BAPTISM OF THE LORD

Directions: *Read the scripture selected from the Revised Common Lectionary, perhaps before bed, in the morning, or during a family meal. Move through the discussion questions in one sitting or answer one a day to help reflect on the scripture throughout the week. End your time in prayer. This could be a simple ritual to incorporate into the week.*

MARK 1:4-11

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Doves are often signs of God and the Holy Spirit in the Bible. What signs of God and the Holy Spirit do you see in your life?

2. How can they help us remember God is with us?

3. Who teaches or has taught you about God and God's love?

4. Think about or share a time when someone was proud of you.

5. Who in your life breaks through the clouds and makes you feel loved and appreciated?

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PRAYER DOVE RITUAL

***Materials**: Dove activity page, large bowl, water, scissors, pencils, pen, and/or crayons*

Many different symbols remind us of our connection with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Here is a ritual to help you remember and honor that connection. Using the dove activity page:

1. Think about how God is proud of you for being your unique self. What things make you *you*? It could be things you like to do, your favorite foods, how you express yourself, your smile, your laugh, the special way you care for people, anything at all about yourself! Write/draw those things inside your dove.
2. Think about the people in your life who make you feel loved and connected to God. This could include your parents, grandparents, siblings, pastors, teachers, friends, anyone who helps you feel God's love. Write/draw those people inside your dove.
3. Cut out your dove.

Pour water into the large bowl and place your dove on top of the water. Make sure the side with the writing/drawing is facing you. Place your hand in the water and swirl it around. Watch and say the prayer as your dove moves and changes in the water. It may sink, it may break down, it may even dissolve. That's okay. It is becoming part of the water. Just like how all the great things about you and the great people in your life connect you with God!

Take your hand out of the water and touch it to your forehead or heart. As you feel the water on your skin, remember God and your community love you. If you've been baptized, take a moment to remember that.

PRAYER

Loving God, we know you are always with us and you love us. Help us notice people and things in our lives that connect us with you. Guide us to follow and make you proud!

Amen.

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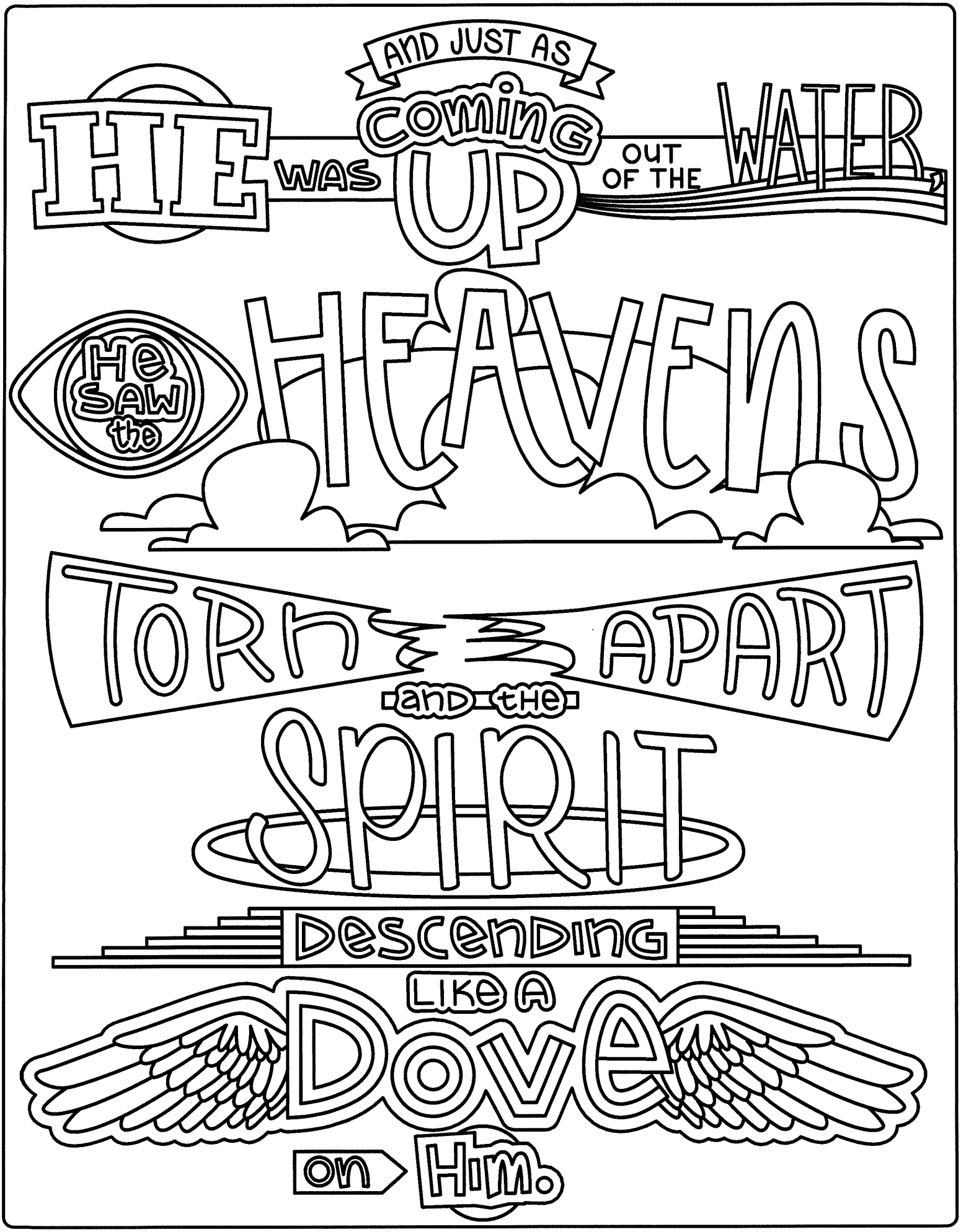
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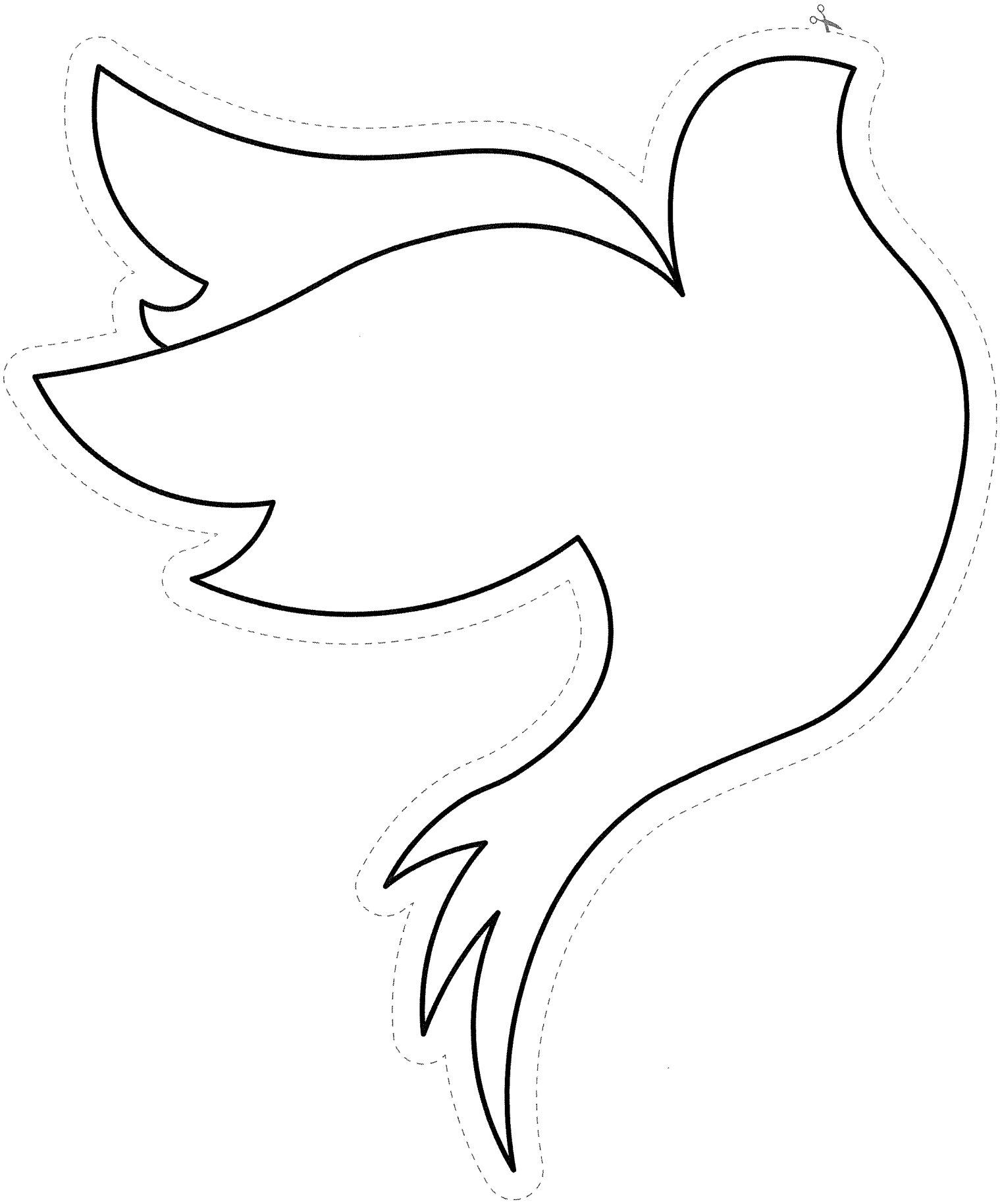

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