

General Church Education



John the Baptist

Matthew 3:1-17

Lesson 17

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Introductory Level: The Lord Is Our
Heavenly Father

For ages 5-6 years

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Matthew 3:1-17

OVERVIEW OF THE STORY

John the Baptist was the messenger sent before the Lord to prepare the way for people to receive Him. His message was one of repentance and He baptized people. The Lord Himself was baptized to set an example for us.

CONCEPTS FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

- ❖ People needed to be prepared to receive the Lord so when the time was right, John the Baptist began preaching his message of repentance.
- ❖ Repentance is being sorry for what we have done wrong and turning away from our evils. It is the first step in receiving the Lord into our lives because we cannot recognize Him if we continue to be selfish.
- ❖ Baptism is spiritual washing. It represents repentance. In the New Church baptism is a sacrament, an act that has sacred meaning. It establishes a unique connection with heaven so that the Lord and His angels can be with the person in a new way.
- ❖ Reformation, the next step, is learning how to change your life.
- ❖ Regeneration is the third step. In the New Church, regeneration means coming to love to do what is right.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

IMPORTANT IDEAS FOR CHILDREN

John taught people about the Lord when He was on the earth.
He baptized people who wanted to change their lives.
We also get baptized, usually as babies.

LET'S REMEMBER:

- ♦ **Do you remember what happened to Jesus when He was 12 years old?** (After the Passover feast at Jerusalem, He was found in the temple.)
- ♦ **What was He learning about in the temple?** (The Scriptures or the Word.)
- ♦ **Did many people recognize that Jesus was the Lord who had come on earth?** (No.)

But there was one man who did! Do you remember the special baby who was born to Elizabeth and Zacharias just before the Baby Lord was born?

- ♦ **What was his name?** (John.)
- ♦ **Do you remember what special job this baby, John, would have when he grew up?** (To prepare people to receive the Lord.)



OUR STORY FOR TODAY:

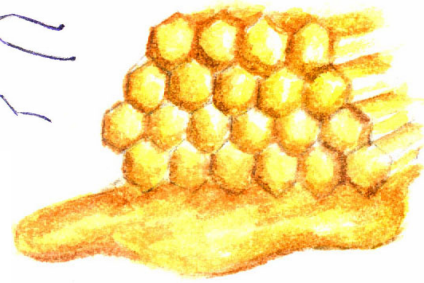
When Jesus was about thirty years old, He began to teach people the heavenly way to live. In order to help people see who He was and listen to Him, someone was sent to alert and prepare the people. Listen as we read to see what this messenger's name was and what he looked like.



Read **Matthew 3:1-4**.

What was this man's name? (John or John the Baptist.) What kind of clothes did he wear? (Made of camel's hair with a leather belt.) What kind of food did he eat? (Locusts and wild honey.) Do you think he was a rich and powerful man or one who lived simply? (Simply.)

Yes, John the Baptist lived in the wilderness. He dressed in plain clothes and ate simple food. His



message was plain and simple as well. He told the people that the Lord was coming soon and that they needed to repent. Repent means to be sorry for the bad things we have done and to try not to do them again. As a sign of repentance or a reminder that they were trying to do what was right, John baptized people with water in the Jordan River.

Have you ever seen someone baptized?

What happens at a baptism? (People come to a worship service where the minister puts water on a person's head and heart as a sign of baptism.)

We use water to wash our body when it is dirty. And a minister uses water during a baptism as a sign of washing or cleaning our spirit. Baptism opens our heart and mind to the Lord. Sometimes people are baptized when they are grown up, as in this story. Often parents bring their babies to be baptized as a sign that they will try to teach their children to keep the commandments as they grow up. The special angels that surround the babies also help in this important work.



In our story Jesus came to be baptized by John in the river. John was one of the few people who recognized right away that Jesus was the Lord who had come to earth. John hesitated to baptize Him because Jesus had never done anything wrong to repent. But John did baptize Him when Jesus asked him to do so. Listen to what happened when Jesus was baptized.



Read **Matthew 3:13-17**.

Immediately after Jesus was baptized, the heavens opened and what did He see? (The Spirit of God descending or coming down like a dove.) What did the voice from heaven say? (This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.)

From that time on, John continued to go around the land telling people that the Lord was coming and helping them get ready for Him. Jesus began teaching people how to live, healing them and doing amazing miracles.



WHAT DID WE LEARN TODAY?

- ♦ **Who came to prepare the way for the Lord?** (John the Baptist.)
- ♦ **What kind of clothes did he wear?** (Camel's hair with leather belt.)
- ♦ **What food did he eat?** (Locusts and wild honey.)
- ♦ **Where did John baptize people?** (In the Jordan River.)
- ♦ **Did John baptize Jesus?** (Yes.)
- ♦ **What did He see coming from heaven afterwards?** (A dove.)
- ♦ **Why do you think the Lord wanted to be baptized?** (So that we would learn how important it is.)

JOHN THE BAPTIST

ACTIVITIES



Recitation: Learn the recitation by heart and earn an award. Awards are on the last page of this lesson.

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.



Project choices:

Matthew 7:7-8

John Baptizes Jesus project
Color a picture of John the Baptist



Songs:

See the Savior in the Temple—Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-see-the-savior-in-the-temple/>
I Pray Thee, Lord, to Guide My Ways—Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-i-pray-thee-lord-to-guide-my-ways/>



Additional Activities:

- ❖ Taste honey. Serve honey on a spoon, on flat bread or on toast.
- ❖ Look at photos of baptisms and talk about what happens during a baptism.
- ❖ Show children special baptismal clothes.
- ❖ Talk about ways in which guardian angels protect babies and children.

John Baptizes Jesus

Learn more about John's simple life living in the wilderness.

Supplies:

1 printed page
1 piece of green paper
1 piece of blue paper
crayons or markers
scissors
glue
tape

Project instructions:

1. Color the pictures of John the Baptist, the Lord and the Dove. Cut them out.
2. Cut one long side of the blue paper in a wavy line.
3. Fold the piece of blue construction paper in half lengthwise.
4. Slip the folded blue paper over the green paper. Glue the uncut side of the blue paper to the green paper. This is the back of the project.
5. On the front side of the project, glue just the side edges of the blue paper down onto the green paper to form a pocket. The blue paper is the Jordan River.
6. Glue the dove to the top center of the green paper.
7. Once all the glue is dry, you can tell the story of the Lord's baptism by putting the figures of John and Jesus into the river.
8. If you wish, you can draw bushes, grass, trees, hills, etc. on the green paper beside the river.



John the Baptist



Dove

The Lord





Recitation Award: John the Baptist

Purchase a wide colorful ribbon. Attach each recitation award to the ribbon as it is learned. Multiple copies of the award are provided for classes.

