

## God sends John to Prepare The Way

### THE POINT

Focus:

- God sent John to prepare the way for Jesus.
- God works through faithful people in His plan.
- God helps us know our sin, and seek forgiveness.

Application:

- We repent and seek forgiveness to accept Christ.
- We seek to be faithful people, open to being used by God.

Last Week: Isaiah 9

2 Weeks Ago: Nehemiah

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### HEART CONNECTION (5-7 MINUTES)

Materials: (optional: cut-outs to write experiences on for a classroom display).

For the month of Advent, spend the first 5 minutes of your time together hearing about how families in your congregation are anticipating advent on their own. You can also talk about ways that you've seen signs of Advent in local stores or at school (Christmas decorations, school parties, etc). This encourages children to look for signs of Advent and celebrations of Christ throughout the week. Here are a few questions to get started:

- **Have you heard or read any stories this week to prepare for Christmas?**
- **Do you have a manger/nativity scene/crèche set up at home?**
- **Have you listened to any Christmas songs that tell about Jesus this week?**
- **Did you see anything in stores or your school this week that celebrated Christmas?**

If you'd like to keep a record of these, you can write a word or phrase on a cut-out like an ornament or a Christmas light and hang on a tree, glue to a poster board, or display in the classroom. You might also send cutouts home for children to fill out with their families and bring back for your classroom display!

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## **STORY CONNECTION (10-12 MINUTES)**

**PREK and KINDERGARTEN:**

**MATERIALS:** Worksheet, cut-outs, glue-sticks.

*When prompted, have the children glue the cut-out into the correct box. Talk about how all these pictures are about JESUS! The Lord is giving us a picture of who Jesus is before he even comes. You can review the pictures as you place each new one. The children will use these pictures as their guide for their quiet reflection time.*

**1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> GRADE:**

**MATERIALS:** worksheets, crayons or other coloring materials.

For older children, have them draw their own picture in each box instead of gluing the cut-out. Talk about each picture, and review them as you go. The children may use this in their quiet reflection time, but they can also draw or write on their own.

*Have the children sit in a circle for the story. This helps include children who might feel shy, and helps each child feel equally engaged. It reassures children that they are seen and welcome in the community.*

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**Last week we talked about a promise that the Lord made to send a Messiah to rescue all the people from their sin and separation from Him. The Lord made this promise, but then he waited a long, long time. He was waiting for the perfect time to send Jesus! When it was finally almost time for Jesus to come, the Lord started special preparations. He had promise the people in Israel that he would send a special messenger to tell them when the Messiah was coming. This week, we're going to learn about that special messenger.**

Luke 1:5-25

<sup>5</sup> Herod was king of Judea. During the time he was ruling, there was a priest named Zechariah. He belonged to a group of priests named after Abijah. His wife Elizabeth also came from the family line of Aaron. <sup>6</sup> Both of them did what was right in the sight of God. They obeyed all the Lord's commands and rules faithfully. <sup>7</sup> But they had no children, because Elizabeth was not able to have any. And they were both very old.

<sup>8</sup> One day Zechariah's group was on duty. He was serving as a priest in God's temple. <sup>9</sup> He happened to be chosen, in the usual way, to go into the temple of the Lord. There he was supposed to burn incense. <sup>10</sup> The time came for this to be done. All who had gathered to worship were praying outside.

<sup>11</sup> Then an angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah. The angel was standing at the right side of the incense altar. <sup>12</sup> When Zechariah saw him, he was amazed and terrified. <sup>13</sup> But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will have a child. It will be a boy, and you must call him John.

<sup>14</sup> He will be a joy and delight to you. His birth will make many people very glad.

**(smile)**

<sup>15</sup> He will be important in the sight of the Lord.

**(eye)**

He must never drink wine or other such drinks.

He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born.

**(dove)**

<sup>16</sup> He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God.

<sup>17</sup> And he will prepare the way for the Lord.

**(water)**

He will have the same spirit and power that Elijah had.

He will bring peace between parents and their children.

**(heart)**

He will teach people who don't obey to be wise and do what is right.

**(book, "law")**

In this way, he will prepare a people who are ready for the Lord."

**(person outline)**

*(continued) Luke 1:18-25*

<sup>18</sup> Zechariah asked the angel, “How can I be sure of this? I am an old man, and my wife is old too.”

<sup>19</sup> The angel said to him, “I am Gabriel. I serve God. I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. <sup>20</sup> And now you will have to be silent. You will not be able to speak until after John is born. That’s because you did not believe my words. They will come true at the time God has chosen.”

<sup>21</sup> During that time, the people were waiting for Zechariah to come out of the temple. They wondered why he stayed there so long. <sup>22</sup> When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple. They knew this because he kept gesturing [using his hands and movements to communicate] to them. He still could not speak.

**For 9 months, Zechariah could not speak. Then Elizabeth gave birth to their baby boy! Everyone thought they would name the new baby Zechariah after his father. But Zechariah knew that God wanted the baby to be named John. Zechariah obeyed God and named the baby John. Immediately, he could talk again!**

**God showed everyone that he was working out his special plan for Israel and all people in the world everywhere. He was using people like Zechariah, Elizabeth, and John to do his work in the world!**

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### **WONDER CONNECTION (3-5 MINUTES)**

MATERIALS: None.

I wonder what it was like for Zechariah to meet the angel.

I wonder how all the people felt when they heard the good news of the Messiah.

I wonder how Elisabeth felt when she heard the special news.

What do you wonder?

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### **SPIRIT CONNECTION (5-10 MINUTES)**

MATERIALS: Coloring supplies, paper.

**When we ask Jesus to come into our lives, we ask him to help us turn away from sin and darkness. We ask him to bring in light!**

**God sent John the Baptist to tell the people that there was someone special coming to bring them light and freedom from sin. John the Baptist was going to help the people celebrate Jesus!**

**Take a few minutes to talk with Jesus about what it means to have his light in your heart. This is a quiet time for you to talk with Jesus, not to talk with your neighbor or friends.**

**Suggested Prayer: Jesus, we thank you for coming to give us freedom. Thank you for sending people to tell us about your Good News! We know you use ordinary people in your work. Help us to listen to your Holy Spirit this week and be ready to work with you. We love you, Jesus! Amen.**