

John the Baptist's Life

Luke 1:17

QUESTIONS

AGES 3–5

1. Who was the special messenger who prepared the way for Jesus? *John the Baptist.*
2. What did John the Baptist tell people to do and what does it mean? *Repent, turn away from sin and turn toward God.*
3. What did the Father call Jesus at His baptism? *My beloved Son.*
4. Who tempted Jesus in the wilderness? *Satan tempted Jesus.*

AGES 6–8

1. What did John say was coming very soon? *The kingdom of heaven.*
2. What is the kingdom of heaven? *It is the realm of God's rule over those who belong to Him. This is always true, but one day Jesus will also physically reign on earth (Rev 20:4–6).*
3. What did many people do to show their repentance? *They were baptized. This was a way for them to admit that they were unworthy sinners.*
4. Did Jesus sin? *No. He was sinless, but He was baptized to show that He would identify with and take the place of sinners.*
5. Why was it wrong if Jesus turned the stone into bread? *He would not have been trusting God's provision.*

AGES 9–11

1. Besides confession and sadness, what else is part of repentance? *A desire and choice to turn from sin and do what is right. This is seen through changed behavior.*
2. What does Jesus do for those who repent? *He baptizes them in the Holy Spirit, saves them from hell, and lets them into His kingdom.*
3. Why did Jesus say He wanted to be baptized? *To fulfill all righteousness (Matt 3:15): to publicly accept God's plan for Him to be the Messiah.*
4. Why was it wrong for Jesus to accept kingdoms from Satan? *He would not have been trusting God's timing, and it would have required Jesus to worship Satan instead of God.*

5. How can you follow Jesus' example when you are tempted? (1) *Resist by faith that God is in control and will provide a way of escape.* (2) *Be filled with the Spirit.* (3) *Hide God's Word in your heart.* (4) *Deny yourself and put God and others first.* (5) *Depend on Christ, who lives within every Christian.*

INTRODUCE

AGES 3–5

HOW TO TREAT A KING

Ask the children how they should treat the following groups of people: parents, teachers, and police officers. Is it a good idea to disobey your parents or teachers? What about acting silly around a police officer? Since all these individuals are in charge, how should children treat them? If you show this kind of obedience to regular people, what kind of obedience does Jesus deserve? In our story today, John the Baptist says that Jesus is the great King. Because of that, we must obey His command to repent and honor Him.

READY FOR THE KING

John the Baptist came to prepare the people for the King. If your classroom allows, you can teach the lesson by having the children help you prepare a dinner table for an important and very special guest. Have the children sit around the table and explain the ministry of John the Baptist to them. He didn't instruct people to make sure their homes and their tables were ready, but he came to make sure that their hearts were ready. End the lesson by explaining to the children how they must be ready for Christ when He comes again.

AGES 6–8

BELONGING

Jesus' baptism demonstrates that He identified fully with mankind, and yet was not like any other person. He is both fully God and fully man. This can be illustrated by showing the children various objects which are either black or white and then asking them which group it should go with. Finally, bring out another object that is both black and white. Where would such an object belong? In today's lesson, we will see how Jesus' humanity and deity are both affirmed at His baptism.

ROLE REVERSAL

Ask the children to name their favorite athlete, singer, or actor/actress. Now ask the children to imagine this person coming to their house to ask them for lessons on how to be a better athlete, singer, or actor/actress! How would they respond? They might say something like John the Baptist, who, when approached by Jesus to be baptized, exclaimed, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" (Matt 3:14). In today's lesson, we will learn why Jesus, the King, came to be baptized by John, the King's messenger.

AGES 9–11

NAVY SEALS

Very few people become Navy SEALs. The training is rigorous. Using the training requirements listed on the official Navy SEAL website (www.navyseals.com), describe the mental and physical tests that must be passed before one can qualify to serve with the SEALs. Now imagine a test so difficult that only one human has ever passed. Everyone else, including you and me, has failed. The test is perfect obedience to God, and the man is Jesus Christ. In today's lesson, we'll learn about His test.

NEVER GAVE IN

Invite two or more children to get into push-up position. Challenge them to maintain this position (chest and knees off the ground) as long as possible. While they hold this position, have the rest of the class turn to Hebrews 4:15. Explain that Jesus experienced temptation just like us. However, unlike us, He never gave in (sinned). As the children begin to tire and are unable to maintain their form, remind the children that Jesus never gave in to sin.

ILLUSTRATE

AGES 3–5

VISUAL AIDS

This story includes lots of concrete visuals. Bring in props (some real, some pretend) to illustrate as you tell the story: coarse garment, leather belt, grasshopper, honey, water (with toy person to baptize in it), rubber snake, fruit, stone, pretend axe, tree (or smaller plant), sandal, pitchfork, straw/chaff, grain, etc.

MESSIAH'S QUALIFICATIONS

John affirmed that Jesus was the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. He could only do this because he met all the necessary qualifications: 1) He fully obeyed God; 2) He was anointed by the Spirit; 3) He was well-pleasing to God. These qualifications are all affirmed at Jesus' baptism. Have students cut out the squares and rectangles and glue them to the cross in the correct order. Students can decorate the cross and pictures with crayons, glitter, glue, etc.

AGES 6–8

EXACT LIKENESS

Jesus "is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature" (Heb 1:3). Bring in two pictures that look similar but, after closer inspection, are not exactly the same. Explain that unlike these examples, Jesus perfectly reflects the Father.

MY BELOVED SON

The Father expressed His deep love for the Son at His baptism (Matt 3:17b). Share a story of a couple who waited many years for a child. Describe their delight in finally holding their newborn son or daughter in their arms for the first time. Explain that this love, as great as it is, cannot compare to the Father's love for the Son and the Son's love for the Father. This is because no human father and son or daughter have ever been so close, so united in heart as God the Father and God the Son (John 10:30).

AGES 9–11

WAY OF ESCAPE

Describe or show the class a picture of a runaway truck ramp. Explain that these traffic devices are there to help vehicles with braking trouble stop safely. These ramps are placed next to the highway on a downhill portion of road and are filled with sand or gravel. They are a "way of escape" for runaway vehicles. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13 as a class. Explain that God has also provided us a "way of escape" in each temptation.

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR SWORD?

Before firearms were invented, a soldier's sword was his constant companion. He ate with it, slept with it, traveled with it, worked with it, and fought with it. It never left his side! He knew every inch of his sword and cleaned and sharpened it often. What about you? The Bible, the "sword of the Spirit" (Eph 6:17), is our only weapon in the fight against Satan's attacks. Find out who knows their "sword" the best by racing to look up references (like Psalm 119:11, Ephesians 6:17, and Colossians 3:16) that describe the power of God's Word in our struggle against Satan's temptations:

WHAT DOES REPENTANCE LOOK LIKE?

In Luke's account of John the Baptist's ministry, John gives several examples of the fruit of repentance. If someone has two shirts, what should they do (Luke 3:11)? What should tax collectors do (3:12–13)? What should soldiers do (3:14)? Look up the verses to answer the questions. What does repentance look like in your life? Think about your roles in life: as a child, a friend, a student, or a brother or sister.