

Connecting the Sunday Sparkle at Hearsall Baptist with the Daily Dust of Life

Welcome

Tell us about a time when the weather has caught you out. Maybe you were drenched by a sudden downpour. Maybe you took warm clothes to Scotland in April and found yourself in a heatwave...

Worship

- Discuss what most symbolises **raw power** for you.
- Would it be possible to use this to symbolise the power of God?
- Read Psalm 29.
- How does the language of the Psalm make you feel?

Word

Read Matthew 3: 13 - 17

The baptism of Jesus is something of a surprise in the gospel narrative. Here is the Christ, the Holy One, the sinless Son of God, taking part in John's baptism, which concerned repentance and the forgiveness of sins. Jesus says he should be baptised 'to fulfil all righteousness'.

Righteousness concerns doing God's will, and also the completion of God's whole plan of salvation.

- Discuss **why** Jesus was baptised.
- What does this tell us about God's saving plan for us?
- What does this tell us about our own baptism?

The Trinity is, in part, the idea that it's the same God who created everything; walked on the earth as Jesus; and pours love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. The same God is seen in the power of the storm of Psalm 29; in the tender visions of Isaiah 42:3 (who will not break a bruised reed); and in the suffering servant Jesus on the cross.

- To what extent does this story support the later Christian doctrine of the Trinity?
- What does it tell us about our daily Christian experience?

Response

Try an imaginative contemplation of our gospel scene today.

- Set apart half an hour or so to enter the story in your imagination.
- Read it through a couple of times.
- Consider what you can see, hear, smell, touch or taste.
- Look at the faces of the people involved. Hear their tones of voice.
- Notice the perspective you take: Are you a passive on-looker, or an active character?
- Replay the scene a couple more times through in your imagination. Pause at points that catch your interest.