



Small Group Study Guide for January 14, 2024

Our Savior Lutheran Church and School

Theme: “The Gift of the Spirit” This week kicks off our new sermon series, “Love Languages.” It’s based on a book by Gary Chapman titled, “The Five Love Languages.” What we learn from Chapman is that different people express love in different ways. And this week, we’re talking about the love language of gift-giving. We can both express our love in the gifts we give, and feel loved when we receive a thoughtful gift. This action of love is present in our gospel reading from Mark. Jesus is baptized in the river Jordan and God the Father opens the heavens to give Jesus a powerful gift—the gift of the Holy Spirit. In our lives, we discover this is a gift we desperately need. For in baptism, we are united with Christ. When we remember this gift each day we know we have forgiveness, life, and salvation. In Him, we are called children of God!

Getting Started: (sharing with each other)

1. What is your favorite part about being on the water? (Your favorite thing to do at the lake/beach)
2. Is the love language of gift-giving, something that you are drawn to? Do you typically enjoy giving or receiving gifts?

In the Word: Read Mark 1:4-11

3. Mark does not include the birth of Christ in his Gospel. Why do you think he jumps straight to John the Baptist in the wilderness, “preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins?” How does John the Baptist bridge the gap from the Old Testament to the New Testament?
4. In verse 7, John the Baptist tells us, “After me comes one more powerful than I, the strap of whose sandals I am unworthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” **Read John 13:3-9.** Ironically, what do we see Jesus demonstrate through His actions?

5. What are some key similarities and differences between the baptism John gives and the baptism that Jesus will give?

Similarities	Differences

Putting it all Together (what do we believe or do as disciples?)

6. The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah begins with John the Baptist telling everyone to repent and pointing them to Jesus. How does this message reflect the story of the Bible?
7. Mark's telling of The Baptism of Jesus reminds us of the profound gift of the Holy Spirit that Christians everywhere share. This week, how can you be reminded of this gift? How do these reminders sharpen our understanding of our true identity?
8. What are some ways that you have seen the Holy Spirit at work in your life?

Prayer: Gracious God, we give thanks for the gift you have given us through Your Son Jesus. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit in this New Year to share your love with those in need. Lead us to be gift-givers of Your good news. Strengthen us to remain in Your Word as we wait for Your glorious return. In every season, we rejoice in the hope of eternal life that we have now. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Next Week: Next week, we will continue with the second Love Language from Gary Chapman's book, "The Five Love Languages." We will be reflecting on how we can love through physical touch. Warm hugs and shoulder rubs are a two ways we physically love those we care for. Jesus Himself reaches out with the intimate love and physical touch to the blind, the lame, and all those in need.