

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: MATTHEW 3:1-12



The STORY

Read about John the Baptist in Matthew 3:1-12.

Please note: The discussion questions in the following sections are written to serve as a guide in teaching our youngest children. Three to six year olds are not going to be able to answer these questions like their older brothers and sisters. Please refer to the God's Story Preschool Curriculum Outline for additional ideas.

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion.

- What did John the Baptist tell the people of Israel? (John told the people they should repent (turn away) from their sin. He also told them that another, Jesus, would be coming who would baptize not with water but with the Holy Spirit. In this way John was preparing the way for the ministry of the Lord.)
- What else did John do? (John baptized those who wanted to repent of their sin and dedicate their lives to serving God.)
- What did John tell them to do? (John taught them to love one another. John said their lives should show the good works or fruit of their repentance.)

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CRAFT QUESTIONS

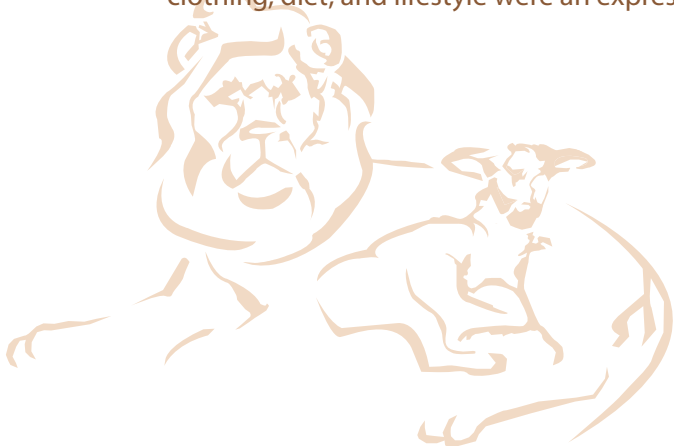
Coloring sheets have been provided that exemplify today's lesson: John the Baptist preaching to the crowd. Engage the children by asking:

- How is John's message like Jesus' message? (John was not pointing people to himself, but to Christ. John wanted people to repent of their sin and follow God. Like Jesus, John had people show their faith by being baptized.)
- A viper is a type of poisonous snake. Who did John call a viper? (John called the religious leaders vipers. He knew that they wanted to appear holy and dedicated to God on the outside but they did not love God with their hearts. Later, Jesus also called the Pharisees vipers.)
- John baptized with water. What did he say Jesus would baptize with? (John said that another would come who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. When the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples, tongues of fire did appear above them. This pouring out of the Holy Spirit is considered the first baptism of the Spirit in the Bible.)

SNACK QUESTIONS

Read Leviticus 11:20-23. While the children are eating the snack, engage the children by asking:

- What did John the Baptist eat? (Locusts and wild honey.)
Locusts are a type of grasshopper.
- What would you think about eating that kind of meal? (Accept any answer.)
- What did John wear? (A garment of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist. His simple clothing, diet, and lifestyle were an expression of a life dedicated to the Lord.)



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WHERE IS the Gospel?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

John was very clear to indicate that men were sinful and in need of a savior. In the Gospel of Luke we learn that John quoted a larger portion of Isaiah than is indicated in Matthew. In Luke 3:6 the passage quoted from Isaiah reads "and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." John was not merely introducing a great prophet, John was introducing the Lord Himself who would bring salvation to all people.

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

