

JOHN POINTED TO JESUS

JOHN 3



KEY PASSAGE: 1 John 3:5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Did Jesus ever sin? No, Jesus never sinned.

CHRIST CONNECTION: John pointed people to believe in Jesus as the Messiah. When people believe in Jesus as the Messiah, they receive eternal life and can point others to believe in Jesus too!

STORY POINT: John pointed people to follow Jesus as the Messiah.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

We see the humility of John the Baptist in John chapter 3 as he led more people to follow Jesus. We also learn that Jesus' gift of eternal life is ours for the taking when received by faith.

In this passage, we read that both John and Jesus were ministering and baptizing people in the same area of Judea. Suddenly, an argument arose among some of John's disciples and others. They took their dispute to John, saying, "Rabbi, the one you testified about, and who was with you across the Jordan, is baptizing—and everyone is going to him."

John, however, wasn't jealous, nor was he worried about those who listened to him one day and went to follow Jesus the next. John knew who Jesus really is and how worthy He is to be followed. John reminded the people of the words he had already spoken: "I am not the Messiah, but I've been sent ahead of him."

John viewed himself like a friend of the groom at a wedding. It was his duty to stand by, listen for Him, and rejoice greatly at His words. John's joy was made complete by the ministry of Jesus as Messiah. John spoke with humility: "He must increase, but I must decrease."

The beauty of the gospel is that God cast His wrath upon His own Son and granted His righteousness to believers, so that all who trust in Him will receive salvation. Jesus took our sin upon Himself so that we may live forever in right relation to God. John understood Jesus was the promised Messiah, and he lived to declare Christ's truths.

As you prepare to teach this session to kids, pray that God would soften their hearts to see that Christ is the only One worth following, the only One with the power to forgive and save. Ask the Lord to show them His offer of everlasting life and His worthiness as the object of our faith.



Scan the QR code to listen to The Gospel Project for Kids Weekly Leader Training Podcast.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- "Dot-to-dot" activity page

Session Starter (option 2)

- picture of where your church baptizes people



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LIVE

Reflection and Prayer

- Bible story coloring page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- "John Pointed to Jesus" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- blue paper (optional)

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 21, Session 4" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- "Everyday Conversations" printable

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "No Sin in Him (1 John 3:5)" song
- ball or beanbag
- worship song of your choice (optional)



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “Have you ever helped someone by telling them how to get to a certain place? What did you do to help guide them in the right direction?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Dot-to-dot” on the activity page.

SAY “Today we will learn that **JOHN POINTED PEOPLE TO FOLLOW JESUS AS THE MESSIAH**. The people had been waiting for the promised Messiah for so long, and now He was finally here. I’m looking forward to sharing this story with you!”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: WHAT DO I SEE?



Challenge kids to listen closely as you call out clues about an object or a person you see in the room. Encourage kids to raise their hands when they think they know what or who you are describing. Call on kids, one by one, to hear their answers. Once a kid has correctly guessed the object or person you described, choose another object. For an added challenge, invite a kid to choose an object to describe while the rest of the group takes guesses.

SAY “The clues I called out pointed you to a specific object or person. Through today’s Bible story we will see how **JOHN POINTED PEOPLE TO FOLLOW JESUS AS THE MESSIAH**. John told people that Jesus must become greater, and he must become less important.”

OPTION 2: THE BAPTISTRY

Explain that in today’s story, kids will learn about a man named John who baptized and told people the good news that Jesus had come to save them. Discuss the importance of baptism in a believer’s life. Explain that baptism is an outward picture of what Jesus has done inside a person’s heart. Then, show a picture of where your church normally baptizes people. Explain what your church does when a person wants to be baptized, what clothes they wear when they get baptized, where they will be before and after their baptism, etc.

SAY “John baptized and pointed people to Jesus, telling them the good news that Jesus is the Messiah. When a person chooses to be baptized, they are sharing with others what Jesus has done in their lives when He saved them from their sins.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Welcome, kids! I am so glad you’re here. My name is [your name], and today I get to share a true story from the Bible with you. If you have your Bible, will you take it out and place it in your lap? [Distribute Bibles to kids who do not have one.]

Today we will learn about a man named John who God sent to prepare the way for Jesus. **JOHN POINTED PEOPLE TO FOLLOW JESUS AS THE MESSIAH.** When we trust in Jesus as the Messiah, we receive eternal life. We can be like John and point people to Jesus so that they can have forgiveness and eternal life in Him. ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ As we study God’s Word together, we like to think through a big picture question and answer that helps us consider a truth from God’s Word. Does anyone remember our big picture question? [Allow responses.] Our big picture question is: **Did Jesus ever sin?** What is the answer to that question? [Allow kids to respond.] That’s right! The answer is **no, Jesus never sinned.**

Today, we will learn about John, who was sent to prepare the way for Jesus. Many people asked John if he was the Messiah. John told the people that he was not the Messiah and pointed people to follow Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus came to earth and lived a perfect life. Because of this, He alone is the perfect sacrifice for our sins. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ Over the last several weeks, we have learned about Jesus’ ministry during His time on earth. We saw Jesus’ first miracle in which He turned water into wine and showed His glory. Then, we learned how Jesus saw people’s sin and cleaned out the temple. We also studied how Jesus taught that the only way to enter the kingdom of God is to be born again. Today we will see how **JOHN POINTED PEOPLE TO FOLLOW JESUS AS THE MESSIAH.** ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to John 3. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “John Pointed to Jesus.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

JOHN POINTED TO JESUS

“ Jesus and His disciples went out to the Judean countryside to baptize and minister to the people. John was also baptizing people in the same area.

One of John’s disciples came to him and said, “Teacher, the one you testified about as the Messiah at the Jordan River is here baptizing people. And everyone is going to him!”

Instead of being jealous, John responded, “You heard me say that I am not the Messiah. I was sent to prepare the way for him.”

John also said, “Jesus is like the groom at a wedding. He’s the most important man at the event. I’m like the best man, who is glad to stand beside the groom and serve him. I am so happy that Jesus is here. Jesus must become greater, and I must become less important.”

In his gospel, John taught other truths about Jesus. John said that Jesus is the one who came from heaven, and that He is above all. Jesus spoke God’s words. God the Father loves His Son, Jesus, and has given everything to Him. God’s anger toward sin remains on those who do not believe in Jesus, but whoever believes in Jesus has eternal life.

Christ Connection: John pointed people to believe in Jesus as the Messiah. When people believe in Jesus as the Messiah, they receive eternal life and can point others to believe in Jesus too! ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Riverside: Create the Jordan River in your classroom by taping blue paper to the ground. Invite kids to join you around the “river” as you tell the story.

Voice Variance: Use an engaging voice to keep the kids’ attention as you tell the story. Alternate between high and low, soft and loud, and slow and fast voices.

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Today we learned about a man named John. John had been chosen by God, even before he was born, to prepare the way for the Lord. To whom did John compare himself? [Allow responses.] John compared himself to the groom’s friend at a wedding to show that he was not the Messiah but the one who was to joyfully point others to Him. **JOHN POINTED PEOPLE TO FOLLOW JESUS AS THE MESSIAH.**

What did John say must happen to him? [Allow responses.] John said that Jesus must become more important and that he must become less important. John wanted all the focus to be on Jesus, the long-awaited, promised Messiah. John was a messenger, sent to prepare the way for the Savior of the world, Jesus. Jesus alone deserves all the attention and praise. Only He can save us from our sins and give us



eternal life.

Christians should have the same attitude John had. They should desire to make less of themselves as they make God more important in their lives. Jesus should be the focus of everything believers say and do. The goal for every person who has trusted Jesus as Savior must be to point other people to Jesus.

John pointed people to believe in Jesus as the Messiah. When people believe in Jesus as the Messiah, they receive eternal life and can point others to believe in Jesus, too. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ Jesus came to earth as the Messiah to save the world from their sins. God invites us to trust Jesus as Savior and have eternal life through Him. Have you trusted Jesus as your Savior? If you haven’t and have questions, I’d love to share more about this with you. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 21, Session 4” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. If we are made in God’s image, why do we still sin?
2. If you have trusted in Jesus as your Savior, you can share the good news about Jesus with others. Who can you tell?



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Read the story from the “Everyday Conversations” printable to the kids.

Point out that Josh uses simple conversation hooks to move from talking about everyday things to talking about God and His love for people. By living among the people in Central Asia, Josh has learned what people of this culture might respond to as he tells them the good news about Jesus. Josh says that the meaning of peoples’ names in Central Asia provide a great opportunity for him to point to biblical truths because their names often have a special meaning.

Explain that none of the men Josh spoke to that day responded immediately to trust in Jesus as Savior, but Josh felt like God was in control of all those people hearing about Him and His Son, Jesus, that day. One of the men asked Josh if he could have his phone number to talk to him some more.

Talk about how spending time talking with someone might be the best way to have opportunities to talk about Jesus. Name a conversation topic, such as favorite foods. Ask kids how they could use a conversation about their favorite foods to tell someone about God and His Son, Jesus. (God provides food for us. God helps things grow that are needed to make our favorite foods.) Then, if time allows, introduce another topic, such as traveling or a place you haven’t visited but would like to.

Thank God for missionaries like Josh who lead mission teams and help start new churches. Pray that the teams will be able to tell many people in Central Asia about Jesus.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud 1 John 3:5 together.

Form kids into a circle. Give a ball or bean bag to one kid in the circle and challenge her to say the first word of the key passage. Then, begin playing music and direct kids to pass the ball around the circle until the music stops. Challenge the kid who is holding the ball when the music stops to say the next word of the key passage; then start the music again. Make sure each kid gets a turn saying a word from the key passage.

SAY “Great job remembering our key passage! It is so important to memorize Scripture verses because God often brings these verses to our minds when we need them.”

Lead kids to sing “No Sin in Him (1 John 3:5).” You may also sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “Thank You, Lord, for sending Jesus as the Messiah, our Rescuer, the One who saves us from our sins. Help us point others to Jesus so that they, too, can have eternal life with You. Amen.”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the New Testament Israel Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to John 3. Explain that John the Baptist is mentioned in all four of the Gospels. Each of these books tells us about John's ministry and interactions with Jesus.

Consider pointing out the location of Judea (J3) and the Jordan River (E6-H6) on the New Testament Israel Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud John 3:23-24, or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY “ These verses were written by John the disciple of Jesus, about John the Baptist; these were two different men who both followed Jesus in unique ways. These verses give us a glimpse into what John the Baptist would go through later in his life. John boldly followed the Lord and proclaimed the good news that Jesus had come. Some people did not like that John pointed people to follow Jesus as Messiah, so they later threw him in jail. Eventually, John would be killed for telling people about Jesus. There are many people in the world today who are in danger because they follow Jesus and tell others about Him. We should pray for these Christ-followers as they share the good news of Jesus, even at risk to their own lives. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ What does Messiah mean? ”

The title Messiah means Savior or Anointed One. God had promised to send a Savior. The prophets of the Old Testament told of this Messiah's coming and now Jesus, the Promised Messiah and Savior of the world, had finally arrived.

SAY “ How can I point people to Jesus? ”

You can point people to Jesus through your actions, but the best way to point people to Jesus is to tell them the good news of the gospel. That good news is that God sent His only Son, Jesus, to come to earth, live a perfect life, die on the cross, take the punishment our sin deserves, and rise from the dead. Anyone who trusts Jesus as Lord receives eternal life with God and can share the good news with others.

SAY “ What does it mean to have eternal life? ”

This means that when a person who has trusted Jesus as their Savior dies on this earth, that person will go to heaven and be alive with God forever. Even though they are no longer living on this earth, they have a life that will never end in heaven because of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: WHO WAS JOHN THE BAPTIST?

Before the session, prepare a list of true and false statements about John the Baptist and today's story. Challenge the kids to listen closely as you read statements about John the Baptist. If the statement is true, direct kids to remain standing, but if the statement is false, direct them to sit down on the ground. For example, if you read the statement, John was the Messiah, kids should sit down. But if you read the statement, John came to prepare the way for Jesus, kids should remain standing. Play for as long as time allows. For an added challenge, switch the action kids should do for true or false statements such as waving their hands in the air for a true statement and hopping on one foot for a false statement.

SAY “ JOHN POINTED PEOPLE TO FOLLOW JESUS AS THE MESSIAH. When we trust Jesus as our Savior, we receive forgiveness for our sins and eternal life in Him. Let's tell others about this good news! ”

OPTION 2: CLAP AND TAP



Invite kids to stand in a large group and spread out. Practice saying the names of the books of the Bible in order. Encourage kids to listen carefully as you say the first book of the Bible and then clap your hands and tap your feet for each syllable in the name. For example, say, “Gen-e-sis” and then clap your hands and tap your feet three times. Then challenge kids to repeat what you just did, saying the name and then clapping. Repeat with each book of the Bible. For added interest, switch up the action you do for each syllable. Direct the kids to snap, hop, or stomp instead of clapping and tapping.

SAY “ Great job! The more we hear and read the books of the Bible, the more familiar we become with them. This can help you as you begin to study the Bible for yourself. ”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.