

Use Week of:

Unit 19 • Session 2

John Was Born

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Luke 1

STORY POINT:

John was born to get people ready for Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE:

John 1:1

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Is Jesus God or a human? Jesus is both fully God and fully human.



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LEADER Bible Study

Some of the last words of the Lord recorded in the Old Testament are found in Malachi 4: “Look, I am going to send you the prophet Elijah ... he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers” (vv. 5-6). The Book of Malachi was written more than 400 years before Jesus was born. For centuries, God’s people did not hear from Him. They were back in their homeland but were subject to other ruling nations. Eventually, the Romans took over.

The Roman emperor installed Herod as a leader over Judea and surrounding regions such as Samaria and Galilee. To gain the people’s favor, King Herod replaced Zerubbabel’s temple in Jerusalem with a beautiful marble temple constructed by 10,000 workers. This was the temple in which Zechariah, a priest from the family of Abijah, served the Lord. This was the temple in which God, through the angel Gabriel, broke His silence after so many years.

Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, were both “righteous in God’s sight” (Luke 1:6), living by faith in God’s promise to send a Messiah. Like Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 18, they were getting along in years and did not have any children. Elizabeth’s barrenness was a point of disgrace for her among the community (Luke 1:25) and God graciously answered this couple’s prayers.

An angel appeared to Zechariah in the temple sanctuary and delivered good news: “Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear a son.” Echoing Malachi’s prophecy, the angel declared this son would “turn the hearts of fathers to their children” (Luke 1:17)

For his doubting, Zechariah was rendered mute until the promise came to pass. When John was born, Zechariah could speak again. He praised God and prophesied. John was born to prepare the way for Jesus. John would point people to Jesus, the Savior God promised.

The BIBLE Story

John Was Born

Luke 1

Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, did not have any children. They loved God, and **Zechariah was a priest.** Two times a year, Zechariah went to Jerusalem to serve in the temple.

Many priests worked in the temple. **One day,** Zechariah was chosen to do a special job. People were praying outside, and **Zechariah went inside the temple. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared.** Zechariah was afraid!

“Do not be afraid,” the angel said. **“God heard your prayer. Your wife will have a son named John. God’s Spirit will be with Him.”** The angel said that John would get people ready for the Messiah to come.

“How can I know this will happen?” Zechariah asked. **“I am old, and my wife is old.”**

The angel said, **“God sent me to tell you this good news. Because you did not believe my words, you will not be able to speak until these things happen.”**

Zechariah left the temple, and he could not talk. He went home to **Elizabeth.** She **became pregnant and gave birth to a son.** Her neighbors and relatives were very happy.

Zechariah and Elizabeth named their son John. Finally,



Zechariah could speak again. He praised God. God's Spirit was with John. Zechariah told the people God's words: **"God has come to help His people. He will save us through David's family. He will rescue us from our enemies."** Then he spoke to John: **"You will be called a prophet of the Most High. You will go before the Lord to prepare the way for Him."**

The time had come. God was going to bring His light into the dark world. Peace was coming for God's people.

John grew up and lived in the wilderness until God told him to get the people ready for Jesus.

Christ Connection: When Zechariah believed God's word, he praised God. Zechariah's son, John, was born to get people ready for Jesus. People would praise God for keeping His promise to send the Savior.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Change voices:** As you read the story, change voices and body positions to go along with the Bible people.
- **Make it a monologue:** Invite an older male to dress in Bible times clothing and tell the Bible story from the perspective of Zechariah.

INTRODUCE the Story



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Welcome time

- "He Came Into the World" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- "Finish the Pattern" activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Invite preschoolers to circle what comes next in each row.
SAY • Shortly before Jesus was born, God planned for another baby to be born. Today we will hear how God told a priest named Zechariah that he and his wife, Elizabeth, would have a baby named John who would get people ready for Jesus.

LOW PREP

- worship songs
- "He Came Into the World" song (optional)

Make up a worship dance

Play worship music about Jesus. Point out the name *Jesus* each time it is sung. Suggest preschoolers think about Jesus as they sway back and forth to the beat of the music. Turn in circles, clap hands, or create unique movements as the music plays. Invite a volunteer to perform his or her dance for Jesus in front of the group.

SAY • Listen to the words that are being sung. The singers are praising God, and when we think about Jesus

when we move, we are worshiping Him too. In today's Bible story, an angel told Zechariah he would have a son named John. John's job would be to get people ready for Jesus. When John was born, Zechariah praised God.

Write on a dry erase board

Give a small dry erase board and dry erase marker to a child. Suggest she draw or print letters on the board. Open the Bible to Luke 1 and point to the name *John*. Challenge an older child to copy John's name on the board.

- small dry erase boards
- dry erase markers
- erasers
- Bible

SAY • Zechariah and Elizabeth were old, and they had no children. When an angel appeared to Zechariah and told him that Elizabeth would have a baby, Zechariah did not believe it. After he saw the angel, Zechariah could not speak until after baby John was born. The Bible says when the people asked what the baby's name was, Zechariah wrote *John* on a writing tablet.

Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Tell preschoolers to pretend they cannot speak by placing their hands over their mouths as they move to the Bible study area.

- countdown video (optional)

TEACH the Story



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Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at Luke 1 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • Today's Bible story is from the New Testament Book of Luke. Luke is the third book in the New Testament. Let's say the names of the first three books of the New Testament: Matthew; Mark; Luke.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "John Was Born" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

SAY • God gave Zechariah and Elizabeth a son. Even better, their son would get people ready for the most important Son to ever be born—Jesus. **John was born to get people ready for Jesus.** The time had come. God was going to bring His light into the dark world. Peace was coming for God's people. People would praise God for keeping His promise to send the Savior.

Practice the key passage

Print the words *beginning*, *Word*, and *God* on index cards. Place the key passage marker at John 1:1. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Say the verse and hold up the corresponding index card for each word as it is spoken. Next, lead children in saying the verse but pause and hold up the card instead of saying the word when you come to it. Encourage children to say the word on the card.

SAY • Good job saying these words. Our key passage says Jesus is *the* Word. Jesus was with God in the beginning, but He is also God at the same time.

Sing the key passage song, “In the Beginning,” and the theme song, “He Came Into the World.”

- index cards
- marker
- Bible
- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- “In the Beginning (John 1:1)” song
- “He Came Into the World” song

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Jesus and God are the same, but Jesus was born as a human. ***Is Jesus God or a human? Jesus is both fully God and fully human.*** God knew we needed Him to become one of us to save us from sin, so God came to earth in the form of a baby.

- Big Picture Question Poster



Missions moment

SAY • Like **John was born to get people ready for Jesus**, missionaries get people ready to trust in Jesus to save them from sin. Last week, we learned about the people in a city called São Paulo, Brazil. Let’s watch another video about missionaries in Brazil. Play the “Relentless Love (Part 1)” video, then pray for Brandi, Amanda, and other believers in Brazil.

- “Relentless Love (Part 1)” video

Pray and transition to experience the story

EXPERIENCE the Story



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LOW PREP

· painter's tape

Prepare the way

Give preschoolers a roll of painter's tape. Ask them to work together to create a taped path on the floor for people to follow. Help children pull and tear the tape and compliment their attempts to prepare a path for other people. When children have prepared the path, walk on it. Invite friends to join you. Challenge a child to walk backwards or hop on one foot along the path.

SAY • You got the path ready for me to walk on. An angel of the Lord told Zechariah that his son, John, would be the one to get people ready for Jesus. The people had waited for many years for Jesus, and the time was almost here for Him to come. **John was born to get people ready for Jesus.** Zechariah praised God because he knew that John would be part of God's plan to send the Savior, Jesus.

Reverse charades

· "Charades" printable
· scissors (adult use)

Print and cut apart the "Charades" cards. Gather boys and girls together and ask a child to volunteer to stand and face the group. Show the group one of the cards, being careful that the volunteer does not see it. Instruct preschoolers to act out the item pictured without using words. Everyone should be moving simultaneously, trying to mimic the

pictured item while the volunteer guesses. Continue playing with a new volunteer each time.

SAY • When you moved your body so your friend would guess the word *guitar*, you used your hands to pretend make music, but you did not speak. In today's Bible story, the angel told Zechariah that he would not be able to speak because he did not believe the angel when he said that Elizabeth would have a baby. After baby John was born, Zechariah spoke and praised God because Jesus would be born soon. Zechariah understood that God would keep His promise to send a Savior. ***Is Jesus God or a human? Jesus is both fully God and fully human.***

Build a baby bed

Place a doll and baby blanket in the blocks area. Suggest boys and girls arrange the blocks and cardboard pieces to build a baby bed. Show pictures of a crib or a bassinet on a tablet or smartphone. Help a child stack blocks upright around the bed. Arrange the blanket to give the baby a place to rest.

- blocks or cardboard pieces
- doll
- baby blanket
- electronic tablet or smartphone

SAY • An angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah while he was at the temple. Zechariah learned that even though he and Elizabeth were old, she would have a special baby named John. **John was born to get people ready for Jesus.** John grew up and lived in the wilderness until God told him it was time to get the people ready for Jesus.

- Bible
- index cards
- markers
- washable ink pad
- rubber letter stamps
- paper

Stamp letters and words

Print Bible story-related words onto index cards. Read a word and help a child select the letters that spell the word.

Demonstrate how to press the stamp into the ink and touch it to the paper. Print a child's name on a card and challenge her to spell her own name as well. Recall parts of the Bible story as children create. Open the Bible to John 1:1 and Luke 1. Point to words that a preschooler is spelling.

SAY • You spelled the word *Jesus*. God kept His promise when He sent Jesus to be born. Jesus is God, but when He was born, He was also a baby. ***Is Jesus God or a human? Jesus is both fully God and fully human.*** Jesus had all the power that God has, but He was also a baby boy who grew up to be a man who would take the punishment for people's sins.



Mix rice and beans

Post an allergy alert. Explain to preschoolers that rice and beans is a very popular meal to eat in Brazil. Many people eat rice and beans every day, even for breakfast. Invite preschoolers to pretend to make rice and beans by stirring the dried ingredients into a bowl. Remind them that the dried rice and beans cannot be eaten, but children can feel the ingredients with their fingers.

SAY • Missionaries in Brazil learn to eat this food and eat other foods that are popular. They make their home in Brazil so that they can tell people about Jesus. Zechariah's son, **John, was born to get people ready for Jesus.** God wants all people, including people who live in Brazil, to know that He sent His Son, Jesus, to be the Savior of the world.

- Allergy Alert
- uncooked rice
- uncooked black beans
- bowls
- spoons

Tip: You may also prepare rice and beans before class for tasting.

Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Serve cheese singles for snack. Show a child how to press an angel-shaped cookie cutter through the cheese to create an angel shape. Mention that an angel told Zechariah that he would have a son named John who would get people ready for the Messiah to come.

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. Who appeared to Zechariah at the temple? (*an angel*)
2. What did the angel's tell Zechariah? (*Elizabeth, Zechariah's wife, would have a son named John.*)
3. Why didn't Zechariah believe the angel at first? (*Zechariah and Elizabeth were both very old.*)
4. Why did God make Zechariah unable to talk until John was born? (*Because he did not believe the angel.*)
5. Why was John born? (**John was born to get people ready for Jesus.**)
6. *Is Jesus God or a human? Jesus is both fully God and fully human.*

Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- cheese singles (optional)
- angel-shaped cookie cutters (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- "In the Beginning (John 1:1)" song
- "He Came Into the World" song
- *Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers*