

General Church Education



The Birth of John

Luke 1:5-22, 57-63

Lesson 27

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Introductory Level: The Lord Is Our
Heavenly Father

For ages 5-6 years

THE BIRTH OF JOHN

Luke 1:5-22, 57-63

OVERVIEW OF THE STORY

An angel appeared to Zacharias with a message from the Lord that he and his wife Elizabeth would have a son in their old age. He would be a special baby who would fulfill the prophecy of one preparing the way of the Lord, who was about to be born on earth.

CONCEPTS FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

- ❖ The prophecies of the Lord's birth were given to keep hope for the salvation of humanity alive.
- ❖ The Old Testament prophecies foretold the coming of two special babies. One would come "in the spirit and power of Elijah" to prepare the way of the Lord. The other would be the Lord Himself—the Messiah.
- ❖ At the time of the Lord's birth, there was great spiritual darkness, that is, ignorance and lack of understanding of Divine truth. Even those who wanted to live a good life were confused.
- ❖ Each of us needs to prepare to receive the Lord into our lives. The way to do this is to repent, that is, to be sorry and to turn away from our evil thoughts, feelings and actions. This is what John's message and baptism represent.

THE BIRTH OF JOHN

IMPORTANT IDEAS FOR CHILDREN

Zacharias and Elizabeth were very good people who loved the Lord and loved each other.

They wanted a child very much and the Lord answered their prayers.

John was born to help prepare people to learn from the Lord.

LET'S REMEMBER:

- ♦ Think back to *Genesis* and the first stories in the Word. The Lord made a garden for the first people to live in. Was it a nice place? (Yes.)
- ♦ Do you remember what it was called? (The Garden of Eden.)
- ♦ Does the Lord want people to be happy? (Yes.)

He wants people to make good choices and obey His commandments. That is how to be truly happy. However, people have not always obeyed the Lord. We have seen that when people start down a bad path, it is easy to make more and more bad choices.



In the Old Testament times the Lord sent prophets, special people who spoke messages from the Lord to the people. The prophets reminded the people to obey the Lord at times when they were making bad choices and getting into trouble. These special messengers called by the Lord spoke prophecies. A prophecy is telling something that will happen in the future. Many of these prophecies tell of two very special people who would be born: one would be the Lord Himself born on earth, the other would go before the Lord to tell people

OUR STORY FOR TODAY:

This is the story about the first baby to be born, the one who would prepare the way of the Lord. He would tell the people to listen to the Lord and that He was coming soon. The story starts out with two good people who lived long ago. The man's name was Zacharias. He was a priest who helped with worship in the temple. His wife's name was Elizabeth. Let's see what it says about them.



Read **Luke 1:5-6**.

Were they good people? (Yes.) Yes, they obeyed all the commandments. They loved the Lord and they loved each other. They wanted a child very much, but they were now old and they still had no children.

Priests had many duties. One job was to burn incense in the temple while the people stood outside in the courtyard praying. One day a wonderful thing happened. An angel appeared to Zacharias and gave him good news.



Read **Luke 1:11-16**.

What was the good news? (Zacharias and Elizabeth would have a son.) What did the angel say the child's name would be? (John.)

The angel also said the new baby would be "filled with the Holy Spirit," and that he would "make ready a people prepared for the Lord." This baby that Zacharias and Elizabeth were going to have would be the long awaited one who would prepare the way for the Lord when He came on earth. How wonderful it was that this prophecy was coming true!

How do you think Zacharias felt about this? He must have been very happy! It was such an amazing thing, he wondered if it could be true that they would have a child since he and his wife were so old. But because he did not believe at first, he became mute or unable to speak. When he came out of the temple, he could not speak, and people wondered about this.



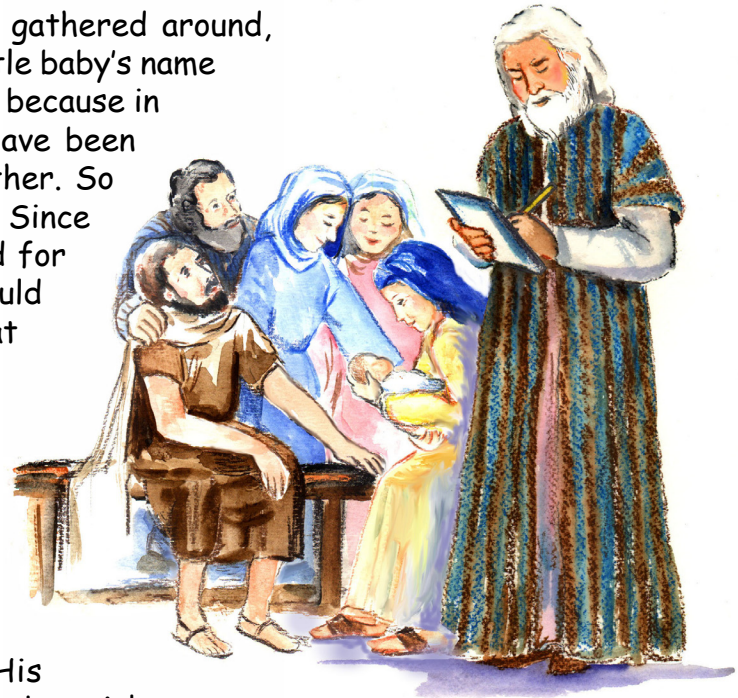
Read **Luke 1:18-22**.

Do you think the Lord will keep His promise even when it seems impossible? (Yes.) All things are possible with the Lord.

For many months Zacharias could not speak. Friends and relatives got used to him motioning with his hands. Then one day the baby was born. It was the custom back then to have your friends and family members come to your home when the new baby was eight days old. They would celebrate the baby's birth and the parents would tell everyone the baby's name.



As their family and friends gathered around, Elizabeth told them that the little baby's name was John. This was very unusual because in those days a baby boy would have been given the same name as his father. So they asked Zacharias about this. Since he still could not talk, he called for a writing tablet. This tablet would have been a flat piece of clay that could be written on with a sharp object. Let's find out what he wrote.



Read **Luke 1:57-63**.

What did he write? ("His name is John.") Yes, and then an amazing thing happened. His voice returned and he could speak again! Zacharias praised the Lord.

This was such a powerful sign that the people all around were talking about it. They knew that the Lord would be with this baby, that there was a special purpose for his life. This baby would grow up to be John the Baptist. He would fulfill the prophecy and prepare the people to receive the Lord. He would tell people about the Lord's coming and baptize those who believed. We will learn more about him later in another story. Next time we will learn about the other very special baby whose birth was told ahead of time in the prophecies.

WHAT DID WE LEARN TODAY?

- ♦ **What is a prophet?** (Someone who speaks for the Lord.)
- ♦ **What is a prophecy?** (A message about what will happen in the future.)
- ♦ **What did Zacharias see as he was offering incense?** (An angel.)
- ♦ **What good news was he told?** (That he and his wife Elizabeth would have a son in their old age.)
- ♦ **What happened when Zacharias did not believe?** (He became mute.)
- ♦ **Why did Zacharias name the baby John?** (The angel told them to.)
- ♦ **What special job would John grow up to do?** (Tell people the Lord was coming soon.)
- ♦ **Do you think people will listen to John's message?**

THE BIRTH OF JOHN

ACTIVITIES



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

Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

Luke 2:9-11



Project choices:

Angel Appears to Zacharias project
Color a picture of the baby John



Songs:

Away in a Manger—Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-away-in-a-manger/>

O Tell Me, Gentle Shepherd—Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-o-tell-me-gentle-shepherd/>



Additional Activities:

- ❖ Children may like to use play dough, clay, plasticine or beeswax to make a little tablet. Using a pencil point or other sharp object, write the letters for John's name on it.
- ❖ Each of us has special qualities that can be used to serve the Lord. Ask children if they know why their parents gave them their name.
- ❖ Practice being mute and see how it feels. How you would communicate with others?

Angel Appears to Zacharias

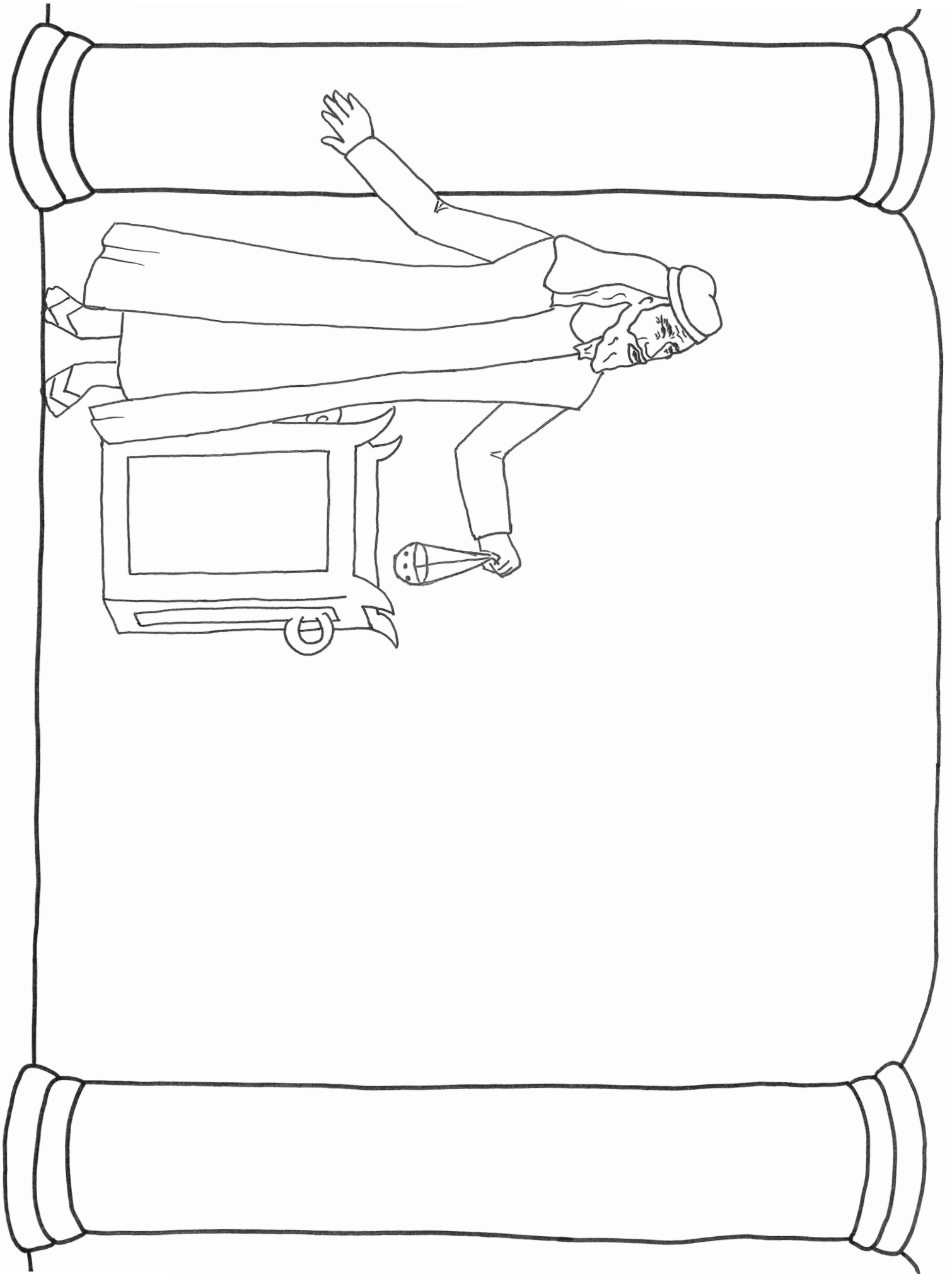
This project helps children remember how an angel appeared to Zacharias.

Supplies:

1 printed page
1 piece of yellow paper
crayons or markers
glue
glitter

Project instructions:

1. Color the printed picture of Zacharias in the temple.
2. In the blank space between the altar and the far temple pillar, draw and color the angel appearing.
3. Fold the part of the page with the far side pillar over, so that the angel is hidden and only Zacharias and the altar can be seen. You may want to draw another temple pillar on the outside of the fold.
4. Open the picture all the way again and add rays of glitter around the angel to show that he is a messenger from the Lord.
5. Now you can retell the story of the angel appearing to Zacharias by folding and unfolding your picture, first showing Zacharias alone and then the angel with him.





Recitation Award: The Birth of John

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.

