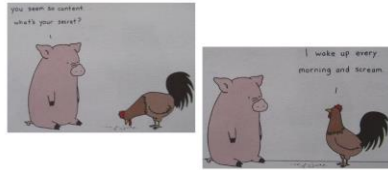


Interactive lesson



pictures from photos taken of January 5 page of [the little world of Liz Climo 2024 Daily Calendar](#)

In this cartoon by Liz Climo, the pig asks the rooster, “You seem so content. What’s your secret?” The rooster replies, “I wake up every morning and scream.”

What’s the first thing you do in the morning, upon waking up? <Let them respond>

Why do you do that? <Let them respond>

Most people generally answer nature’s call first thing upon getting up. Who do you think is really calling you to get up for the day? <Let them respond>

How do you think God wants us to respond?
<Let them respond>

What kinds of feelings might you have after waking up, about the day? Why? <Let them respond>

Have you ever woken up feeling guilty about prior events? If so, what did you do about it? How did it affect your outlook on the day? <Let them respond>

Ever wake up feeling particularly energized for the day? If so, what enabled that? <Let them respond>

So, a new day gives us... what? <Let them respond>

What new opportunities are you facing?
<Let them respond>

Whether you wake up singing, praying, or screaming

(like that rooster), remember to take time to acknowledge God's presence with you for the day. Thinking of our Savior can change your approach to the day vastly for the better.

Gospel lesson

After the Christmas season, we move on today to when Jesus had grown up.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/wdv-john-baptist/>

Mark 1:4-11 (NRSV)

⁴ John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

⁵ And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁶ Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.

⁷ He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals.

⁸ I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

⁹ In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

¹⁰ And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.

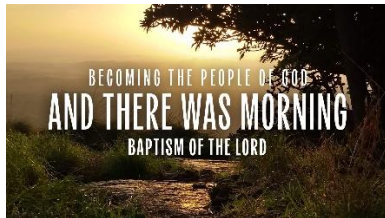
¹¹ And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

The word of God for the people of God

<Hymn "When Jesus Came to Jordan">

UMH #252>

Message: And There Was Morning



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/becoming-the-people-of-god/first-sunday-after-the-epiphany-baptism-of-the-lord-year-b-lectionary-planning-notes/first-sunday-after-the-epiphany-baptism-of-the-lord-year-b-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Renewing Creator,

as we take time now to further consider today's scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we wake up out of our complacent slumber to live fully in this world with Your grace. Amen.

We begin a new series today, “Becoming the People of God,” with “And There Was Morning”:

“Take a deep breath. You made it. We’re officially on the other side of Advent, Christmas, and New Year’s Day. After all the preparation, the complex emotions, and the celebrations in December, the allure of the return of Ordinary Time in January is probably all too real. But [today we celebrate again - the Baptism of Our Lord].”

Every day, there is a new dawn. My day typically begins with my alarm clock going off while Keven is already downstairs exercising. Sometimes I will hit the snooze button, only to be forced to get up anyway (because of nature calling) or simply be unable to sleep once awakened.

I typically start talking to God right then, asking if I really need to get up at that moment, and if so, to please help me because I’m not good at doing that on my own. I am not the morning person I used to be (before having kids and too many nights interrupted with emergency squad calls).

And yet, each morning I am reminded that God created yet another wonderful miracle for me: a new day filled with many blessings, such as hot running water, coffee, and a wonderful husband. I make an

effort to give Keven a send-off kiss as he heads out to work each day, and then I head back into the house with a “now what?” thought about the day. What do I need to do to make this day worthwhile, a thank you to God for giving me the gift of it?

We heard in the Old Testament lesson how God created from nothingness, bringing light where there was only darkness, separating night and day, and it was good. But then what? After creation, what did humanity do to thank God for the gift of life? We decided to do our own thing instead of trusting and praising God.

The psalmist goes on about how awesome the Lord is, worthy of praise. Yet even understanding that God is incomprehensibly powerful, we still sin. When we get [a glimmer of realization that God has reason to be angry with us], we also realize we need to repent.

John was in the wilderness teaching people how to confess their sins and repent, using baptism in water as a means of preparing them to be cleansed enough to face God in their midst. He warned them that while he was just doing a surface clean (baptizing with water), a deep cleansing was coming (baptism with the Holy Spirit, which would clean their very souls).

Then Jesus came to be baptized. Why would someone who had never sinned need to be baptized? What did God have to be sorry about? Was God repenting of letting

people suffer the pain of the consequences of sin, especially when it was not their own sin?

If we focus on the repentance aspect of baptism, we miss the critical thing that happened in Jesus, made known to us through that baptism: The Holy Spirit descended to a human *and remained with Him*.

God was - and is - well pleased, to dwell with us - especially when we seek to restore the relationship with God that we broke in the first place. *We* need to repent; through Jesus, we receive God's forgiveness, a true cleansing of our souls, restored to what we were created to be.

In the early church, this presence of God with us, the Holy Spirit, was marked by acts of power for those baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Simply repenting and washing in water, as required by Jewish ritual, was not sufficient.

The disciples had to acknowledge God among us in Jesus to receive the Holy Spirit at baptism, to let God's power work through them. Unfortunately, through the centuries of the Good News being proclaimed, sinful corruption has made much of humanity complacent and cynical about the Word among us.

But it is a new day! There was another dawn this morning, so wake up! God is calling us to live -

fully and with the source of all Light and Life with us. It is not enough to just “be a good person” or “be kind” – though those are an important part of it.

We must acknowledge what our Creator has done and is doing for us, must repent of our sins and seek the forgiving grace of Jesus, and must invite the Holy Spirit to dwell within us.

Start by contemplating what your baptism means for you, every time you touch water this week. Think of:

- † washing hands and body as a reminder of the cleansing of your sin;
- † drinks of water as a reminder of the spiritual nourishment God provides for our lives; and
- † other analogies for other uses of water, such as the purification of boiling water or the relief of a humidifier in an overly dry environment.

Invite the Holy Spirit in at every opportunity. Trust God to answer the “what now?” with miracles of grace. Then move forward to live in that grace, sharing God’s love with the world through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

<Invitation

UMH p.7>

We know that Christ our Lord invites to His table all who love Him, who earnestly repent of their sin and seek to live in peace with one another.

Therefore, let us confess our sin before God and one another.

<slide change>

<Prayer of Confession and Words of Assurance

Written by Nancy C. Townley, posted on the Worship Connection page of the Ministry Matters website, <http://www.ministrymatters.com/worship/article/entry/4549/worship-connection-january-12-2014>. Reposted on the re:Worship blog, <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2014/01/epiphany-confession-baptism-of-our-lord.html> and on <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/becoming-the-people-of-god/first-sunday-after-the-epiphany-baptism-of-the-lord-year-b-lectionary-planning-notes/first-sunday-after-the-epiphany-baptism-of-the-lord-year-b-liturgical-resources>. >

Let us pray:

We are incredibly stubborn, O Lord.

We have entered the season in which

Your Light has been given to the world,
your blessings have been poured out on the world,
and yet all we can think about is our own problems,
our own needs, our own desires.

Help us to desire you, Lord.

Help us to yearn for your presence.

Pour your baptismal waters over us again,

cleansing us from our self-pity and arrogance.

Nourish and heal us so that we may joyfully serve
you.

Wash away our jealousy, greed, and all negative
thoughts and behaviors that stand in the way of our
truly being the people you have called us to be.

Again let us receive the blessings offered in
creation, in the birth and baptism of Jesus,
and in the ministry of the saints of light.

We ask this in Jesus' Name.

Amen.

The love of God is always offered to us,
freely, joyfully, for all eternity.

Rejoice, dear friends,
this is the Good News of our Lord.
Amen.