



Advent 3: John the Baptist

Lesson Aim: To challenge children to point others to Jesus.

THE WORSHIP

Who God is: The God of Peace

THE WORD

Bible Story: Luke 1:16-17, 41, 76-79; John 1:29

What He has done: God sent John the Baptist to point others to the promised Savior.

Key Verse: Luke 1:76-77

THE WAY

Christ Connection: Isaiah 40:3-5

BIBLE MEMORY VERSE

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulders: and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6 (KJV)

Unit 10: The Promised One			
	Bible Story	What He Has Done	Lesson Aim
48	Advent 1: Isaiah and the Prince of Peace, Isaiah 9:2, 6-7	God gave Isaiah the prophecy about the coming Prince of Peace.	To know Jesus fulfilled Isaiah's prophecies.
49	Advent 2: God's Promise to Mary, Luke 1:26-38	God promised Mary she would give birth to His Son Jesus.	To know we can trust God to keep His promises because nothing is impossible with God.
50	Advent 3: John the Baptist, Luke 1:16-17, 41, 76-79; John 1:29	God sent John the Baptist to point others to the promised Savior.	To challenge children to point others to Jesus.
51	Advent 4: Shepherds See the Promised One, Luke 2:4-18; John 14:27	God sent His Son to bring peace.	To know Jesus brought peace just as God promised.
52	The Story of God and His People, Jeremiah 24:7; 2 Chronicles 7:14	God gave us the Bible to tell the story of God and His people.	To understand the Bible is the story of God and His people.

TEACHER'S ENCOURAGEMENT

This week, read 2 Peter 1:16-17. Please join us in praying, "Thank You, Lord, for each prophecy that points us to You. Help us point the children to You this Christmas. Help us trust Your timing in their lives and in our own. Amen."

WHAT ABOUT SANTA? Many cultures incorporate the story of Saint Nicholas (Santa Claus) into their family traditions at Christmas. Many young children are very excited about this tradition. To honor all parents, our role as Bible teachers is not to address (validate or invalidate) their family traditions, but to redirect their focus to celebrate the gift of God's Son.

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**THE WORSHIP
THE WORD &
THE WAY**

Segment	Minutes	Activity	Supplies
THE WELCOME	Up to 15	Meet & Greet	None
		Game: Prepare A Path	Newspaper or paper plates, floor tape or chalk
THE WORSHIP	Up to 20	Worship Sheet music and recordings for Bible Memory Verse Songs available at ResourceWell.org	Advent wreath Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song: "For Unto Us" Other Bible Memory Verse Song Suggestions: "I Bring You Good News" "For God So Loved the World" "King of Kings" "At the Name of Jesus" "You Will Seek Me" Additional Hymn Suggestions: "Joy to the World" "Away in a Manger" Additional Song Collection Suggestions: Worship Jamz Christmas by Worship Jamz Shout Praises Kids Christmas by Integrity Media
		Advent Scripture Reading: John 1:6-9	Bible
		Offering	Baskets
		Worship Illustration	Lesson 50 The Love Sub script or storybook
THE WORD	Up to 10	Read the Word: Luke 1:16-17, 41, 76-79; John 1:29	Bibles, Bible Story Scripture reference poster, highlighters
THE WAY	Up to 25	Discuss the Word	Bibles, Christ Connection Scripture reference poster, highlighters
		Christ Connection: Isaiah 40:3-5	
	Golden Bowl	Golden Bowl, pencils, note cards	
	Final 5	Final Five Minutes	Treasure Treats—"Ask Me About John the Baptist" Sticker, Daily Ways, basket, paper, pencils, crayons or markers, prayer notebook, Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song "For Unto Us," CD player
GOT TIME?	Up to 10	Snack: Locusts and Honey	Honey, bread
	Up to 10	Game: Point to Jesus	Spinner from any board game (or make your own using a paper plate, a paper fastener, and a straw)
	Up to 15	Craft: Peaceful Dove Ornament	Cardboard, white craft foam (or sturdy paper), pencils, black permanent markers or pens, white feathers, wide ribbon, scissors, hole punch, tacky glue (or hot glue or glue dots), glitter
	Up to 10	Bible Memory Verse Activity: Appearing Angel	Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse poster, dry erase or poster board, marker
	Up to 10	Bible Memory Verse Activity: Toss-A-Verse	Large ball (inflatable beach ball, rubber ball, etc.), permanent marker
	Up to 5	Bible Timeline Review	Date with story title or name printed on card

RESOURCES: Supplemental materials are available at ResourceWell.org.



Getting started

THE WELCOME

To spark anticipation, encourage arriving children to meet and greet one another with today's question.

Meet & Greet Question: What is your favorite sign that Christmas is coming?

GAME: PREPARE A PATH

Purpose: Children will prepare paths for each other in a race as they are introduced to John the Baptist's role as the one who prepared people for Jesus' coming.

Supplies: Newspaper or paper plates, floor tape or chalk

Prepare: Use the floor tape or chalk to mark a start and a finish line on opposite ends of the play area.

Teacher Tip: Have extra newspaper or paper plates on hand so you're prepared for rips and tears.

How quickly can you prepare a straight path for your friends? Let's find out by having a race. Some of you will lay a path for your partner and some of you will run the race.

Directions:

1. Divide the children into two teams. On each team, children find partners and form pairs.
2. Each pair decides who will be the Walker and who will be the Path Layer.
3. Give two sheets of paper to each Path Layer.
4. Teams line up in pairs behind the start line.
5. On your signal, the first pair begins the race. Path Layers place the first sheet of paper on the floor in front of the Walker. The Walkers step onto the paper.
6. Path Layers lay the second sheet of paper on the floor in front of the Walker. The Walkers step onto that paper.
7. Path Layers move the paper from behind the Walker in front of the Walker to create a moving path. The Walker can only step on the papers and may not touch the floor or ground.
8. Pairs repeat step 7 until they reach the finish line. Then, the next pair on the team begins.
9. The goal is to be the first team to have everyone cross the finish line.

Today, we are going to learn about John the Baptist. He is part of the Christmas story because he was born just a few months before Jesus. God sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for Jesus. He didn't make a path for Jesus' feet; he helped people make a path for Jesus to come into their hearts. He prepared them to listen to and follow Jesus. Let's find out more about John the Baptist.

Limited Space? Let each pair make a fun directional sign using paper and assorted craft supplies. Children may copy a real sign or make up their own. Tell children that John the Baptist' words were like the directions on a sign. He told people how to live to get ready for Jesus' coming.



The God of Peace

THE WORSHIP

Teacher Tip: To help children identify time set aside for worship, designate a special corner or area for singing, collecting offering, and watching the worship illustration. Play music as children move to the designated area.

Before worship, light the first two candles on the Advent wreath.



Today, we worship the God of Peace. Jesus brings peace between God and anyone who believes in Jesus. He gives our hearts the peace that comes from knowing God loves us and we are forgiven. God sent John the Baptist to point people to Jesus. He was chosen to prepare their hearts for Him. He told the people to repent and ask for God's forgiveness. Let's ask God to search our hearts and show us anything we are doing that is wrong in His eyes. When we ask Him to forgive us for these things, He will do it. Sing: "Search Me, O God" as the offering is collected.



Advent Candle Lighting Ceremony: The Prophets' Candle

Advent Wreath: 4 candles set in a wreath of greenery with gold trim

At Christmastime, we get our hearts ready to celebrate the coming of Jesus by lighting the candles on the Advent Wreath. Advent means coming—the coming of Jesus. The Advent season helps get our hearts ready to celebrate Christmas. Our Advent Wreath is round; it has no end, just as God's love for us has no end.

Each candle on the Advent Wreath stands for one of the four Sundays before Christmas. Today, we light the third candle of Advent: The Prophets' Candle. As we light the Prophets' Candle, think about the way John the Baptist pointed people to Jesus. God sent John the Baptist to prepare the hearts of the people for the coming of God's Son, Jesus. Jesus is also called the Light of the World. Choose a child to light the third candle now.



As you look at the candlelight, listen to the prophecy Zechariah made when his son, John the Baptist, was born. Read John 1:6-9.



Today, we celebrate the fact that God used prophecies from Isaiah, Gabriel, Zechariah, and Zechariah's son John the Baptist to get our hearts ready for Jesus. Sing Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song: "For Unto Us" as the offering is collected.

Sing: "Joy to the World." You may also choose to sing songs that focus on preparing our hearts to put Jesus first.



Perform The Love Sub script or read storybook: Prophets & Promises Unit 10, Lesson 50.



John pointed others to Jesus

THE WORD

Teacher Tip: As you move from worship to instruction, change rooms or locations within a room to help redirect the children's focus to the Bible story. During this transition time, have each child write their name on a card and place it in the Golden Bowl.

Before we read God's Word, let's go over our Class Covenant. A covenant is an agreement. Just as God made a covenant with His people, I ask each of you to make this covenant promise with me today. Listen as I read our Class Covenant: "I will keep my eyes on my teacher, my mouth in control, my ears on God's Word—knowing God is my goal."

Last time, we learned the angel Gabriel told Mary she would be the mother of God's Son, Jesus. Today, we will learn how Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist, prepared the way for Jesus to come to the world. John the Baptist pointed people to Jesus from the time he was in his mother's belly and throughout his life. Let's find out what the Bible says about that. If a Bible Timeline is available, point to The Birth of Jesus (Circa 1 A.D.). For a Bible Timeline Review activity, see the GOT TIME? segment of this lesson.



Let's play Find It First! Bring out your Bible; keep it right in front of you. Hand out spare Bibles. **Today's Scripture verse is behind the curtain** (or secret door, secret window, etc.). Child reveals the Bible Story Scripture reference: Luke 1:16-17, 41, 76-79; 3:12-16; John 1:29. **First, we will find Luke 1:76-77. Let's see who can Find It First. Ready? Set? Go!** Children race to find it first. The winner helps others find it. **Let's highlight our Key Verses: Luke 1:76-77.**

Before we read, let's stand and ask God to open our eyes, ears, hearts, and minds to His Word today. Who would like to pray that for us? Child prays aloud. **Be seated.**

Let's read the angel Gabriel's prophecy about John the Baptist. Remember, a prophecy is a prediction from God about a future event. Read Luke 1:16-17.

While Mary was pregnant, she visited her cousin Elizabeth who was pregnant with John. Check out how John pointed to Jesus even while he was still in his mother's belly. Read Luke 1:41.

Now, let's read Zechariah's prophecy about his son. Read Luke 1:76-79.

Each prophecy about John came true. When he grew up, he told the people to repent and he baptized them in the Jordan River. If a map is available, point to the Jordan River near Bethany, Israel. Read Luke 3:12-16.

John baptized Jesus there, too. A dove came down from heaven and God's voice said, "This is My Son. I am very pleased with Him." That is when John told the people who Jesus was and why He had come. Read John 1:29.



We can point others to Jesus

THE WAY

Why did God send John the Baptist ahead of Jesus? (To prepare the way for Him.) **John told everyone to prepare for Jesus by repenting and being baptized. What does it mean to repent?** (To turn from wrongdoing and to do things God's way.) **What can you do to prepare your heart to grow closer to Jesus?** (Children respond.) **How might that help point others to Jesus?** (Children respond.)

Why was John called John the Baptist? (He baptized people in water.) **If someone wanted to repent, John took that person into the Jordan River. Going under the water was a sign that he or she wanted to be washed clean from sin. Baptism is only a sign, because sins cannot be washed away by water. Who is the only One who can take away our sins?** (Jesus.) **Today, when believers are baptized, it is a sign to the world that Jesus has washed their sins away.**

What did John the Baptist tell the people Jesus would do about their sins? (Jesus would save them from their sins and their sins would be forgiven.) **What were the two names John called Jesus?** (Son of God, Lamb of God.) **When he pointed to Jesus and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world," what did the people do?** (They believed in and followed Jesus.) **Everyone sins, so everyone needs to be saved and forgiven by God. What can you tell your friends and family about Jesus?** (Children respond.) Encourage children to share facts they know about Jesus, how they feel about their relationship with Jesus, and how Jesus has changed their lives. **Our words are just one way we can point others to Jesus. Does your life now show others something about Jesus?** (Children respond.) **What can you do to help prepare your heart to celebrate the birth of Jesus this Christmas?** (Children respond.) **How might your preparation help point others to Jesus?** (Children respond.)



Connecting the Old Testament, the New Testament, and Us

CHRIST CONNECTION

John told the people he was the voice calling in the desert who Isaiah had described in his prophecy 700 years earlier. Isaiah described how John would prepare the people for Jesus. Isaiah compares making our hearts ready for Jesus to making a road through the wilderness.



FIND IT FIRST > **Everyone, place your Bible closed on your lap.** Choose a child to reveal the Christ Connection Scripture reference: Isaiah 40:3-5. **Let's see who can Find It First! Ready? Set? Go! Find it and highlight it.** Read Isaiah 40:3-5.

It is hard to make a path in the wilderness. What types of land does Isaiah describe in the wilderness? (Valleys, mountains, hills, rough ground, rugged places.) **Just as there are different types of land, our hearts are each different. Isaiah knew our hearts must be made ready so we can believe, love, and follow Jesus. John the Baptist helped get hearts ready by preaching about turning from sin and asking for God's forgiveness.**

THE WAY *continued...*



Revelation 5:8

GOLDEN BOWL

Teacher Tip: Write the names of classmates, local church leaders, and children in other nations or others who need prayer on small pieces of paper. Place the papers in a golden bowl.

Revelation 5:8 says our prayers are like sweet smelling incense in the golden bowls at God's throne. I'm going to lift each one of your names to God's throne as you pray for each person silently. Then, we will pray the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) aloud together. Let's pray.

Lord God, we lift up to Your throne the name of each child here. We trust You to watch over us and our needs, the ones we say aloud and the ones hidden in our hearts. First, we lift up to You ____, ____, ____. Read names in Golden Bowl.

Now, we pray the prayer Your Son taught us: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.



When only 5 minutes remain, begin this segment.

FINAL FIVE MINUTES

TREASURE TREAT: Today, your Treasure Treat is an "Ask Me About John the Baptist" sticker. Tell everyone John pointed people to Jesus as the Son of God who would save the world from sin.

DAILY WAY CHALLENGE: Did anyone bring in a completed Daily Way from last time? Praise or reward those who return a Daily Way. Distribute Lesson 50 Daily Way 5-day Bible study. **Complete this week's Daily Way at home and let God speak to you through His own words in the Bible. Join the Daily Way Challenge by returning your completed Daily Way.**

Teacher Tip: Collect Daily Ways in a basket or other container and periodically reward children as a group for completing the challenge.

OFFERING OF ART: Until it is time to be dismissed, make an Offering of Art. For your offering, draw a picture of John the Baptist baptizing people in the Jordan River.

PRAYER REQUESTS: As children work on their Offering of Art, ask how you can pray for them this week. Write requests in a prayer notebook.

BIBLE MEMORY VERSE SONG: Play the Unit 10 Bible Memory Verse Song, "For Unto Us," in the background as children wait to be dismissed.



If time remains, choose from the connected activities below.

GOT TIME?

SNACK: LOCUSTS AND HONEY

Purpose: Children will eat a snack similar to one John the Baptist would have eaten.

Snack Suggestion: Honey, bread

God sent John the Baptist to help people get their hearts ready for Jesus. John lived a very simple life in the desert. He focused his whole life on telling people how to prepare for Jesus. He wore rough clothes made of camel fur and he ate locusts and honey. As we eat a honey snack, let's talk about how you prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth at Christmas.

Directions:

1. Distribute the snack and drink.
2. Child prays to thank God for the snack.
3. Ask the Snack Discussion Question: **"How do you prepare for Christmas?"**

GAME: POINT TO JESUS

Purpose: Children will say facts they know about Jesus as they realize they can point people to Him.

Supplies: Spinner from any board game (or make your own spinner using a paper plate, a paper fastener, and a straw)

God sent John the Baptist to do a special job. What was it? (To prepare the way for Jesus.) **When John was still in his mother's belly, what did he do when she met Jesus' mother?** (He leaped in her belly.) **Even before John was born, he was pointing people to Jesus. You can point people to Jesus, too. You have been learning many things about Him. When the spinner points to you, tell us one fact you know about Jesus.**

Directions:

1. Children sit in a circle.
2. Place the spinner in the center of the circle.
3. Choose one child to spin the spinner. When it stops, determine which child the spinner is facing.
4. That child states one fact about Jesus. If he or she can't think of a fact, ask the child a question such as, "Name a miracle Jesus did."
5. That child then spins the spinner.
6. Play until each child has a turn sharing a fact about Jesus.

You can use all of those facts to point people to Jesus. Be sure to tell others what you know about Jesus so they can prepare to celebrate His birth at Christmas, too!

GOT TIME? *continued...*

CRAFT: PEACEFUL DOVE ORNAMENT

Purpose: To create a Christmas decoration which points others to Jesus as the Prince of Peace.

Supplies: Cardboard, white craft foam (or sturdy paper), pencils, black permanent markers or pens, white feathers, wide ribbon, scissors, hole punch, tacky glue (or hot glue or glue dots), glitter

Prepare: From cardboard, draw and cut out dove templates (at least 3-inch body width). For each child, cut a 10-inch length of the wide ribbon. Where children can see to copy, write: **Prince of Peace**

Teacher Tip: Instead of making dove templates, you may choose to pre-cut the doves for younger children or if your class time is limited. Strips of white tissue paper, fabric, or paper may be substituted for the feathers.

Why did God send John the Baptist before He sent His Son Jesus? (So John could help people prepare their hearts for Jesus.) **John pointed people to Jesus so their hearts would be ready for Him.**

Luke 1:79 says Jesus will “guide our feet into the path of peace.” In our Bible Memory Verse, what is Jesus’ title as prince? (The Prince of Peace.) **Jesus brings peace between God and anyone who believes in Jesus. He gives our hearts the peace that comes from knowing God loves us and we are forgiven. John the Baptist’s job was to point people to the Prince of Peace!**

The white dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The dove with an olive branch in its mouth is a symbol of peace. When John baptized Jesus, a dove came down from heaven to Jesus. Let’s make dove ornaments to help us remember Jesus is the Prince of Peace. You can point to your dove and tell people about Jesus, just as John the Baptist pointed people to Jesus!

Directions:

1. Children use a dove template to trace the outline of the dove onto the white craft foam.
2. Cut out the dove.
3. Punch a hole in the top of the dove’s back.
4. Draw an eye on the dove with the permanent marker.
5. With a permanent marker write **“Prince of Peace”** on the dove’s body or on the wide ribbon.
6. Glue feathers and glitter onto the dove to decorate.
7. Thread the ribbon through the hole in the dove and knot the ends to create a hanger.

GOT TIME? *continued...*



BIBLE MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITIES

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulders: and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6 (KJV)

GAME: APPEARING ANGEL

Purpose: Children learn the meaning of the Bible Memory Verse: Isaiah 9:6.

Supplies: Bible Memory Verse poster, dry erase board, marker

Prepare: Display the Bible Memory Verse poster.

Directions:

1. Choose one of the phrases below. On a dry erase board, draw one line for each letter in the phrase. Include a blank space between each word.
2. Choose a child to guess a letter. If the letter is found in the phrase, write it on every blank where it belongs. If the letter is not in the phrase, draw one part of an angel (Robe, head, hands, feet, smile, eyes, nose, hair, etc.) on another part of the dry erase board.
3. Choose another child to guess a letter.
4. Continue playing until the children have guessed the phrase or until the angel drawing is complete. The goal is to complete the phrase before the angel drawing is completed.
5. After the phrase is revealed, read its meaning below to explain that part of the verse.
6. If time allows, play again using another phrase. Use different phrases each time you play.

Phrase and meaning

“For unto us a child is born” (Jesus was born as a baby.)

“Unto us a Son is given” (God gave His Son to be our Savior.)

“And the government shall be on His shoulders” (Jesus will one day rule the world.)

“And His name will be called” (There are many names for God.)

“Wonderful Counselor” (The Holy Spirit guides us to do things God’s way.)

“Mighty God” (God is so strong that He can do anything.)

“The Everlasting Father” (God is our heavenly Father forever.)

“The Prince of Peace” (Jesus gives us peace with God, and peace in our hearts.)

GAME: TOSS-A-VERSE

Purpose: Children memorize the Bible Memory Verse: Isaiah 9:6.

Supplies: Large ball (inflatable beach ball, soccer ball, etc.), permanent marker

Prepare: Write the Bible Memory Verse on the ball.

Directions:

1. Children stand in a circle.
2. One child holds the ball and quickly says the first word of the verse. The child then tosses the ball to another child who says the next word.
3. Continue tossing the ball until the verse is completed.
4. Children may use the verse written on the ball to help them remember the words, but encourage them to learn the verse as they play.

Option: Divide into two or more teams. Have teams race against each other to complete the game first.

GOT TIME? *continued...*



BIBLE TIMELINE REVIEW

Prophets & Promises Part Two studies the miracles and stories of the Bible from Elijah through Malachi. Review recent Bible stories to see the continuing story of who God is and He has done.

Malachi (Circa 430 B.C.) Malachi was the last prophet to speak before the birth of Jesus. He gave God's message that the people were robbing God by not bringing their tithes and offerings to Him. What is a tithe? (A tithe is giving one tenth of our riches to God's house.) God challenged the people to tithe and see how God would bless them.

400 Years of Silence (Circa 400 B.C.-1 B.C.) Malachi was the last Old Testament prophet to speak before the birth of Christ. This period is known as the 400 years of silence because there were no new prophecies. Over the previous 800 years, God's people had heard many prophecies from God's prophets, including Isaiah's prophecy about the coming of the Lord and what He would accomplish.

The Birth of Jesus (Circa 1 A.D.) A.D. stands for Anno Domini, which means "the Year of our Lord." A.D. begins with Jesus' birth and continues until the end of time. Everything written in the law and the prophets led up to the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. God used the angels, Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, Zechariah, John the Baptist, shepherds, and the heavenly host to fulfill the prophecies about the coming Savior. Sin separates each person from God, so He gave His only Son Jesus as that Savior. Whoever believes in Him will have life forever close with God.

How to create a Bible Timeline from Elijah through Malachi:

1. Print each scroll on sturdy paper.
2. Choose a wall or other visible location to display the timeline.
3. Before each lesson, add the scroll for that lesson to the Bible Timeline using the list below. Add the Unit 10 cards for Prophets & Promises Lessons 48-52.
4. To review, ask the corresponding questions as you point to the associated scroll.

Elijah – Malachi: Elijah (Circa 870-845 B.C.) > Elisha (Circa 845-800 B.C.) > Joel (Circa 830 B.C.) > Jonah (Circa 781 B.C.) > Amos (Circa 760 B.C.) > Isaiah (Circa 710 B.C.) > Micah (Circa 700 B.C.) > Zephaniah (Circa 630 B.C.) > Jeremiah (Circa 626 B.C.) > Habakkuk (Circa 603 B.C.) > Ezekiel (Circa 593 B.C.) > Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Circa 580 B.C.) > Daniel (Circa 580 B.C.) > Haggai and Zechariah (Circa 530 B.C.) > Malachi (Circa 430 B.C.)

Unit 10: 400 Years of Silence (Circa 400-2 B.C.) > The Birth of Jesus (Circa 7-2 B.C.)