



MODULE 1: WATER STORIES





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Illustrator & Editor: Adam Walker Cleaveland

Writing Team: Alissa Ellett, Arianne Braithwaite Lehn, Erika Marksbury

Design & Layout: Anne Reinisch

illustratedchildrensministry.com

Email: hello@illustratedchildrensministry.com

Born in Evanston, Illinois.

Powered by Starbucks and San Pellegrino Limonata Sparkling Lemon Beverages.



WELCOME TO AN ILLUSTRATED EARTH: CELEBRATING GOD'S CREATION

Thank you for your purchase of *An Illustrated Earth: Celebrating God's Creation*. We are excited about this new curriculum, and the opportunities it will provide for churches to spend time reflecting on Bible stories that celebrate various aspects of God's creation.

This curriculum is incredibly flexible and has the capacity to be able to be used in a variety of different ways. Here at Illustrated Children's Ministry, we imagine the lessons and coloring pages could be used as a Sunday School curriculum, as a component in your summer Vacation Bible School program, as a mid-week intergenerational program or as a curriculum for a family ministry gathering at your church. In whatever way *An Illustrated Earth: Celebrating God's Creation* meets your ministry needs, we hope it's a blessing to all who encounter it, offering you and those you serve opportunities to connect with each other and with God and reflect on the wonderful diversity and beauty of God's creation.

STRUCTURE OF LESSONS

This is a curriculum that focuses primarily around a particular biblical story for the week, and all of the components of the lessons point back to that biblical story. Our goal is to offer you a low-prep to no-prep curriculum that can easily be led by anyone in your congregation. We don't have a supplies list (other than photocopies if you need to make them and crayons/markers/colored pencils for coloring). In hopes of minimizing your work load, we have intentionally designed *An Illustrated Earth* in such a way that it requires little background material and reading prior to presenting the lesson.

What emerges is a simple but meaningful lesson focused around hearing a biblical story, reflecting on it with open questions and discussion and a chance to create a piece of art based on the story.

Gathering: Since much of the lesson is focused on listening, discussing and coloring, this gathering time gives you a chance to lead an activity that might be more active. We provide you with a sample gathering activity, but you are welcome to come up with your own that suits the children's needs and temperaments in your ministry. Though this doesn't need to be overly involved, it's a good opportunity for movement and for the children to introduce themselves if that is necessary in your context.

Story Time: This is the time set aside for becoming familiar with the biblical story for that week. There are a variety of ways you can introduce the kids to the story. First, we have provided you with a paraphrase of the passage that has been written specifically for children. Second, we provide you with that same paraphrase broken up into a script. If you have some older children in your group, this would be a great opportunity to allow them to stand up and act out the story. Depending on the story, you may choose to have some of the younger children act out the story while it's narrated and directed by the older children or teachers. Finally, we have created Illustrated Story Cards for each lesson. These story cards each have a very simple line drawing that depicts one part of the story. The goal is to offer children the opportunity to put their cards in the proper sequence, matching the illustrations with the story in scripture they've just heard.

Imagining Together: This is not so much a time to make sure they got the information or facts of the story, but rather, an opportunity for the children to share what stood out to them and what they imagined when they listened to the story. Depending on the time you have set aside for this lesson time, you may choose to do this portion while coloring the poster or sheets, or you may want to spend a little time imagining with the children first, and then move over to the poster.

Coloring: If you purchased our Illustrated Earth Coloring Posters, you will have a poster that corresponds with each lesson. Each poster has a word, phrase or portion of the biblical passage incorporated into the design.

Coloring is an opportunity to continue talking about the story, while asking questions and seeing where the conversation takes you. Because many of the story's elements are integrated into the coloring design, it may be fun to encourage the children to search out as many symbols as they can that communicate an aspect of the story.

If you didn't purchase the large coloring posters, you can use this as time for individual coloring with the included coloring sheets. We have provided you with both the design of the poster, and a simplified coloring sheet for your younger children.

Closing Prayer: Whether you simply read the prayer, or have the children repeat after you - use this as a chance to "close" your time together as you wait for parents to come pick up their children. As you approach the end of your time together, this is a great short ritual to do with the children; it creates a sense of community and preparation as they enter back into the world.

Illustrated Earth Sign: Finally, we have included an Illustrated Earth Sign that you can print out (preferably on card stock or a thicker paper) and give to the children in your class on the first Sunday that you teach *An Illustrated Earth*. These signs are for the children and their families to take with them wherever they will be celebrating God's creation. The sign can be personalized, and we encourage children and their families to have fun with this. They can write their own names on the sign, or your church's name (if you want to begin a church-wide campaign). Your church and children will be joining a large online community of folks who have used our *An Illustrated Earth* curriculum: hundreds of families and churches across the world have used this curriculum. We encourage everyone to share their photos on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and be sure to use the hashtag #anillustratedearth. You can check the hashtag online, and see where the global body of Christ is celebrating God's beautiful creation.

An Illustrated Earth: Celebrating God's Creation is a new resource, and the first curriculum that Illustrated Children's Ministry has published. As is the case with all of our products and resources, we would love to hear from you about what was helpful and meaningful and what suggestions or comments you have for us about the materials. We want to create quality resources for children in the church, so we appreciate your comments and feedback.

You can reach us at hello@illustratedchildrensministry.com or find us on the following social networks:

Facebook: facebook.com/IllustratedCM

Pinterest: pinterest.com/IllustratedCM

Twitter: twitter.com/IllustratedCM

Instagram: instagram.com/IllustratedCM

We also love to see photos and hear stories about how you are using our materials. When you are posting photos or comments online about *An Illustrated Earth: Celebrating God's Creation*, please be sure to use the hashtag #anillustratedearth, so we can be part of the conversation and you can be part of our online community.

Blessings,

Illustrated Children's Ministry



BAPTISM OF JESUS

Week 3: Matthew 3:13-17



GATHERING

Since much of the lesson is focused on listening, discussing and coloring, this gathering time gives you a chance to lead an activity that might be more active. We provide you with a sample gathering activity, but you are welcome to come up with your own that suits the children's needs and temperaments in your ministry.

Blessing at the Font

Go to the sanctuary and allow the children to see the baptismal font. Wonder with the children about why it's sacred water. If you'd like, you may offer a blessing to the children by dipping your finger into the water and drawing a cross on each child's forehead saying, "God delights in calling you daughter/son."

Discussing Symbols

If your church's baptismal font isn't convenient to use, an alternative activity may be to discuss various symbols as a way of describing the way in which baptism is a symbol of our commitment to the ways of Christ. First, ask the children to think of symbols that they know of, e.g.: \$, @, wedding ring, hand telling one to wait at a crosswalk, American flag, etc. If it doesn't come up in conversation, you can mention a team jersey as a symbol of an inward commitment to a particular team. This is similar to the symbol of baptism, an acknowledgment of one's commitment, or parents' commitment on the behalf of a child, to living in the ways of God and being a part of the Church. Tell the children that even Jesus was baptized as a commitment to what God wanted him to do with his life and that we can find this story in the Bible.

INTRODUCTION

Water is absolutely necessary for life to exist on Earth, a fundamental component of our very bodies. For this reason, water is all around us and can seem utterly ordinary. But in baptism water takes on a sacred quality; we see this in reading the story of Jesus' baptism. You'll wonder together in this lesson about baptism and also about what other things in our lives may appear ordinary but may also be sacred and used by God for a special purpose in the world.



STORY TIME

One of the goals of An Illustrated Earth is to help children become more familiar with some of these stories and to help increase biblical literacy. There are a variety of ways you can introduce the kids to the story. First, we have provided you with a paraphrase of the passage that has been written specifically for children.

Second, we provide you with that same paraphrase broken up into a script. If you have some older children in your group, this would be a great opportunity to allow them to stand up and narrate the story. Depending on the story, you may choose to have some of the younger children act out the story while it's narrated and directed by the older children or teachers.

Finally, we have created Illustrated Story Cards for each lesson. These story cards each have very simple line drawings that depict one part of the story. The goal is to offer children the opportunity to put the cards in the proper sequence, matching the illustrations with the story in scripture they've just heard.

MATTHEW 3:13-17

Jesus left Galilee and went to the Jordan River so John would baptize him. John didn't understand, saying, "Why do you want me to baptize you, Jesus? You should be baptizing me!"

But Jesus said, "Allow this to happen. This is right and needed."

When John baptized Jesus, the sky opened. Jesus saw God's Spirit come down like a dove that rested on him. Then a voice from the sky said, "This is my Son whom I love so much. He makes me so happy."



IMAGINING TOGETHER

After you've spent some time with the story, we encourage you to reflect with the children about the story and see what stood out to them. This is not so much a time to make sure they received the information or facts of the story, but rather, an opportunity for the children to share what stood out to them and what they imagined when they listened to the story. Depending on the time you have set aside for this lesson, you may choose to do this portion while coloring the poster or sheets, or you may want to spend a little time imagining with the children first, and then move on to the coloring.

We would encourage you to think about what questions make the most sense for your context, and certainly you can add to the list below—but here are a few questions that you could reflect on with the children:

- What are some things that seem ordinary but are actually really special?
- Are there things we think are ordinary that God uses in the world to do amazing things?
- What is it like to go under water? Maybe at the swimming pool? Or under the waves at the beach? What does it feel like to be under water and to come up for air?
- Talk about how scripture describes the scene. What would it have been like to be there?
- Why might John the Baptist have hesitated to baptize Jesus?
- How many of us have been baptized? What was it like?



COLORING

If you purchased our Illustrated Earth Coloring Posters, you will have a poster that corresponds with each lesson. Each poster has a word, phrase or portion of the biblical passage incorporated into the design. Coloring is an opportunity to continue talking about the story, while asking questions and seeing where the conversation takes you. Because many of the story's elements are integrated into the coloring design, it may be fun to encourage the children to search out as many symbols as they can that communicate an aspect of the story. If you didn't purchase the posters, we have included 8.5x11 versions of those designs so each child can color their own individual coloring sheet.



CLOSING PRAYER

Whether you simply read the prayer, or have the children repeat after you - use this as a chance to “close” your time together as you wait for parents to come pick up their children. As you approach the end of your time together, this is a great short ritual to do with the children; it creates a sense of community and preparation as they enter back into the world.

Loving God,
Thank you for baptism water
and how it frees us to live
with joy and hope as your children.
Help us remember we
are enough in your eyes.
Amen.

SCRIPT: MATTHEW 3:13-17

Reader 1: Jesus left Galilee and went to the Jordan River so John would baptize him.

Reader 2: John didn't understand, saying, "Why do you want me to baptize you, Jesus? You should be baptizing me!"

Reader 1: But Jesus said, "Allow this to happen. This is right and needed."

Reader 2: When John baptized Jesus, the sky opened. Jesus saw God's Spirit come down like a dove that rested on him. Then a voice from the sky said,

Reader 1: "This is my Son whom I love so much. He makes me so happy."

ILLUSTRATED STORY CARDS

On the following pages you will find the Illustrated Story Cards for Matthew 3:13-17.

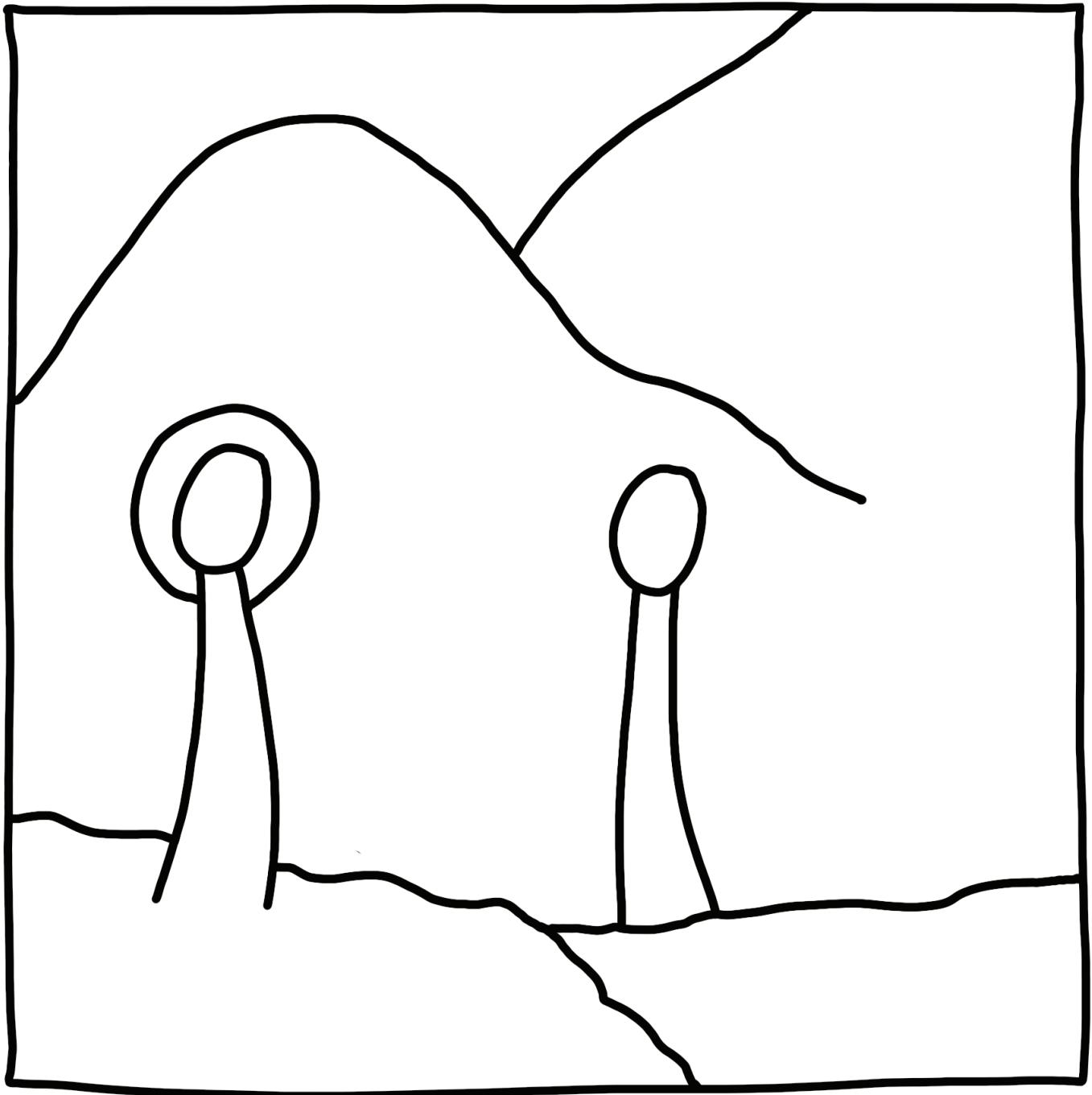
Print out the Illustrated Story Cards and have them ready for children to go through after you've read them the Bible story. You could print out a set for each child, or you could have the children get together in groups to put the story in the right order.

COLORING SHEETS

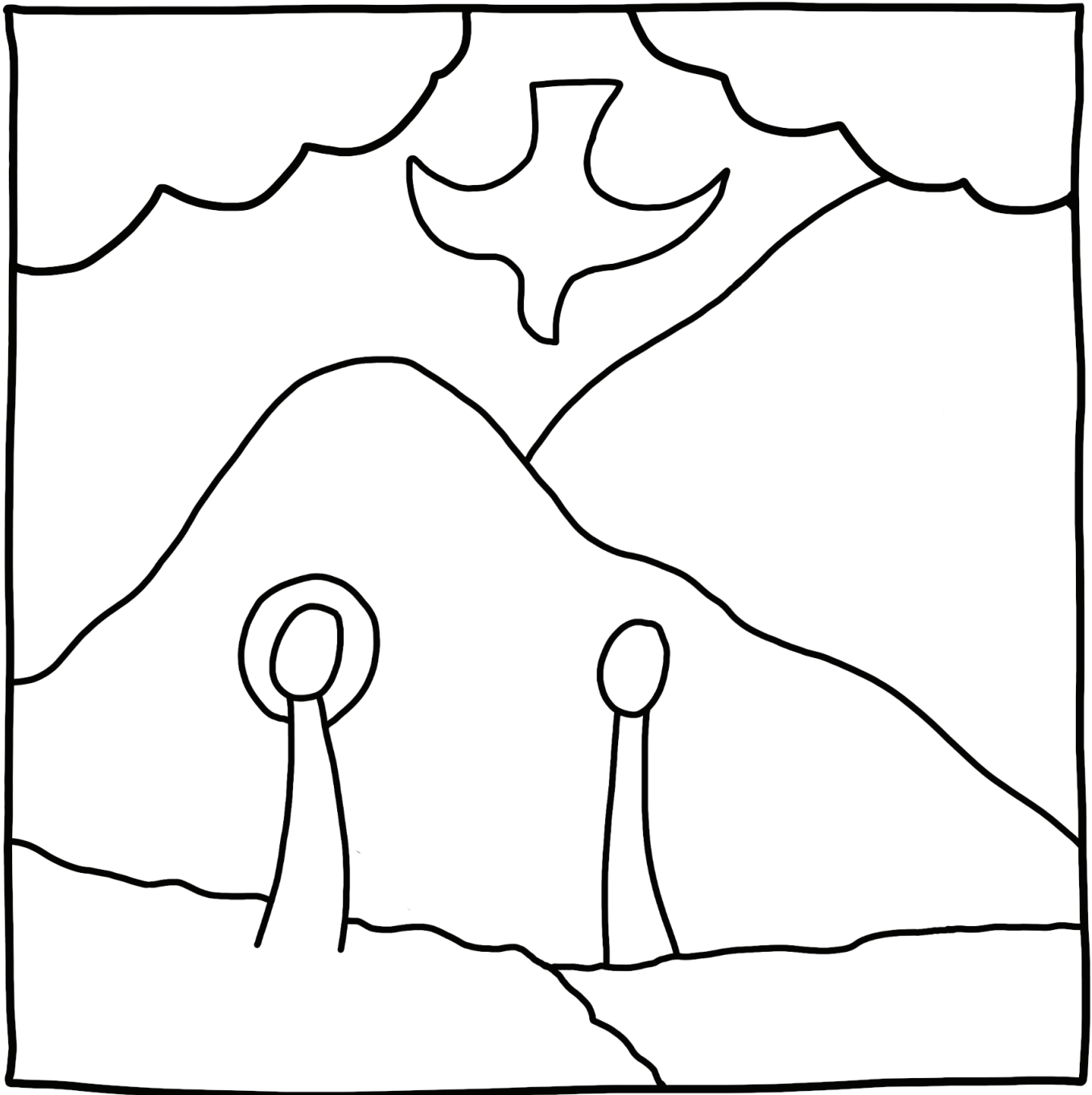
If you didn't purchase our large coloring posters, you can print out these coloring sheets to give to the children in your class. If you did purchase the coloring posters, you could still send kids home with this coloring sheet so they could color one of their own during the week after they've participated in this lesson of An Illustrated Earth. Or you may have parents asking if they could have a copy as well, so it wouldn't hurt to print out a few extras.

You will also notice that there are two versions of the coloring sheet. There is a detailed version which is the exact same design as the coloring posters, and then there is a simplified coloring sheet that includes the same general pieces of the illustration, but with less detail to color in. The simplified version of the coloring sheets would be great for the younger children you may be working with.

Happy coloring!



JESUS WENT TO THE JORDAN RIVER, WHERE JOHN THE
BAPTIST WAS.



WHILE JOHN BAPTIZED JESUS, THE SKY OPENED AND A DOVE
CAME DOWN.

THIS IS MY SON!



A VOICE FROM THE SKY SAID, "THIS IS MY SON WHOM I LOVE SO MUCH AND MAKES ME SO HAPPY."

