



## PARENT/GUARDIAN INTRO

The story of Easter is one that started long ago. Before Adam and Eve, Moses or the prophets, God was already hatching a plan to save mankind. Four hundred years after the final words of the Old Testament were written, a baby was born in a manger and a new prophet was given to Israel. The baby in the manger was Jesus; the prophet was his cousin, John the Baptist.

When Jesus was about 30 years old, he began his ministry on earth, which would last for about three years. His cousin John baptized him, and Jesus' deity was confirmed as the Father spoke from heaven and the Holy Spirit came down as a dove. This man was no ordinary teacher; Jesus was God in human form.

After Jesus was baptized, he was tested in the wilderness by Satan who urged him to take control of the situation instead of trusting in God's plan. Jesus answered the Devil with words straight from God.

This week, help your children grasp the greatness of who Jesus was. He was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. He was the loved Son of God. He was the sinless Savior. He was the Messiah. He was and is the only one who could bring us to God. And with his arrival, the world would never be the same.

## INTRODUCTION & VIDEO

**PLAY** the first video on the lesson webpage (Intro to this week's lesson from Garrett), if you haven't done so already.

Then...

**PLAY** the second video on the lesson webpage (Buck Denver Lesson).

Follow the video by saying something like this:

**Wow! This is a pretty exciting story so far. Jesus was born as the fulfillment to the Old Testament prophecies. Then God sent a new prophet to Israel named John the Baptist. John baptized Jesus and we saw the Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—for the first time. Then Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness. You may be wondering what all of this has to do with Easter; we'll be getting to that in the next few weeks.**

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- Why did Matthew begin his gospel with the genealogy of Jesus? (*Because it connected Jesus to David and Abraham and let the people know that this was the Messiah they had been waiting for.*)
- Who was the prophet God sent to Israel after they waited for 400 years? (*John the Baptist.*)
- What did John the Baptist tell the people to do? (*Repent or turn from their sins.*)

- What happened when John baptized Jesus? (*The Holy Spirit came down as a dove and a voice spoke from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." We saw the Trinity.*)
- When Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, how did Jesus respond? (*He quoted the Bible and did not give in.*)

## **GOING DEEP**

Read the story of Jesus' baptism from Matthew 3, using this script. Even though we just heard this story in our video, repetition will help your children to remember it even more. This also gives your children the chance to interact and ask questions throughout reading the story.

(If they are able, have your children read the red, italicized statements throughout this story.)

Our story begins with a prophet named John the Baptist. The book of Matthew says that John was preaching in the wilderness. John went around telling people, ***"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*** Repent means to turn away from sin.

Many years before, a prophet named Isaiah had predicted that another prophet would come to introduce the Messiah, or Savior. Isaiah had said: ***"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.'"***

John was this prophet that Isaiah had talked about. John dressed in clothing made of camel's hair and ate bugs and wild honey! You wouldn't think that people would want to spend time with a strange man living out in the desert, but the Bible says people from Jerusalem and all over Judea went out to John in the wilderness to repent of their sins and be baptized in the Jordan River.

Some people thought that John was the Messiah, but he told them that one more powerful than him was coming, someone whose sandals John did not feel worthy to carry. John told them that he baptized them with water, but this Messiah would baptize them with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus was about 30 years old at this time. He came to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. John had been baptizing people who confessed their sin. So why would Jesus need to be baptized? That's what John wondered. He said: ***"I need to be baptized by you, and you come to me?"***

Listen to Jesus' response: ***"Let it be so now; for it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."*** When John heard Jesus' words, he agreed to baptize him right away. This was all part of God's plan to establish his Kingdom on earth.

But as John was baptizing Jesus, something amazing happened! As Jesus came up out of the water, the Bible says the heavens opened and the Spirit of God came down like a dove and landed on him. And a voice from heaven spoke and said: ***"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."*** God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit—three parts of One God—were there at Jesus' baptism. I'm sure the people who witnessed it knew that Jesus was very special!

Jesus' baptism was just the start of his amazing ministry. Jesus would be like no other man who ever lived. That's because he is God. He had come to be the Savior of the world, and establish the Kingdom of God.

## **CLOSER LOOK**

### **Activity 1: GOD'S PLAN THROUGHOUT THE BIBLE**

Jesus fulfilled more than 300 Old Testament prophecies through his birth, life and death. Help your children look up some Bible verses to explore some of these prophecies.



## **PRAY**

Spend a few minutes in prayer as a whole family. Pray for personal needs, pray about the lesson we just learned, and pray about the current situation we all find ourselves in. While parents may lead this time of prayer, encourage your children to participate as well, even if it is only a brief sentence or two. Here are some prayer points to go off of:

- That God would guide and help medical personnel and our leaders
- That God would heal anyone who is sick
- That God would protect those who are not sick
- That we will be able to physically gather as a church again soon
- That people, now more than ever, would see Jesus as their savior and accept him into their hearts