

A Sunday School Series



**GOOD NEWS**

from Mark

**JESUS IS HERE!**

# JESUS ARRIVES



LESSON 1

Mark 1:9–15



**faith**in**kids**

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Jesus is Here! Good News from Mark (Part 1)

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We recommend the International Children's Bible for use with children during the lesson. Our leader's notes use the New International Version.

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'All for the glory of God alone' (1 Corinthians 10:31)

# Jesus Arrives

Mark 1:9–15



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## Truth that changes me:

Good news! Jesus, the Son of God, has come to earth.



## Faith in Kids looks like:

Children who are excited to discover more about Jesus, the Son of God.

## Preparation



### Where are we going?

As we meet Jesus for the first time in Mark's Gospel, we want the children to hear and understand what God says about him. Jesus is God's loved son and God is pleased with him. Those words could not be said about anyone else, past, present or future. Jesus is extraordinary! As we hear Jesus speak and proclaim that the time has come, we want the children to be confident that he is worth listening to and worth finding out more about.

This lesson does not teach about baptism generally but focuses on Jesus' baptism and what we learn about him. The meaning of "repent and believe" will be touched on here and then more fully explained in future lessons when we have seen more of Jesus. Our aim this time is for children to be excited to find out more about who Jesus is and how he is good news for them.

Pray and read the Bible passage. Read **Where are we going** and **Look at the passage** to give you a better understanding of how to apply the truth.



### Look at the passage

## Jesus Arrives (v9)

Before we meet Jesus, Mark introduces John the Baptist, the warm-up act. John was at the River Jordan, preparing the crowd, baptising people who repented of their sins and who wanted to live for God. One day, onto the scene walked Jesus. An ordinary looking man from Nazareth, an ordinary town. As Jesus stepped into the river, nothing made him stand out from the crowd.

continued →

**GOOD NEWS**  
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## God Speaks (v10–11)

But as Jesus came out of the water, the extraordinary began. A voice from heaven announced, “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased”. Jesus was completely different to everyone else – he is God’s loved Son! We can be totally sure about Jesus’ identity because God himself tells us.

What’s more, Jesus is the only person who has ever lived a life that fully pleased God, in everything he did, said and thought. Even on our best days, we can’t say that we have fully pleased God. In fact nobody else in history has fully pleased God with their whole life – not even the best of people.

The Jesus we meet is certainly not ordinary; he is totally human, experiencing all of our struggles and joys, but he is also totally God – God’s son – with all the power, goodness and authority that God has. The action of Mark’s gospel is going to be amazing to follow.

*This lesson is not focused on baptism generally. It might be helpful for you to know your church’s position on baptism in case of questions.*

## Jesus Speaks (v12–15)

These verses contain some dramatic scene shifts – Jesus in the wild resisting Satan, John the Baptist jailed. Against the reality of a world where bad things happen and evil exists, the good news of Jesus is shouted out, “The time has come, God’s Kingdom has come near, repent and believe the good news.”

Jesus completely understands the problem of evil. He knows the troubles we face and announces a solution, a Kingdom where God rules. This Kingdom has come and we can be included by repenting and believing in Jesus.

We need the good news of Jesus just as much today as the people did then. This series in Mark’s gospel will help us to explore this good news more.

*This lesson is introductory and does not fully cover what it looks like to repent and believe but focuses on introducing Jesus. More will be said on repent and believe in future lessons.*



### Win my heart

What would be good news to your ears right now? 50% off in your favourite shop, someone else is cooking tonight, your annoying colleague is resigning, or how about the secret joy when the kid in your group that can be hard work isn’t here this week? So often in the day-to-day grind of life our idea of good news is limited to what will make our life easier, bring us comfort or give us a feeling of success.

The good news of Jesus’ arrival is bigger, wider and greater, offering hope on the darkest day. God’s beloved son has stepped into our world and the Kingdom of God has come near. God has met our greatest need by sending a saviour who will mend our broken relationship with him. We can all be included in God’s Kingdom if we repent and believe.

Jesus is the good news we all need whatever we are facing – you and that challenging kid in your group. Hear Jesus’ words loud and clear as you prepare this session, so that the good news will be ringing in your ears as you teach.

*For your heart, before you prepare the lesson.*

## Questions for your heart

- What might feel like good news for you right now?
- How is the good news of Jesus even better news?

continued →





## 5 minutes to focus on your group

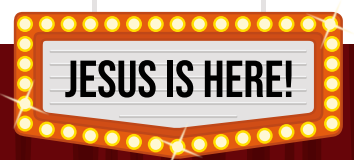
What would be good news to the children in your group? They probably wouldn't answer Jesus! What do the children already know or think about him? Do they believe what God tells us? How can you help them to start making a connection and see that Jesus is good news for them personally?

*What do the children in  
your group need?*

*Pray that the Spirit  
would help them:*

- *to grasp the truth*
- *to live it out*

**GOOD NEWS**  
from Mark





## All together time



*This has been written as an all-age slot to introduce the whole church family to what the children are learning today, but it could be adapted for the children's classes.*



## Props

A list of news to read - good, bad, and some that will divide opinion e.g. chips for tea, it is snowing, no more screen time, the car has broken down; a large bowl / tub of water; a number of action figures (use whatever is in your toy box) or 4/5 tins of soup/ beans - label one with a "J" for Jesus; a toy bird or umbrella you can pretend is a bird; two large speech bubbles - one with a heart drawn on, one with a thumbs up emoji.



## What to Say



## What to Do

I know that you LOVE sharing your news - where you went yesterday, what your Nan's cat did, new shoes. This morning I'm going to read out some news - I want you to imagine this being announced in your house and tell me if its:

- Good news = Thumbs up
- Bad news = Thumbs down

*Read items from your prepared list.*

Engage with responses: *"You think chips are good. You think rain is bad, but you are happy because of your new wellies".*

Today as we start our series in Mark's gospel we are going to meet someone who claimed that he was really good news for you and me.

But before he arrived, there was someone else on the scene...

Have action figures/tins and water.

John the Baptist, or John the baptising man.

John told everyone; "Hey! You've forgotten about God, you're living for yourselves. Stop, sort yourselves out and start living for God."

John dipped people in the River Jordan as a sign that they wanted to be clean from their bad ways and live following God instead.

Many people came to the river to be baptised by John. They admitted that they had been living wrongly, they said they wanted to change. Under the water they went, up they came and out of the river they got.

Hold up action figure/tin 1 - John the Baptist - set him beside the tub of water.

Dunk a tin/action figure under the water.

Continue to dunk figures or tins - under, up, out - all the same. (Do not dunk the Jesus tin/figure.)

One day, along the river bank came Jesus. He was from Nazareth, an ordinary town, and he looked like an ordinary man. He joined the waiting people, stepped into the river and was dipped under the water.

Nothing made Jesus stand out.

Hold up action figure/tin labelled "J".

Dunk figure under the water.

continued →

**GOOD NEWS**  
from Mark



## What to Say

## What to Do

**But** when Jesus came up out of the water, something amazing happened.

Heaven opened and the Holy Spirit came down on Jesus like a dove. Then God spoke from heaven and said, "You are my Son whom I love; with you I am well pleased." (Mark 1:11 NIV)

Produce bird toy (explain it represents a dove). Or flap an umbrella like a bird and move towards the water.

*Have someone say God's words from the back loudly/through a microphone.*

Amazing! This ordinary looking man from nowhere Nazareth is actually incredibly special. God spoke from heaven and announced that Jesus is his loved son who DOES live for him. God is very pleased with Jesus. If we watch and listen to Jesus, we will find out what a life that pleases God looks like. We are going to spend the next few weeks in Mark's gospel doing just that.

Hold up speech bubble with heart in.

Well, we've heard God's announcement about Jesus.

But a short time later, Jesus made an announcement of his own: "The time has come. The Kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the Good News." (Mark 1:15 NIV)

*If possible, have a volunteer say this in a booming voice/through a microphone. Or read from the Bible with lots of emphasis!*

Wow! Jesus' message is good news. God is not far away, he has come near and now people can come near to him.

Jesus said, "Repent and believe the good news". He tells people to repent - to change how they live - to stop living for themselves and start living for God instead. And Jesus tells people to believe the good news that he has come and God's Kingdom has come near.

Hold up speech bubble with thumbs up emoji.

Jesus wasn't just speaking to people years ago - this is a message for us too.

We are just like the people queuing to be baptised by John - none of us live for God. We all live for ourselves and some people ignore God altogether. We all need to repent - to admit that we have done wrong things, stop doing them and start living differently.

And the good news is that God will help us to do this! With God's help, we can stop living for ourselves and start living for him. And we can believe the good news that Jesus, God's loved Son, came to earth and that God's Kingdom came with him. That will make a difference to everything.

continued →

**GOOD NEWS**  
from Mark



## What to Say

## What to Do

Do you want to hear more about the good news of Jesus? To see what kind of man he is? To see what kind of kingdom God's Kingdom will be?

Excellent, that's what we're going to do in our groups today and in the coming weeks. Don't miss a thing!

Pray/sing to finish







**Get  
Going**



**Teaching  
Time**



**Brain  
Break**



**Heart &  
Hands**




## 7s and under



**Get going**

### Get the News

Separate out some pages from a newspaper and draw a large visible tick or cross on them. The pages with a tick are good news, the pages with a cross are bad news. Spread the pages around at the back of the room, slightly piled up. Split the children into teams. They have to race across the room and collect a page of good news. After a set time, count the pages - who got the most good news? Take away a point for each bad news page collected by mistake.

 **Link:** You ran and got the "good news". Today we are going to meet Jesus as he arrives in Mark's gospel and brings good news for us to hear.



**Teaching time**

In today's Bible story three big things happen ...

- Jesus arrives and is baptised - *have your tub of water and play figures ready.*
- God speaks from heaven - *have your bird and heart speech bubble ready.*
- Jesus announces good news - *have your thumbs up speech bubble ready.*

### Jesus Arrives

*Have your tub of water, play figures and towel ready.*

Hold up your John the Baptist figure. Explain that John the Baptist loved God but that lots of other people had forgotten God and were not living God's way. Explain that John was helping people to see that what they were doing was wrong and that they needed to change.

Use another play figure and the tub of water to explain what John was doing when he baptised people. He was dunking people under the water to show that they wanted to be clean from their bad ways and live following God. *Demonstrate dunking a play figure under the water (do not dunk the Jesus figure).*

continued →



### Notes

*Flexible resource: look at both lesson plans, pick what works for your group.*

*Use this activity to introduce today's theme.*

*Use a suitable Bible translation - we use the International Children's Bible (found online at [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)).*

**You will need:** A paper cup megaphone, several play figures - keep one aside to be Jesus, a toy bird or a picture of a bird, a tub of water, a towel, two speech bubbles - draw a heart in one and a thumbs up in the other.

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**JESUS IS HERE!**

Lots of people came to listen to his teaching and get dunked under water. Lots of people knew that they needed to change and start living God's way.

*Let all of the children have a go at dunking some figures - a towel will be handy!*

One day someone special arrived on the river bank. *Hold up your Jesus figure.* John the Baptist knew who Jesus was, but the other people didn't. Jesus looked quite ordinary, just like all the other people waiting to be baptised, but what happened next helps us to see that Jesus is very special.

## God Speaks

*Have your bird figure and heart speech bubble ready - dunk your action figure and explain the events.*

As Jesus came up out of the water, something amazing happened, the Bible tells us:

- The heavens opened and God's Spirit descended like a dove. *Produce your bird.*
- God spoke from heaven saying, "You are my Son and I love you. I am very pleased with you." *Read from ICB or NIV. Hold up your heart speech bubble.*

Wow! That is an amazing announcement. That couldn't be said about anybody else. We can be sure that Jesus is someone really special because God has told us that he is.

Tell the children that it will be exciting to find out more about Jesus in the Bible together over the next few weeks.

## Jesus Speaks

*Hold up your paper cup megaphone.*

Ask the children to think of some good news they could say through your megaphone - where might they like to go, what would be good to eat, who is coming over to play, where have they just been? A few children could come and announce their "news".

Jesus didn't have a megaphone, but he did make a big announcement. Read Mark 1:15 from the ICB or NIV. "The right time has come. The Kingdom of God is near. Change your hearts and lives and believe the Good News!"

- Knowing that Jesus is God's Son and always pleases God means that when he speaks we need to listen really carefully.
- Jesus says that we need to change how we live. We need to live God's way, not the way we want to. We are going to hear more about that in the next few weeks.
- Jesus says that his coming is good news for us, so let's be excited to find out more about him - *show thumbs up speech bubble.*

Ask the children what they do when they hear good news. *Suggested answers: tell other people; ask more questions to find out more; feel excited; try to remember what they were told and think about it.* Explain that those are all great things we can do with the good news we have heard today.

Jesus is the son of God, and him coming to earth is good news. Let's listen carefully and be ready to be changed by what Jesus says as we find out more about him this term.



GOOD NEWS  
from Mark






## Brain break

### Traffic Lights

Have three circles of coloured paper to hold up - red, orange and green and one arrow sign. The leader stands in the middle of the room holding up the signs and the children run carefully around the outside of the room acting as cars. They must run the direction the arrow shows.

- Red = Stop - children stand still.
- Orange = Get Ready - children rev their engines (make car noises while staying still).
- Green = Go - children run around following the arrow.

From time to time the leader will state "change direction" and point the arrow the other way, children need to stop going one way and go the other direction.

 **Link:** Today we heard about John the Baptist, who came to get people to STOP (red circle) going their own way and GET READY (orange circle) to listen to Jesus. Jesus arrived, he is the son of God, he has come to tell us good news. We are to GO (green circle) with listening to him and being ready to change (arrow).




## Heart & hands

### Craft time – Good News Megaphone

Children decorate their megaphone with stickers, pens, paper and attach the good news label.

#### OR

Print out p18 on to card, cut out the megaphones and decorate as above. Once decorated, glue the megaphones together.

 **Link:** In our story today we heard that Jesus has come to bring us good news.

### Think time

**Big question:** Who did God say Jesus was? *God's son, who he loves.*

**A follow up question:** What has Jesus come to tell us? *Good news!*

### Pray

Thank you God for sending us Jesus and for giving us the Bible so that we can find out all about him. Help us to be ready to hear the good news of Jesus and be changed by him. **Amen**



*A chance to rest the children's minds before Heart and Hands. Get moving and have fun with this game.*

*Make a craft and have a chat. Give the children time to reflect on today's big truth, so it can impact their hearts.*

**You will need:** Paper cups, scissors, stickers, pens, labels for the megaphones (Jesus is the Son of God who has come to bring us **good news!**), glue.

**In advance:** Cut out the bottom of the paper cups so that they can be used as megaphones.

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**JESUS IS HERE!**



## 8s and over




### Get going

#### Rate the News

Stick two signs on the wall/floor at either end of the room saying Good and Bad. This is the rating scale.

As you read out "the news" the children have to rate whether it is really amazing 10/10 news by standing right next to GOOD; awful, the worst 0/10 news by standing by BAD; or perhaps it's "alright" and they stand in the middle etc. "Remember, there is no right or wrong - we want to know if this is good or bad news for YOU."

Read out a variety of news items - jammy dodgers for snack time, pizza for tea, PE tomorrow, we're getting a dog, let's go swimming, no more screen time. Get the children to notice that the same news can get a different response from different people.

 **Link:** You heard news that some of you thought was good and some of you thought was bad. Today, Jesus states that he has come bringing good news to everyone - no matter who they are.



### Teaching time

Stick three large sheets of paper on the wall - these are the three scenes of the story.

Explain that Mark the gospel writer is a bit like the director of an action movie - all the action in his book happens fast, big news, not too many words, keep the camera on the action. Explain that today we are going to look at three scenes that focus on Jesus and think about what we learn about him.

- Scene 1 - The Riverbank
- Scene 2 - The Heavens
- Scene 3 - Jesus Speaks

#### Scene 1 - The Riverbank (v9)

Read the verse and ask questions to help the children picture the scene. Explain that we don't know for certain but we can have a good idea. Where does the action

continued →



### Notes

*Flexible resource: look at both lesson plans, pick what works for your group.*

*Use this activity to introduce today's theme.*

*Use a suitable Bible translation - we use the International Children's Bible (found online at [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)).*

#### **You will need:**

Mark 1:9-13 printed out, three big sheets of paper, pens, Post-it notes.

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**JESUS IS HERE!**

happen? What might you have seen and heard if you were there? Draw it on the scene - *river, bank, some reeds.*

Once you have created the scene, talk together about the characters we meet. It might be helpful to read Mark 1:4-5 for a bit of extra information.

- John the Baptist, calling people to change their lives and get ready for God's promised Saviour to arrive, he's in the river baptising people. *Draw John the Baptist on the scene.*
- A crowd of people on the riverbank, waiting to be baptised. *Make sure that the children understand why the people are there. Draw a stick person crowd.*
- Jesus on the riverbank. *Draw Jesus on the scene.*

Emphasise to the children the normality of Jesus in this scene - nothing marks him out as different. He looked like an ordinary man from Nazareth, a normal town, walking along the riverbank, waiting to be baptised like other people.

## Scene 2 - The Heavens (v10-11)

Tell the children that scene 2 is going to zoom in on the action as Jesus was baptised. *Draw the water on scene two, and draw Jesus in it.* If this was a movie, this is the scene you would want to see on a big screen!

Read the verses and ask - what do we see? What happened in the sky? What came down? What was heard? What might you have thought and felt if you were there on the riverbank? *Add clouds parting, a bird, a speech bubble on the scene as they are mentioned.*

Now we see that Jesus is not just an ordinary person, he is truly amazing! Lots of people were dunked under the water at the river - only one person had the heavens open, the Holy Spirit descend and God declare, "You are my son and I love you. I am very pleased with you."

It's good news for us that God's Son has arrived, that Jesus is loved by God and is able to please God. If we watch and listen to Jesus, we will find out what a life that pleases God looks like, and we are going to spend the next few weeks in Mark's gospel doing just that.

## Scene 3 - Jesus Speaks (v12-15)

The camera zooms out to give us a wide-angle lens of the world Jesus has stepped into. Ask the children if they can spot three things that sound like bad news in these verses. *John in prison, wild animals, deserts, Satan, temptation. Things that would make us scared, angry etc.*

*Add dark scribbles to scene 3 - a dark backdrop. Leave space in the middle for a speech bubble.*

What bad news do you hear in your life - what is hard? What might make you afraid? *Add more dark scribbles.*

In the middle of all the bad news, Jesus calls out - like the announcer at a concert - giving the people a message of good news. *Draw a speech bubble and add "The Kingdom of God is near. Change your hearts and lives and believe the Good News!"*

Wow! Jesus said that God's Kingdom is near which means that people can now

continued →



GOOD NEWS  
from Mark

JESUS IS HERE!

come near to God. That is good news for everyone. Jesus tells people to change how they live, to stop living for themselves and to start living for God instead - this is called repenting. That is something that we all need to do. And Jesus tells people to believe this good news that he has come and God's Kingdom has come near.

Jesus has arrived bringing good news from God, news that can change our lives. We will hear more about this good news and what it means over the next few weeks.

Who do you think this good news is for? You? Someone else?

What difference does this news make? None? Some? Not sure yet? A lot?



*A chance to rest the children's minds before Heart and Hands. Get moving and have fun with this game.*




## Brain break

### Flip it / Cups / Cones

Set out a number of plastic / paper cups on a table and have them all facing the same way - all up, like a cup, or all turned over, like a cone. Depending on the number of children in your group and how many cups you have, you could play it in teams against each other, or as individuals racing against the clock to see who is fastest.

When you say "GO!" They have to work as quickly as they can to flip all the cups - from a cup to a cone. If playing in teams, the winners are the first to flip all the cups. If you are doing individual times, stop the clock as soon as the last cup is flipped and not each person's time. Repeat as many times as necessary.

 **Link:** Jesus came into a world full of bad news to bring good news, he came so that we can change - be flipped from going our own way to going God's way - he can flip our lives right around.



## Heart & hands

### Did you spot it?

- What did Jesus do at the river?
- If you were standing on the riverbank that day, what would you have seen?
- What would you have heard?

### Work it out

- Why is it good news that Jesus has come?
- What is Jesus asking you to do?
- What in this story do you find most surprising?

*We have found that this is where children make the most progress relating the Bible to their everyday lives. Please leave enough time for this section.*

*These questions can mostly be found on the Chat Time (see p.19) sheet which has been designed to aid your discussion. If possible, enlarge the page to A3 so you can work on it together. Make sure each child can still answer the personal questions honestly for themselves (e.g. hand out Post-it notes for them to write/draw their answers to these questions).*

continued →

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## Live it out

- Do you agree that Jesus is good news? Why or why not?
- If you had been there then, what would you have wanted to ask Jesus or say to him?
- When we hear good news, we tell other people. Can you think of anyone you could tell the good news about Jesus coming and who he is this week?

## Extra stretch

- Who do you think the good news of Jesus is for - only good people? How do you know?
- When does it feel like being a Christian isn't good news? Some Christians around the world are in prison, just because they follow Jesus - what would you say to encourage them? What could you say to yourself on a bad day to help you keep going? *See if they understand anything about the Kingdom that Jesus said was near - knowing that one day all things will be put right and Jesus will rule perfectly helps us keep going on bad days.*
- If this story happened today, what would the headlines be? What would be the most convincing moments and which of the parts would just cause more questions? What would the conversation be in your school the next day? [Try to engage with the events themselves. Try to work out what jumps out at them as real 'drama' and how much is more 'religious' and subtle.]

## Pray

Ask God by his Spirit to work in your heart and life so that you are changed and shaped by the good news of who Jesus is and that he has come. Ask him to help you be excited to know more, and be ready to change.



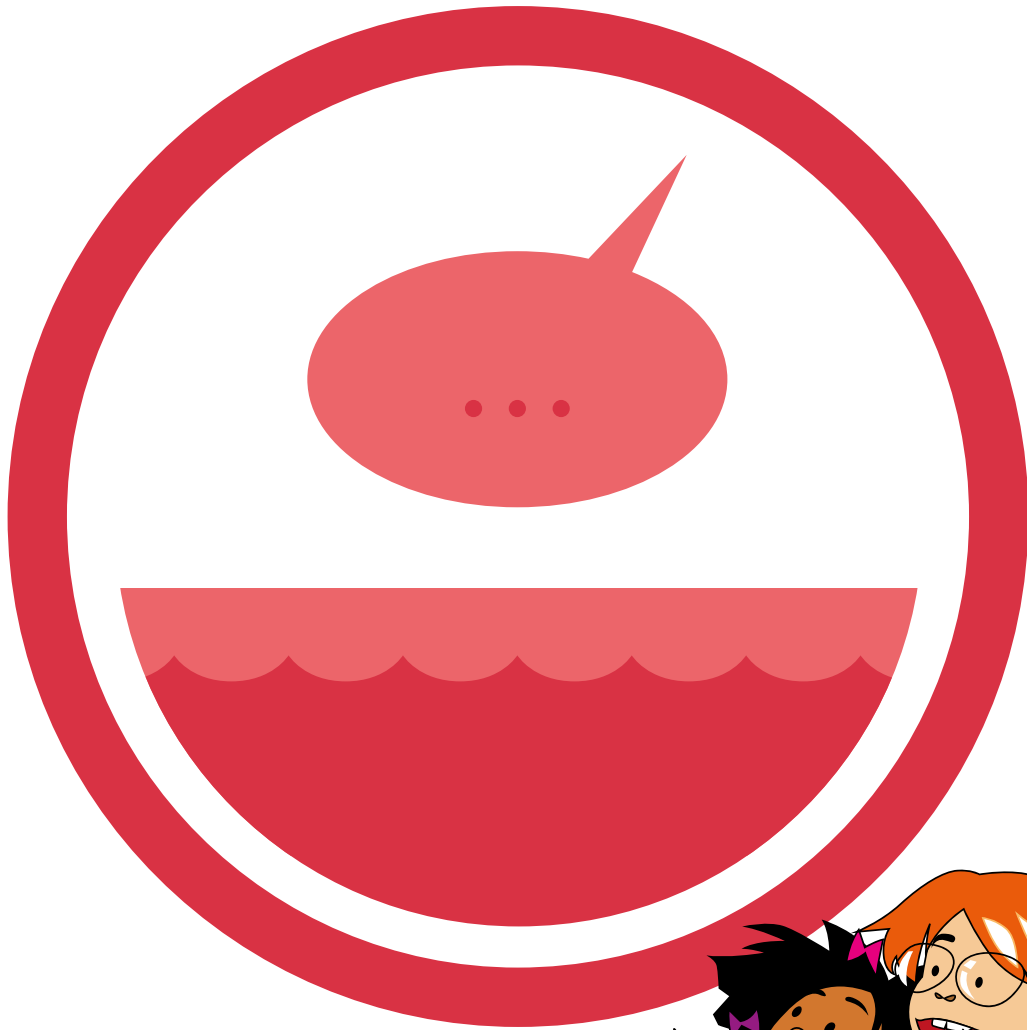
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# JESUS ARRIVES

## LESSON 1

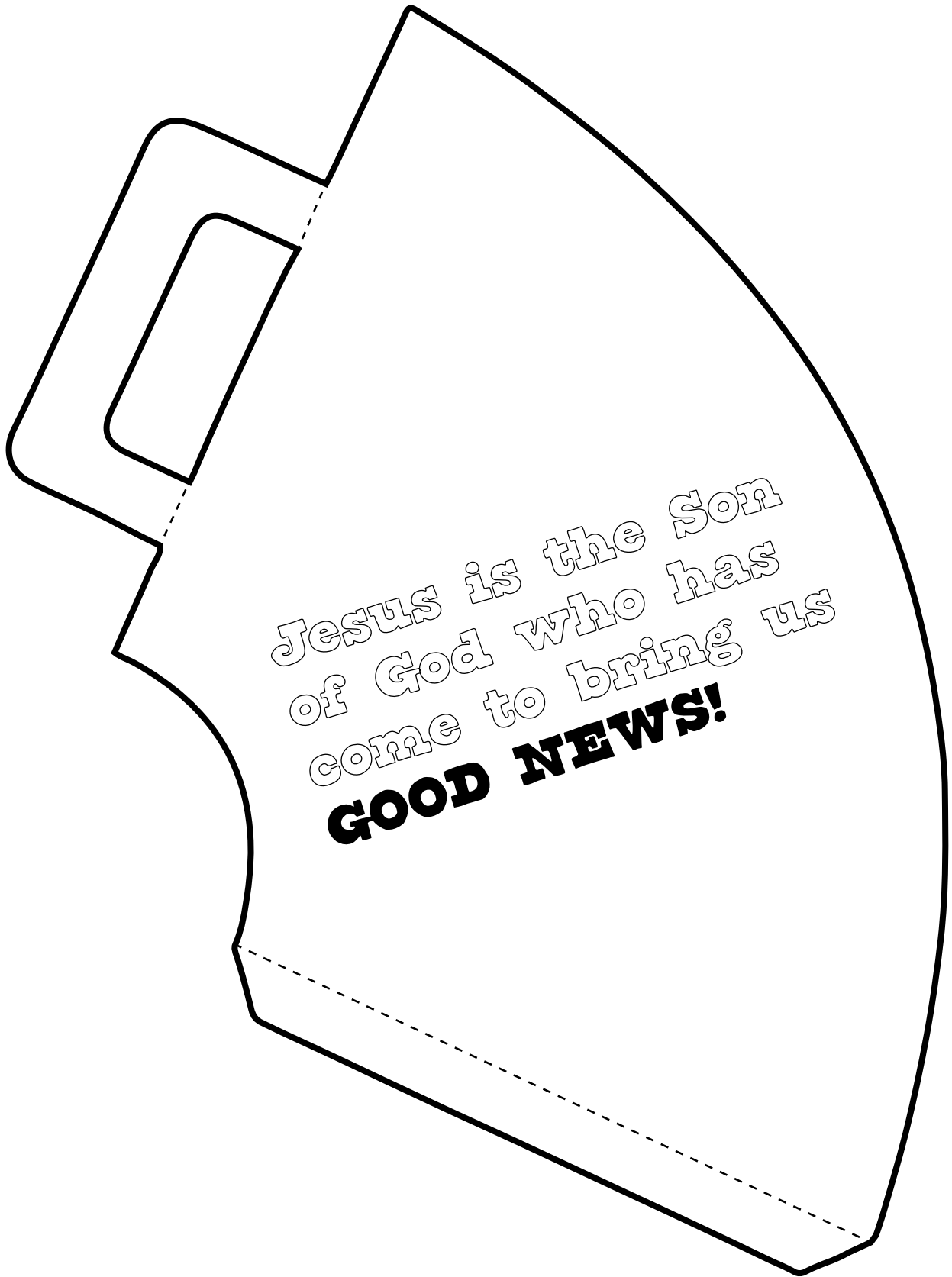






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# Heart & Hands Chat Time



## Did you spot it?

What did Jesus do at the river?



Draw yourself standing on the river bank. **What would you have seen?**

**What would you have heard?**



## Work it out

Why is it good news that Jesus has come?

What is Jesus asking you to do?



What in this story do you find most surprising?



## Live it out

Do you agree that Jesus is good news?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Why?

If you had been there then, what would you have wanted to ask Jesus or say to him?

When we hear good news, we tell other people. Can you think of anyone you could tell the good news about Jesus to this week?

**GOOD NEWS**  
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**JESUS IS HERE!**

# Take Home Sheet

Carry on the conversation at home and build faith with us!



## Truth that changes me:

Good news! Jesus, the Son of God, has come to earth.



## Faith in Kids looks like:

Children who are excited to discover more about Jesus the Son of God.



Look at the picture from today's story – you could colour it in, then choose a path to follow:

- "Talk together" gently starts a conversation about today's big truth.
- "Open the Bible" encourages you to read and apply the truth together.

## Talk Together

Read the verses:

*A voice came from heaven and said, "You are my son and I love you. I am very pleased with you." Mark 1:11*

*Jesus said, "The right time has come. The Kingdom of God is near. Change your hearts and lives and believe the Good News!" Mark 1:15*

Use the picture and the verse to work out:

- Who can you see in this picture?
- Who does God tell us Jesus is?
- What does Jesus want us to do?

Jesus is the son God loves. Jesus coming is good news for everyone. Can you tell me...

- 3 pieces of good news from your day.
- 2 times when you did something that pleased someone else.
- 1 thing you know about Jesus that is good news.

**Live it out:** Talk together about different places and times that we hear news. As you hear news this week, talk about how it makes you feel and decide whether it is good or bad news. Can you spot any news that is good for some but bad for others? Jesus is good news for everyone!

**A prayer to pray:** Dear God, thank you that Jesus is good news. Help us to believe in him so that our hearts and lives might be changed by his good news. Amen.

## Open the Bible

Read Mark 1:9-15 and use the picture to talk about some of the following questions:

### 7s and under

- What amazing things happened when Jesus was baptised?
- Who does God say Jesus is?
- How can you find out more about the good news Jesus brings?

### 8s and over

- What was ordinary about Jesus?
- What was extraordinary about Jesus?
- Why should you listen to what Jesus says?

**Live it out:** Jesus, the son of God has stepped into our world. Jesus says that the Kingdom of God is near. That is good news for everyone. This week, write down one piece of news that you hear each day. Is it good, bad, or mixed – good for some and bad for others? At the end of the week, look back at all of the news you wrote down. What was the best thing? How does Jesus compare?

**Pray:** Thank God that we have the good news of Jesus written down for us in the Bible and for those who help us understand it. Ask him to help you to know more about Jesus and to be changed by believing in him.





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