

# Our Sabbath Scripture Stories



F A M I L I E S   R E C L A I M I N G   S U N D A Y

Read aloud:      Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

Acts 10:34-38

Gospel:            Matthew 3:13-17

When the Pauline children came downstairs this morning, two things immediately caught their eye. One was the glowing light of six taper candles. Each of these candles was a little different. Some were still pretty tall, some of the others were burned down a bit. The other *unusual thing* was how the skylight in the front hall was covered with a cloth. The cloth was loosely taped to the skylight, and an odd-looking string hung down from the middle of it.

"What's all this for?" Vincent whispered loudly to his brothers and sisters.

"I just guess that Dad and Mom are up to their *visible and livable* Bible lessons!" Mary Clare whispered back. "It must be for the Baptism of the Lord Sunday."

Mom overheard Mary Clare's whispers. "Absolutely, Mary Clare!" Mom said. "We have a very special celebration in church today. These lit candles are here to remind us that we were all baptized into God's family."

"And what's the skylight covered for?" Lucy asked.

"You'll see!" Dad said, rather cryptically.

Everyone gathered today in a strange place for the Sunday Gospel reading. Dad told them to go stand under the bellowing skylight cover.

Soon, Dad began reading the words of the Gospel writer, Matthew. It read, "*Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to prevent him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?' Jesus said to him in reply, 'Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed him.*" (Matthew 3:13-15)

"Daddy?" asked little Lucy. "Why doesn't Jesus want John to baptize him in that river?"

"Well, Lucy," Dad replied. "John doesn't want people to mistake him for *the Christ* which means *the anointed one* or *the Messiah*. John makes it clear that he is baptizing those present with water *in the name of THE CHRIST*. Remember, during the Second Sunday of Advent Gospel reading, that John states that soon the *true* Messiah will come to baptize the people with fire and might!"

"And then Jesus comes up out of the water," Mary Clare exclaimed, "and then that cool thing happens! Right, Dad?"

"Right you are, Mary Clare!" Dad answered. "Our reading finishes by saying, *'After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened ... the heavens were opened ...'* (Matthew 3:16) Dad repeated, giving a nudge to Mom who tugged on the ceiling cord, pulling down the cloth, and allowing the sun to pour back over where they all were standing. And, with a solemn tone to his voice, Dad continued, *'And he saw the Spirit of God descending [and] coming upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'*' (Matthew 3:16b-17)

Sun continued to pour through the skylight window as Dad looked lovingly upon his children. "And my favor rests on all of you!" Dad rendered. "You children are a masterpiece of God, and through Baptism, you are heirs to His kingdom."

Mom added, "Each of the lit candles are the very candles we received on your Baptism day. We light them on special occasions. Your dad and I figured that the Baptism of the Lord, when the Blessed Trinity is revealed so powerfully, is a pretty special day!"

"That's right!" Vincent popped in. "We hear God's voice, Jesus is right there, and the Holy Spirit appears in the form of a dove! Pretty great!"

"And that was pretty great the way you pulled down the curtain!" Dad complimented his wife. "The sun just poured over us! Nice effect!"

"That's what us kids say about you two," Vincent stated to his mom and dad. "When it comes to our Sunday Gospel reading, you make them ... "

And the kids all chimed in together, "VISIBLE AND LIVABLE!"

And on that "sunny" note, they all grabbed their coats and headed off to Mass.

