put on the Whole Armour, You bid us firmly stand  
 Strong in Your strength, against the schemes the evil one has planned!

*Verla Schmirler - May/June 2021\**

*Verla Schmirler, Board of Evangelism and Public Relations*

**NEW COMMUNIONWARE BLESSED AND IN USE**

Following a breakin earlier in 2024 during which the congregation’s set of communionware was stolen, we were thankful to be able to borrow a set from our sister congregation, Faith.

Insurance covered a replacement set which arrived just before Christmas. It was blessed during a worship service and is now being used.

## STEWARDSHIP

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### REPENTING OF “FEASTS THAT KNOW NO FAST”

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Fresh off the Christmas season and the retail frenzy that accompanies it, January brings a shot of frigid air into the lives of the people we know and love. This is not a meteorological statement either. While it is true that January is one of the colder months for those in North America, the cold front blast that hits us is the full force of credit card spending that fueled the retail frenzy. The bills for the gifts, the parties, the food and the travel have now come due. The credit card makes things convenient, but it also requires more discipline than many can muster. When the bills come in January for December’s celebration, it really puts a damper on things.

Congregations often make the same mistake in stewardship. We often charge forward in doing what we always do or starting new endeavors without counting the cost. But at the end of the month, or the end of year, when the bill comes due, the red ink on the congregational balance sheet smacks the people in the face like a stiff north wind in January. We hunkered down. We circle the wagons. We start to panic. The work of the Gospel suffers.

The fifth verse of “Forgive Us, Lord, for Shallow Thankfulness” (LSB 788) addresses this January situation. The words penned by William Watkins Reid are very needful for us to hear as we start a new year, while dealing with the bills of past efforts and expense.

*“Forgive us, Lord for feast that knows not fast ...”* This hits us hard, doesn’t it? We love when the money is flowing, the parties are going, and things are getting bigger and better. But there is a time in life, and most especially in our spiritual disciplines, that we need to fast. The purpose of a fast is to step back, lay something aside for a time, and replace it with meditation on Scripture and prayer. This is designed to keep us from turning something that may well be good into an idol that separates us from the God who loves us in Christ.

*“For joy in things that meanwhile starve the soul ...”* In “The Parable of the Sower,” we hear Jesus talk about how the worries and cares of life choke out the growth of the seed of the Word that was planted. We know how this happens in our lives. Professional and youth sports do this. Materialism does this. Travel and leisure do this. There is a list of things that we enjoy that starve the soul.

But it also happens in our congregations. When corporate stewardship is not managed in a responsible way, it can and does destroy individual stewardship. Is it good individual stewardship to support a ministry that doesn’t take its corporate responsibility seriously?

*“For walls and wars that hide your mercies vast and blur our vision of the Kingdom goal.”* This is the ultimate end of the idolatry

of failed stewardship. We build walls between believers within the church and hamper those who are outside from coming to the Light of Life that is Jesus. The wars we fight over money and its impact on ministry do the same. It eventually blurs our vision of what we are here to do: share the Good News of Jesus. When the wintry blast of January hits us in this fashion, we are called to repent.

When the Holy Spirit uses the cold front of the call to repentance, we meet the God who forgives and restores. That is what He does for individual and corporate stewards. When the bills hit, they call us back to Jesus. He is the One who indeed forgives us our shallow thankfulness and leads us into the bounty of His mercy yet again.

While it is too soon to know how St. Paul’s congregation ended the 2024 fiscal year, we can report that our offerings in November and December were very generous and we expect we will end the year with a small surplus. Going into October, November and December, we were looking at a significant year-to-date deficit and the possibility of a cash shortfall for the year. God continues to answer our prayers and bless us as we support our mission and ministry. Thanks be to God!

*Blessings and Peace  
in this new year.  
Board of Stewardship*

# St. Paul's FAMILY gathered for annual Christmas social



## O LOVE THAT WILL NOT LET ME GO

*“How priceless is your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light” (Psalm 36:7-9).*

We are children of the heavenly Father, who out of His love for us, has guided us safely through this day. He has provided for all of our needs and even more than we could have imagined. The very air we breathe is a gift from Him. How much we take for granted!

He who watches over the sparrow, and provides for it 'til its flight is over, has promised to sustain us, His children, whom He redeemed through Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

*“Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them falls to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows” (Matt. 10:29-31).*

We can rest in His unfailing love! Just as the sparrow, we, too, can dwell in God's haven of rest.

*“For even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young – a place near your altar, O Lord Almighty, my King and my God” (Psalm 84:3).*

Prayer:

Now the day is over, night is upon us. We thank you, God our Father, for the many blessings You have given us this day. Forgive us for our sins as we forgive those who have sinned against us. In Your mercy, gather Your children safely under Your wing, and calm each one with Your blessed assurance of everlasting life through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Saviour. Holy Spirit, comfort those who are saddened by some loss in their life. Dearest Jesus, give rest to our weary being till morning awakens us to a new day. In Your name Jesus Christ, we pray, Amen.

Sing: I Am Jesus' Little Lamb  
 I am Jesus' little Lamb,  
 Ever glad at heart I am  
 For my Shepherd gently guides me,  
 Knows my need, and well provides me,  
 Loves me every day the same,  
 Even calls me by my name.

Day by day, at home, away,  
 Jesus is my Staff and Stay  
 When I hunger, Jesus feeds me,  
 Into pleasant pastures leads me;  
 When I thirst He bids me go  
 Where the quiet waters flow.

Written by Irene Warpula, Christian Growth and Program Resource Committee  
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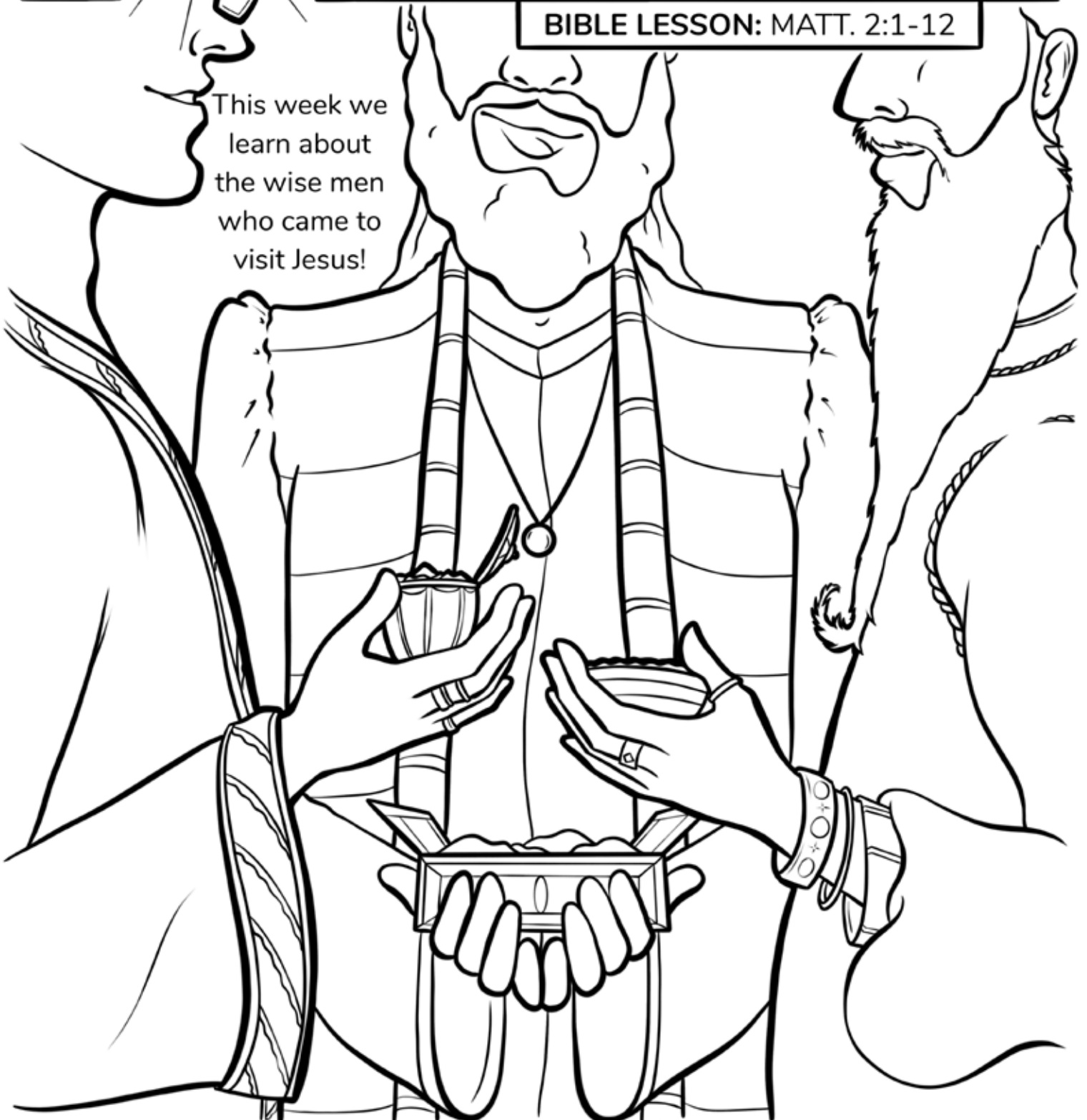


# KIDS' LECTIONARY LEARNING

## EPIPHANY

BIBLE LESSON: MATT. 2:1-12

This week we  
learn about  
the wise men  
who came to  
visit Jesus!



To access the Teaching Supplement that guides you through the lessons, go to [www.ill.ca/lectionary-learning-pages](http://www.ill.ca/lectionary-learning-pages) to get your copy.



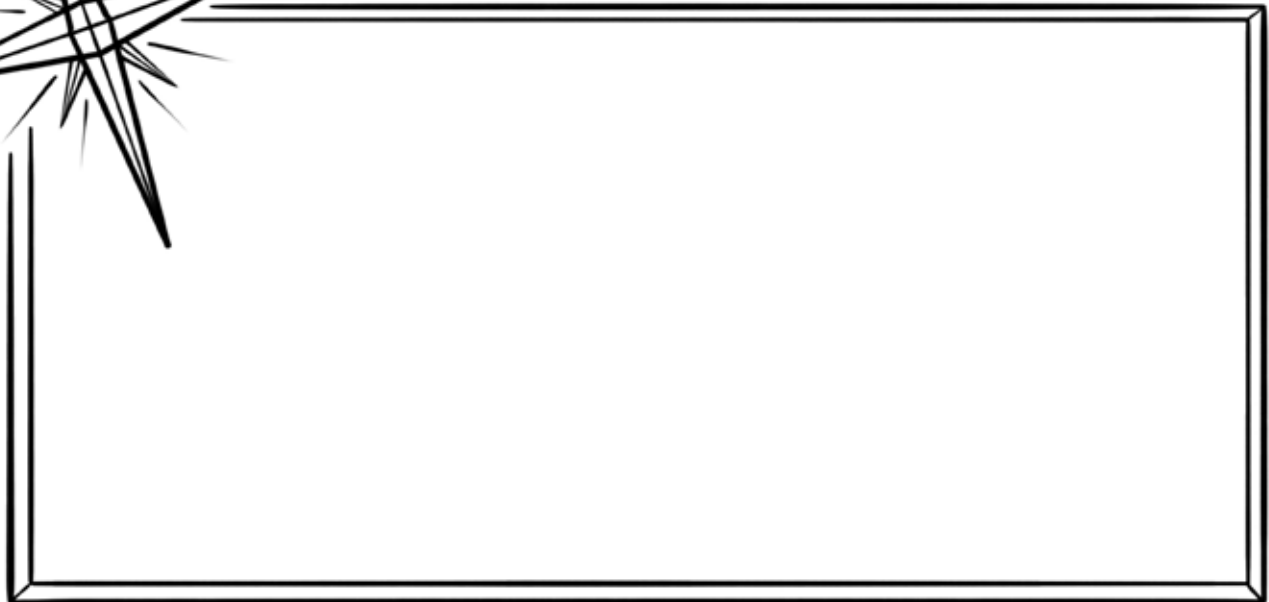
**Did You Know . . .**

The wise men didn't meet Jesus until He was about 2 years old! Jesus was living in His home with Mary and Joseph when the wise men came to visit Him!



**THE BIBLE IN REAL LIFE**

God put the star in the sky to lead the wise men to Jesus!  
God still leads us today with the Bible and the teachers around us!  
Draw a way God leads you in your life!



**Prayer**

O Holy Spirit, strengthen my faith, and fill me with joy as I reflect on the miracle of Christ's birth. Amen.

(Concordia Study Bible, 2009)

To access the Teaching Supplement that guides you through the lessons, go to [www.lll.ca/lectionary-learning-pages](http://www.lll.ca/lectionary-learning-pages) to get your copy.



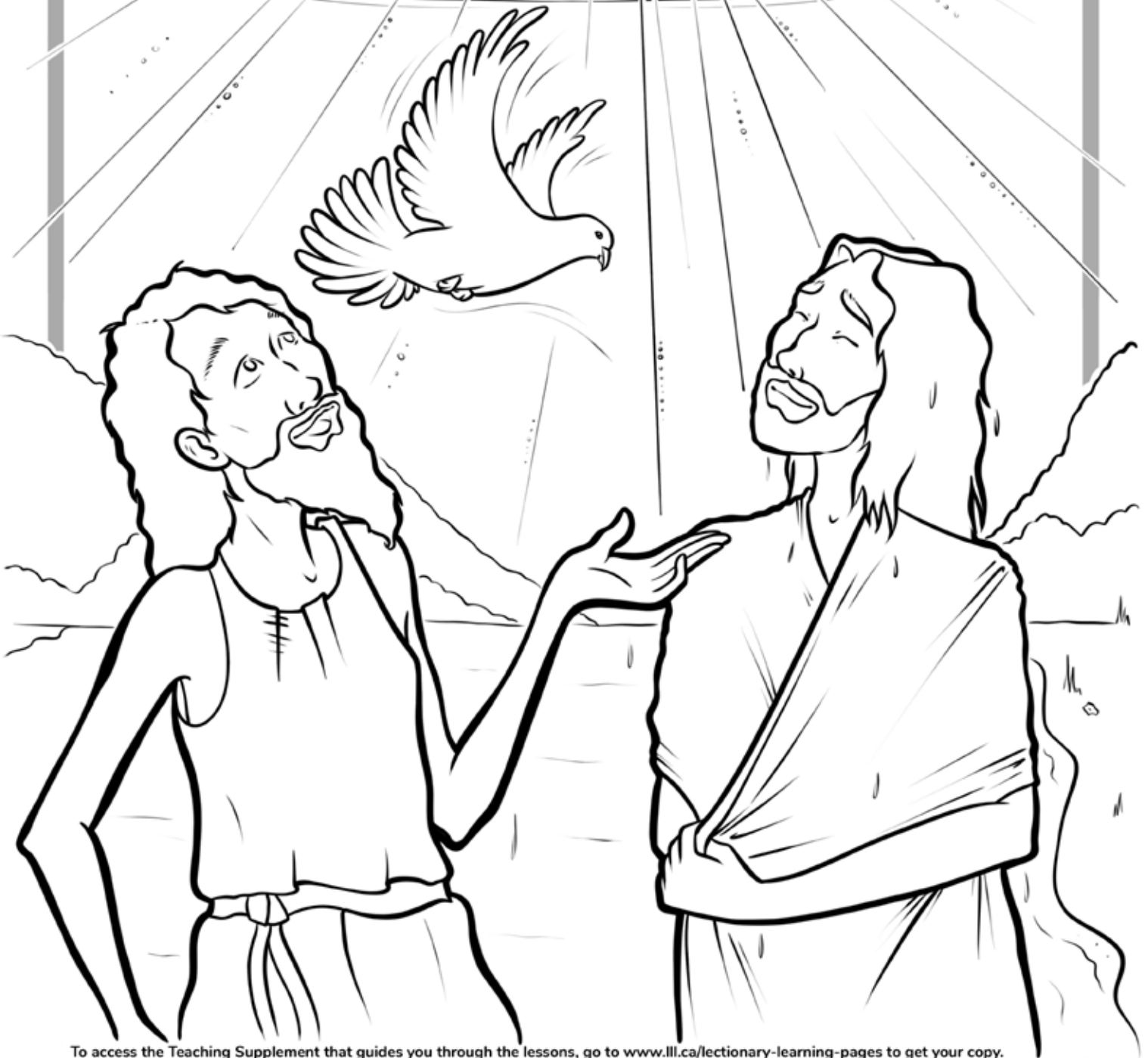
# KIDS' LECTIONARY LEARNING

## THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

BIBLE LESSON: MARK 1:4-11

*"You are my beloved Son; with You I am well pleased."*

- Mark 11b



To access the Teaching Supplement that guides you through the lessons, go to [www.ill.ca/lectionary-learning-pages](http://www.ill.ca/lectionary-learning-pages) to get your copy.



**WORD SEARCH**

Find these words from our Bible lesson in this Word Search!  
There are a few incomplete words in the list, see if you can  
find and finish them!

- BAPTISM
- BELOVED
- D \_ \_ \_ \_
- FORGIVENESS
- GALILEE
- HEAVENS
- J \_ \_ \_ \_
- JOHN
- JORDAN
- JUDEA
- LOCUSTS
- NAZARETH
- PLEASED
- R \_ \_ \_ \_
- SINS
- S \_ \_ \_
- SPIRIT
- TORN
- VOICE
- WATER

T B A P T I S M S V X J C W N C W Z A G  
 S V F K L S K S O I S H U C A T H J O E  
 A I Z B N K L U N C D X E C I O V C E X  
 P A N V F H J S W K H D J R Z U M L R H  
 O Y M S A U O P I H N C I E M H I I J Q  
 Q S O Q T C H J N L T P L J U L V X V Z  
 O Q G E N R O T O T S E L R A E U E G F  
 T L Z L B U N L M I R V R G R T D R T W  
 D M M L I A A P K S G E A T W O W L X  
 T A I K F B E L O V E D J J Z C J H X S  
 S T S U C O L K W A X E X L F A O P A N  
 C S B D E S A E L P N R E T A W N I T E  
 S E W A E D U J T E O Q E Y D J E Q B G  
 F P D O P L R N V F V W S J K F L V T J  
 S A W Q E F K O U C G C Y C O K S V H R  
 B I F D Z Z D O H E A V E N S R Z Y Y D  
 K S K D I J T I D P T R E V Y Z D M G W  
 B Y E P Y Q K H M M P H T F C O L A R U  
 G T R V G P S U S E J G E E L O X Y N O  
 O C R F Z L J F O R G I V E N E S S B E



**Prayer**

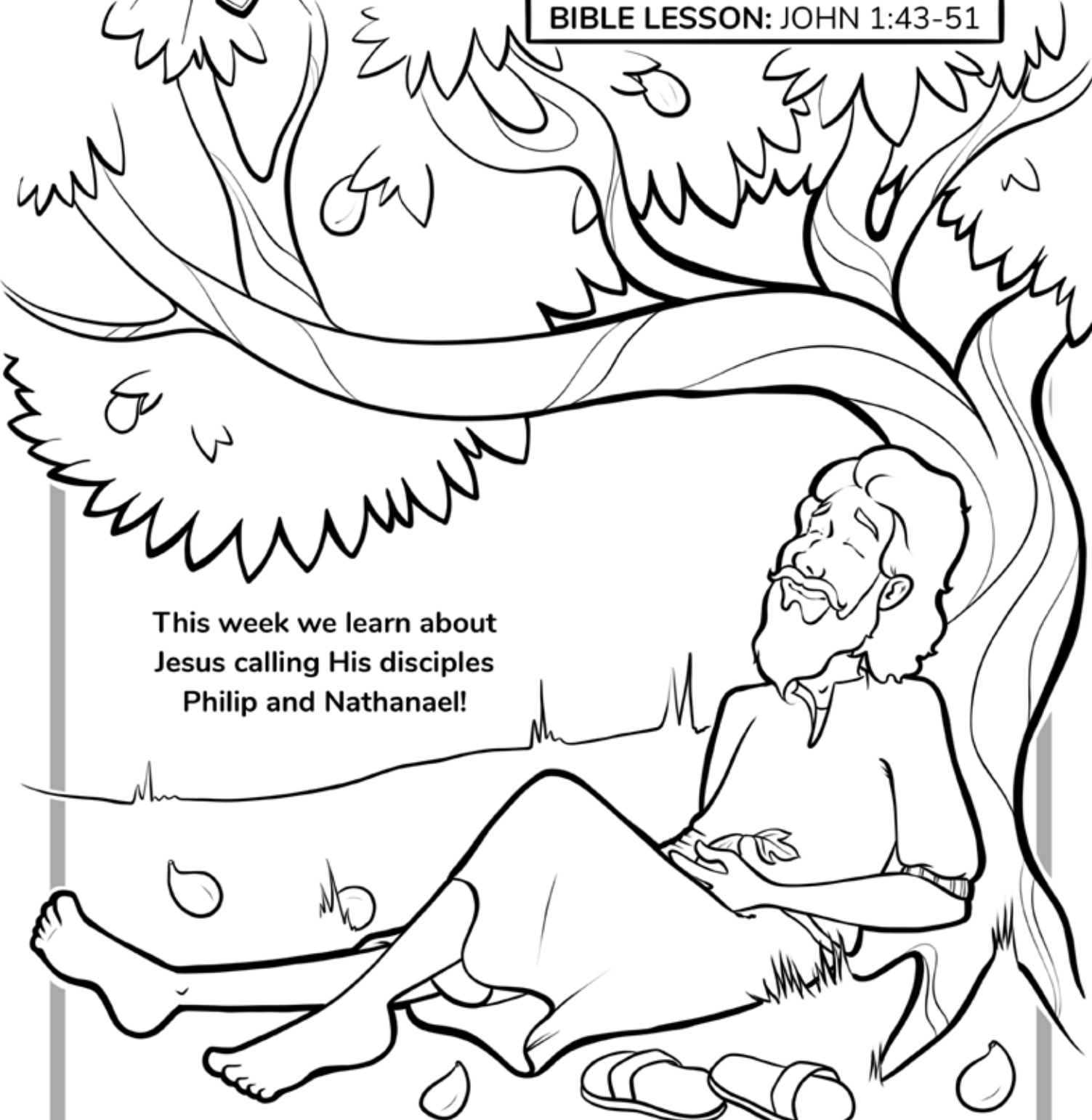
Let us pray together: Dear Father in Heaven, thank you for sending your humble servant John and your own Son Jesus to be baptized so that we could share in that Baptism, and then be saved through Jesus' death and resurrection. In Jesus' name we thank and praise you. Amen.



# KIDS' LECTIONARY LEARNING

2ND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

BIBLE LESSON: JOHN 1:43-51



This week we learn about  
Jesus calling His disciples  
Philip and Nathanael!

To access the Teaching Supplement that guides you through the lessons, go to [www.ill.ca/lectionary-learning-pages](http://www.ill.ca/lectionary-learning-pages) to get your copy.





# KIDS' LECTIONARY LEARNING

3RD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

BIBLE LESSON: MARK 1:14-20



**"Follow me, and I will make you  
become fishers of men."**  
(Mark 1:17b)



This week we learn about Jesus  
calling His disciples Simon,  
Andrew, James, and John!

To access the Teaching Supplement that guides you through the lessons, go to [www.ill.ca/lectionary-learning-pages](http://www.ill.ca/lectionary-learning-pages) to get your copy.



**BIBLE TRIVIA**

Follow along in Mark 1:14-20 and answer these trivia questions!

**1) What was Jesus telling the people in Galilee to do?**

- a. Repent and believe
- b. Drink more water
- c. Build bigger houses

**2) Where did Jesus find Simon and Andrew?**

- a. In their home
- b. On the Sea of Galilee
- c. In a store

**3) What jobs did Simon and Andrew have?**

- a. Fishermen
- b. Cooks
- c. Salesmen

**4) What did Simon and Andrew do when they heard Jesus call them?**

- a. Ignored Jesus
- b. Told Jesus to come onto their boat
- c. Followed Jesus

**5) What were James and John doing when Jesus called them?**

- a. Making a boat
- b. Feeding people
- c. Fixing their fishing nets

**WORD SCRAMBLE**

Unscramble these words from our Bible lesson!

1. MISON \_\_\_\_\_

2. NEWARD \_\_\_\_\_

3. TEEPRN \_\_\_\_\_

4. RISFHENEM \_\_\_\_\_



**Prayer**

Lord, thank You for calling us into Your kingdom, for which You declare us fit by Your grace. Keep us faithful in our calling, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

(Concordia Study Bible, 2009)