

Week 2 | Washed Clean



Full Readings: 1 Peter 3:18-22, Matthew 3:13-17

Shorter Readings: ! Peter 3:21, Matthew 3: 16, 17

Reflection: In our readings this week we are reminded of the power of baptism. Peter talks of the power of baptism, not to cleanse our bodies, but to cleanse our souls. He reminds us that it is through Jesus' death and resurrection we are saved and made clean. Jesus didn't need to be cleansed, there were no sins to be washed away. Yet He is baptized still, joining us in our sin and death, and we are joined with Him in our baptism, in his life and resurrection. Just as Jesus is claimed by God the Father as His child, so are we through the baptism we receive. The activities this week center around water, baptism and the redemptive work of God through it in you as His beloved child. Choose which one(s) you and your family want to do during week one of of your Choose Your Own Lent-venture.

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Prayer // Water & Remembrance

As mentioned above this week's activity is all about baptism.

Adults/Teens

- **Journal prompt:** Reflect on what it means for you to be called a child of God. How does that impact your identity and faith?
- **Prayer:** Lord, you have called me by name - I am yours. Forgive me for the times when I turn away from you. Help me to remember each day the gift of baptism - that I am made clean by you, daily, over and over again. Help me to listen to the Spirit so that I might live faithfully as a forgiven child of God. Amen.

Older & Younger Kids

Find a time this week to show older and younger kids (teens too), photos from their baptism. Share with them the stories from that day - who was there (how have those people supported their faith lives since), what were you feeling as parents? What sort of things did you pray for them about on that day? Ask them if they have any questions about their baptism.

Talk with kids about choosing a time when they can remember their baptism, and their identity as a child of God through-out the day. (Great options for this are when they're using water already - like brushing their teeth in the morning, or washing their hands).

Take turns **saying this blessing over each other** when you're done. Gather a cup of water, and dip your finger in the water, make the sign of the cross on each others foreheads, and say "Today we remember your baptism. You _____ (name) are a forgiven, and loved child of God."

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Fasting Week 1 // Water

For many people baptism is not something they spend a great deal of time thinking about. We might think about it when we're in church for a baptism, or we hear the story of Jesus' baptism read each year, maybe on our baptism birthday. But for most people, it's not something that enters into their daily thoughts. The fasting activities this week connect with being intentional about our care for the water we are given - and using this intentionality to prompt a daily remembrance of your baptism.

Adults, teens

Do a water conservation audit of your daily/weekly habits. Are there spaces that you could be fasting from abundant water usage? Some examples might be: reducing the amount of laundry you do by wearing things more than once before washing, taking shorter showers (a typical shower uses 5-10 gallons of water/minute), compost instead of running the garbage disposal, and research water-intensive foods (like beef) and substitute with something with a lower water usage (like a plant-based protein).

Young kids // Toddler - 1st grade

This age is great for learning habits and routines. With this week's focus on water, help younger kids abstain from water waste by building in some routines and habits that support water conservation. While doing these activities talk about how water is connected to our baptism.

- Turning the faucet off while brushing teeth
- Turning the faucet off while you later up your hands when washing your hands
- Keep a pitcher of drinking water in the fridge - help kids fill the pitcher and place it in the fridge, talk about how it helps the earth because you don't have to waste water waiting for it to get cold.
- Have kids help you wash fruits and vegetables. But do it in a pan of water, instead of running the faucet. Then use the water from the pan to water houseplants.

Older kids // 2nd - 6th grade

Older kids are in a space where they can really start to grasp some of the abstractness that is water waste, and global impact. This is a great time to talk about personal impact. Here are a few ways our upper elementary students can participate:

- Abstain this week from purchasing single use/individual beverages, and instead help kids use a personal water bottle to use that week.
- Find a song that is under 5 minutes for kids to listen to during shower time. Encourage them to keep their showers under that time (while still getting clean). Doing this over the course of year can reduce personal usage by 1000 gallons!
- Reuse towels by making sure they hang dry after each shower, instead of needing to be washed after laying wet on the floor.

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Service (Almsgiving) Week 2 // Water

The readings this week both contain references to water. In one we are reminded both of the terrible power of water (the Flood), and the use of it to represent God's promise to us to make us new again. In the second reading we read of Jesus' baptism. In baptism we are washed clean of our sins, claimed by God as His child, and given the Spirit of God, enabling us to live a faithful life as children of God. This week's activities are designed to provide care for God's creation through care of water sources. As you serve, reflect on the readings, talk/think about how God uses water in each reading, and what it means for us to be washed clean.

This week's activities can be done by all ages.

Stream/River/Lake-side clean-up: Spring is a great time to show care for our natural spaces, and the Spring thaw always leaves ample amounts of garbage behind. As a family choose a water source in your neighborhood to clean-up. Suggested materials: bags for garbage, and for recycling, closed plastic jar for any sharps you may find, gloves, and garbage pickers. As you clean up the garbage talk about how baptism makes us clean. ** If doing this with young kids keep a watchful eye for any sharps they may encounter. You can also use this for a teaching time to talk about recycling, pollution, and care of God's creation through proper waste disposal.

Adopt a Storm Drain (on-going commitment): Storm drains in the metro drain rain to local lakes and the Mississippi River. Many cities have an adopt-a-storm drain program that recruits residents to be part of keeping trash out of our rivers and lakes by keeping storm drains clear of garbage, leaves and other debris. Look into your city's program to see if there's an available storm drain in your neighborhood that you can adopt. St. Paul residents can find more information here:

<https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/public-works/sewer-utility-division/stormwater/adopt-drain>

Global clean-water efforts: As of 2019, 884 million people worldwide did not have clean drinking water. Take time as a family to learn about the issue, and if able, choose a water-related organization/project to support.

Here are a few organizations that we recommend:

- The Water Project (sub-Saharan Africa): <https://thewaterproject.org/>
- Charity Water (projects in 29 different countries): <https://www.charitywater.org/>
- Lifewater (Christian based organization): <https://lifewater.org/>

Learn more about the issue:

- WHO: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/drinking-water>
- CDC: <https://tinyurl.com/5n7aeh3u>