

Jesus Ministry Begins

Storyteller (*spreads out the Desert Bag*): This is the Desert Bag. So many wonderful and important things happen in the desert, we need to know what it is like. We can't get the whole desert into our church, so here is just a little piece of the desert. *The Storyteller smooths the sand while s/he talks.* The desert is a dangerous place. There is little water, and almost nothing grows there. It is hot in the daytime and cold at night.

Mark 1:9-15 – Jesus' ministry begins

About that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River. As soon as Jesus came out of the water, he saw the sky open and the Holy Spirit coming down to him like a dove. A voice from heaven said, "You are my own dear Son, and I am pleased with you."

Right away God's Spirit made Jesus go into the desert. He stayed there for forty days while Satan tested him. Jesus was with the wild animals, but angels took care of him.

After John was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee and told the good news that comes from God. He said, "The time has come! God's kingdom will soon be here. Turn back to God and believe the good news!"

If any of the children reach out to touch the sand, smile at them but say "You may work with the desert bag later in the Story Room. Right now we all need to be ready to listen to the story. This is how you get ready.

Demonstrate folding your hands in your lap. Then smooth the sand in one smooth motion around the edges of the desert bag, reinforcing the limits imposed by the edge of the bag.

Lay the two pieces of the river Jordan down slightly to the right of middle, dividing the desert bag into two uneven sections. The pieces of felt should overlap slightly so they look like a single long river. The river Jordan divides the Promised Land from the Desert. *Put down some greenery in the smaller section.*

Set down the Jesus doll standing "in" the river: Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, -- *set the John doll down next to "Jesus" -- and John baptized him in the Jordan River. Hold the wooden dove up very high, and slowly bring it straight down above John and Jesus.* As soon as Jesus came out of the water, he saw the sky open and the Holy Spirit coming down to him like a dove. A voice from heaven said, "You are my own dear Son, and I am pleased with you." *Put John and the dove back on the tray.*

Move "Jesus" to your left: across the river and out into the middle of the desert. Right away God's Spirit made Jesus go into the desert. He stayed there for forty days while Satan tested him. Jesus was with the wild animals, but angels took care of him.

Unroll the Lake Galilee underlay, on the right side (the "Promised Land" side) of the river Jordan. After John was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee – *Move Jesus onto the lakeshore -- and told the good news that comes from God. He said, "The time has come! God's kingdom will soon be here. Turn back to God and believe the good news!"*

Story Materials

- Desert Bag
- Jesus' Baptism Story materials:
 - Jesus figure
 - John figure
 - water figure
 - dove-
- Fishers of Men underlay