

## Session 4

### ‘Embraced by the Father’



### Reading: **Mark 1:16-20**

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted<sup>[a]</sup> by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

#### Introduction:

This passage introduces Jesus with two distinct and significant events at the start of Jesus’ ministry: His baptism, and his testing in the desert.

- What are some of the key formative events which have shaped you?
- If you have been baptized, what significance does that event hold for you now?

#### WORD:

What do you think is the significance of using these two stories as the introduction to Jesus in the Mark’s gospel (as opposed to the birth of Jesus in Matthew and Luke, and John) ?

#### Jesus’ Baptism

- Why do you think Jesus got baptized, and what does *his* baptism mean for each of us?
- What might be some of the reasons for the dove, and the Father’s voice at Jesus’ baptism?
- Try to imagine the Father wanting to proclaim in a similarly dramatic way the same message about you: **“You are my Child, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”**
  - How easy is it for you to accept that message? What can help you accept such a message from God?
  - Do you find yourself wanting to add caveats to this message? Why do you think that might be?

#### Sent into the Wilderness

- How do you feel about the Spirit ‘sending’ Jesus into the Wilderness to be tempted by Satan?
- What are some of your lessons from wilderness times? (You may want to reflect upon the following list of possible characteristics of ‘wilderness’:)
  - Exposure
  - Testing
  - Simplicity
  - Waiting
  - Discernment

Which story encourages you more: Baptism or Tempting? Why?

**PRAYER:** What prayer response does today’s reading and discussion invite?

**ACTION:** What practical action does today’s reading and discussion encourage?