

Wednesday

Read: **Mark 1:4-5** *People flock to John*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *Why do you think people were coming to John, all the way out in the sticks?*
2. *What does it mean to you to know you are part of the community of the baptized?*

Prayer Focus We confess today that we need to stop, turn to look fully to you, and see the truth of where we've missed the mark. Your forgiveness heals and reconnects us with you and with others, and we are grateful for your compassion.

Thursday

Read: **Mark 1:6-8** *John's message*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *Why would people want to listen to someone as odd as John? Why was his message so successful?*
2. *Spend time today reflecting on your baptism. Consider all the people who made it happen. Remember and thank God.*

Prayer Focus John announced Jesus' coming in all humility yet with pride to be serving as a messenger for Emmanuel. Help us share the news that Christ has come and is with us, always.

Friday

Read: **Mark 1:9-11** *Jesus is baptized*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *How do you think you would have reacted to this wild scene in nature?*
2. *God blessed Jesus before he'd even begun his ministry. What does that say about God? About God's children?*

Prayer Focus Moving through the waters, we give thanks that you're always there, waiting for us when we come up into the light. We are cleansed, refreshed, and transformed by the love you show us, with the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

Beginnings

Pastor's message: Genesis 1:1-5; Mark 1:1-11

Message Notes:



Small Group Format

Welcome

- Introductions/getting acquainted
- Mutual Invitation question: *Who is the most creative person you know? Why are they so creative?*

Opening Prayer

Song (optional)

Reflection on Scripture

Have someone read: **Genesis 1:1-5; Mark 1:1-11**

- Discuss observations about the text
 - *What word or phrase strikes you the most?*
 - *What do you think is the most important point of the text?*

Application of Scripture (The central transformative questions)

- What did you hear God say to you through this week's Scriptures?
- What are you doing about it?
- How can we support you?

Share your faith (in groups of 3)

- *How have you experienced God recently in your life?* (This is a weekly question - it may be difficult to answer at first, but if you ask it each week you may start to notice God more in your life.)

Pray for each other

Refreshments (optional)

BEGINNINGS **January 7, 2024**

Monday

Read: Genesis 1:1-5 *Creation*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *Can you imagine the darkness and the light that are part of this passage?*
2. *What aspects of God's creation call you to celebrate this week?*

Prayer Focus Water can be chaos and water can be life. You shaped our world, time itself, into being and we stand in awe and humble joy. We join in saying your creation is good, and give you our deep thanks, our Creator.

Tuesday

Read: Mark 1:1-3 *God promises a messenger*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *Why does Mark quote Isaiah?*
2. *What constitutes a wilderness for us as people today?*

Prayer Focus God of hope, you didn't just drop Jesus into our midst. You sent us messages for generations saying we needed to get ready and that we didn't have to go it alone. Show us how to keep the way straight for the truth of your power and love.