



**SCRIPTURE:** Mark 1:9-15

**DISCUSSION:**

- What do you think it means to repent and believe in Jesus' Good News?
- Have you ever had to prepare for something big in your life (a project at school, a new job, a new school, a new sport or activity, a big test)?
- What are some things you had to do to prepare?
- What are some things you had to give up to be ready?
- In what ways can you prepare yourself to live into the identity that you are a beloved child of God?
- Do you have a word or phrase that has become a part of you during your life that has been negative or painful/hurtful?
- How has that kept you from your identity of one who is loved and is called to love?

**ACTIVITY:**

*Supplies needed: a glass or clear plastic bowl, small stones, water*

First, fill the bowl three-quarters of the way full of clear water. Place the bowl in the middle of a table or another place where you can sit or stand around the bowl.

Take a moment to go around the table and touch your hand to the water. Take some time to share memories of participating in or witnessing a baptism. If you have not had this experience, talk about what it might have been like for Jesus to be baptized. What would the water have been like? How would it have felt? This week, your act of fasting is to practice mindfully living into your identity of one who is loved and is called to love others. Invite everyone to choose a stone from the ones you have gathered. Think of that word or phrase you discussed earlier which has become a part of you during your life that has been negative or painful.

Hold the stone in your hand when you think of this. Then take that stone and place it in the bowl and say, "I am no longer \_\_\_\_\_. I am a beloved child of God." For younger participants, they can simply say "I am a beloved child of God." Each morning or evening (or time of day that works for your family or group) this week, gather around the bowl. Take another stone and repeat the phrase "I am no longer \_\_\_\_\_. I am a beloved child of God."

**PRAYER:**

To the One who calls us by name, Thank you...

- For being a God who wants to know us and desires to claim us
- For being a God who gives us new identifies and is close to us
- For being a God who guides us in our growth

Beloved God, who calls us Beloved, help us believe and live as your children. In your name we pray, AMEN.