

# JOHN'S MINISTRY BEGAN

MATTHEW 3; MARK 1; LUKE 3; JOHN 1



**CHRIST CONNECTION:** We can believe in Jesus, turn from our sins, be forgiven, and follow Him.

**KEY PASSAGE PHRASE:** The Word became flesh and lived among us. John 1:14

## BABIES GOSPEL GEMS

- A man named John lived in the wilderness, wore a leather belt and clothes made from camel's hair, and ate locusts and wild honey.
- John taught people about Jesus. He told them to turn away from their sin and be baptized.
- John baptized the people with water to show their sins were washed away.

**BIBLE STORY FOR TODDLERS:** John was a man who lived in the wilderness, wore a leather belt and clothes made from camel's hair, and ate locusts and wild honey. John had an important job—to get people ready for Jesus, the One who would save people from their sins. Isaiah, a prophet, had told about someone who would shout in the wilderness. John was the man Isaiah was talking about. People came from all around to hear John teach. The people listened to John and turned away from their sins. John baptized them to show their sins were washed away. John told the people that he baptized with water, but someone was coming who would baptize with the Holy Spirit.



## LEARNING Activities

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Engage babies in the following activities during the session. In each activity, provide handheld Bibles for babies to handle. Open a Bible to Matthew 3. Show the Bible Story Poster as you say the gospel gems in a soothing voice. Read the Key Passage Phrase Card. Pray for the babies.

### 1 SING THE KEY PASSAGE

Sing to the tune of “The Farmer In the Dell”:

“The Word became flesh,  
The Word became flesh,  
The Word became flesh (clap),  
And lived among us.”

| **SAY** “ Our key passage phrase reminds us that the Word became flesh and lived among us. ”

### 2 WASH AWAY

Use a plastic container filled with a small amount of water. Place babies’ hands inside the plastic container and wash their hands with a washcloth and water. Wipe their hands with a dry towel. Repeat as interest allows. Read the gospel gems as the babies explore the water.

| **SAY** “ Who did John teach the people about? Yes, John taught the people about Jesus. John told them to turn away from their sin and be baptized. John baptized the people with water to show their sins were washed away. ”

### 3 TOUCH AND FEEL

Bring in different items that are made of leather, wool, and cashmere, such as a belt, wallet, or an article of clothing. Retell the first gospel gem as the babies touch and feel the items.

| **SAY** “ Today in our Bible story, we learned about a man named John who lived in the wilderness, wore a leather belt and clothes made from camel’s hair, and ate locusts and wild honey. ”

Check diapers, serve bottles if needed, and release babies to parents according to your church’s security guidelines. Give parents today’s Big Picture Card. Repeat the Christ Connection, gospel gems, and Bible-learning activities for babies who stay a second hour.



## LEARNING Activities

Engage toddlers in the following activities. In each activity, show the Bible Story Poster as you review the Bible story. Provide small Bibles for toddlers to handle.

### 1 CIRCLE TIME

Open your Bible to Matthew 3. Show the Bible Story Poster as you tell the provided toddlers' Bible story. Read the Key Passage Phrase Card and guide toddlers to say it. Pray for the toddlers.

### 2 DECORATE "JOHN"

Provide the toddlers with a "Person Outline" printable (one per toddler). Lay out brown felt for John's belt, pieces of sandpaper for the wilderness, and strands of tan and brown yarn for clothes. Instruct the toddlers to use crayons and liquid glue to decorate their "John" images. For sand, place the sandpaper under the paper; then use a brown crayon to shade the toddlers' papers to see the "sand" imprint appear. Tell the story as the toddlers decorate.

**SAY** "Who did we learn about today in our Bible story? Yes, John the Baptist! Where did John live? Yes, John lived in the wilderness. Did John have an important job to do? Yes, John got people ready for Jesus, the One who would save them from their sins."

### 3 PLAY TURN AWAY

Gather the toddlers in a line. Tell the toddlers to listen for the words "red," "green," and "turn." Red represents sin. Green represents following Jesus. Turn represents turning away from sin. Tell the toddlers to take one step back when they hear, "Red," and one step forward when they hear, "Green." Encourage the toddlers to turn when they hear, "Turn." Review the Bible story as the toddlers play.

**SAY** "Did the people listen to John? Yes. Did the people turn away from their sins? Yes! They did! We can also believe in Jesus, turn from our sins, be forgiven, and follow Him."

### 4 TURN INTO SHAPES

Provide play dough and fun-shaped plastic cookie cutters. Encourage the toddlers to listen for instructions, such as make a heart, make a square, and so forth. After the toddlers' finish each instruction, invite the toddlers to stand and turn around. Retell the story.

**SAY** "Did the people in our Bible story turn from their sins? Yes! The people turned from their sins, and we can too! We can believe in Jesus, turn from our sins, be forgiven, and follow Jesus."

### 5 LOOK AT PICTURES



Gather pictures of foods and a picture of a locust. Squirt honey into a sealed ziplock bag. Reinforce the seal with duct tape. Show the pictures and the honey. Allow the toddlers to explore the items. Review the Bible story, pointing to the locust and honey when appropriate.

**SAY** "John the Baptist ate locust and wild honey, and he lived in the wilderness. Who did John teach people about? Yes, John told people about Jesus. We can tell others about Jesus too."

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## 1 TRANSITION ACTIVITY: SHOW THE ONE

Gather one of several objects from around the room (a ball, a block, and so forth). Hold up the item, and lead the toddlers to count and say how many there are. Encourage the toddlers to hold up the number one with their hands. Repeat for all items.

**SAY** “ In our Bible story, we learned about the One who would save people from their sins. Do you remember who the One is? Yes, Jesus is the One God sent to save people from their sins. ”

## 2 SING THE KEY PASSAGE

Sing to the tune of “The Farmer In the Dell”:

“The Word became flesh,  
The Word became flesh,  
The Word became flesh (clap),  
And lived among us.”

**SAY** “ Our key passage reminds us that Jesus, the Word, became flesh. He lived and died for our sins so that we can be forgiven and follow Him. ”

## 3 CALL OUT AND RESPOND

Invite the toddlers to say the Christ Connection in a call-and-response. Instruct the toddlers to say, “We can”, and the leaders to say, “believe in Jesus,” “turn from our sins,” “be forgiven,” and “follow Jesus.” Encourage the toddlers to “shout” as John did in the wilderness.

**SAY** “ Who did people come to hear teach? Yes, John. The people listened to John, believed in Jesus, turned away from their sins, and were forgiven! Did John baptize people? Yes! John baptized them to show their sins were washed away. ”

## 4 WASH AWAY



Provide a large plastic bin with dirt for toddlers to explore. Add plastic toy insects and plastic cups to the dirt container. Set out a pitcher of water and pour the water on the toddlers’ hands to wash off the dirt. Provide paper towels for easy cleanup. Retell the Bible story. Point out how John baptized people to show their sins were washed away. If possible, rinse hands off over a sink or an extra plastic bin to avoid messes.

**SAY** “ John told the people that he baptized with water, but someone was coming who would baptize with the Holy Spirit. Who was the One who would save people from their sins? Jesus! ”

Check diapers, serve a snack if needed, and release toddlers to parents according to your church’s security procedures. Give parents today’s Big Picture Card to reinforce today’s Bible story, Christ Connection, and gospel gems throughout the week.