

THE OLD TESTAMENT POINTS TO JESUS

Luke 1; John 1



A priest named Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth lived rightly before God. They were both old and had no children because Elizabeth was not able to have a baby.

One day, an angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah in the sanctuary of the Lord, and he was afraid! But the angel said, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because God has heard your prayer. Your wife Elizabeth will have a son, and you will name him John. He will have the spirit and power of Elijah. He will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and make the people ready for the Lord.” This was spoken to fulfill what the prophet Malachi said would happen.

Zechariah asked the angel, “How can I know this will happen? After all, my wife and I are very old.”

The angel answered, “You will become silent and unable to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words.” When Zechariah came out of the sanctuary, he couldn’t speak.

Elizabeth became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When it came time to name the baby boy, Zechariah wrote, “His name is John.” Immediately after writing these words, Zechariah could speak again.

Then Zechariah praised God, saying,

“Blessed is the Lord because he has provided salvation for his people. You, my son, will be called a prophet of the Most High, and you will go before the Lord and prepare his ways.” God had kept the promise He made to Abraham and his descendants.

When John grew up, God sent him to be a witness for Jesus in the wilderness of Judea so people might believe in Jesus. John said, “I am a voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord—just as Isaiah the prophet said.”

Christ Connection: God spoke through His prophets in the Old Testament, like Isaiah and Malachi, and shared His plan to send Jesus into the world to save people from sin. When the time had come, God called John to be a witness for Jesus. Anyone who trusts in Jesus will be saved.



1 WELCOME TIME

Greet each preteen 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.

- **When was a time you heard something hard to believe?**
- **Why was it hard to believe?**

2 SESSION STARTER

OPTION 1: CLEAR THE WAY



Before this activity, cover the floor with 30–50 inflated balloons. Form kids into teams of two and provide each team with a trash bag. When you say “Go,” challenge the teams to work together to pick up as many balloons as they can and place them in their trash bags without popping the balloons. Continue playing until all the balloons have been picked up from the floor. The team with the most balloons at the end of the activity wins.

SAY “ By picking up the balloons, you cleared the way so people can walk on the floor without stepping on a balloon. Throughout the Old Testament, God told His people about the coming Messiah—the One who would rescue people from sin. Today, we’ll see how a man named John was sent to clear the way for the Messiah, Jesus. John prepared the people to repent of their sins and receive Him by faith. ”

OPTION 2: I SAW THAT!



Choose one kid to be a witness and lead him to close his eyes. Choose two kids to perform a specific action, such as “rubbing their belly.” Tell the remaining kids to perform any random action they choose except “rubbing their belly.” Lead kids to spread about the room. Challenge the witness to look for two kids who perform the exact same action. Direct the kids to perform their action for 15 seconds. When the witness spots them, he will shout, “I saw that!” Play additional rounds, choosing new kids for each role.

SAY “ Do you know what a witness is? [Allow responses.] A witness is someone who tells others what is true about what they have seen, heard, or experienced. Today, we’ll see that **JOHN WAS SENT BY GOD AS A WITNESS TO THE COMING MESSIAH**. God chose John to tell others what He had seen, heard, and experienced about Jesus. John would point others to Jesus because God had revealed to John that Jesus is the Messiah who had come to save people from sin. ”



1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Today we are going to hear about how the entire Old Testament points to Jesus. Whether this is your first time or your tenth time hearing this story, there is always something new to learn in God's Word.

Read from Luke 1; John 1.

•What does this story teach us about God?

Through our Bible story we learned that **John was sent by God as a witness to the coming Messiah.** John was like the prophets of the Old Testament, declaring an important message from God to the people.

•What did John call for the people to do?

John was sent to prepare the way for the Messiah—Jesus. **John called the people to repent of their sin, helping them to see their need for a Savior.**

Form groups of two or three and practice retelling the Bible story in your own words. Think of someone you could share the story with this week.

2 MISSIONS MOMENT

Remind kids that Brian Bowman and Valley Life Church desire to start more churches in Phoenix, Arizona. Discuss how starting new churches not only involves training leaders to lead the churches but also includes sharing the gospel so new people can become part of the church plants.

Invite kids to think about how they might share the gospel with people. Direct kids to think about ways they might invite people to come to church. Form kids into groups of three or four and guide them to write down their responses. Prompt kids to think about church events that other kids might like to participate in.

Explain to preteens that we don't need to have all the answers to questions people may ask about God or the gospel, but we can be willing to share Jesus and invite others to church. Like Valley Life Church, we can share the hope of Jesus with others so they can be saved from their sin.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

God spoke through His prophets in the Old Testament, like Isaiah and Malachi, and shared His plan to send Jesus into the world to save people from sin. When the time had come, God called John to be a witness for Jesus. Jesus came into the world to provide a way for us to be saved from our sin when we trust in Him. Everyone who trusts in Jesus will be saved.






4 PRAY

Lord, thank You for sending Jesus into the world to save us from sin. Thank You that when we trust in Jesus, we will be saved. Help us share this good news with others. Amen.

THE GOSPEL

GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

The gospel is the good news—the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use Scripture and the guide provided below to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.

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| GOD RULES | WE SINNED | GOD PROVIDED | JESUS GIVES | WE RESPOND |
| Ask: "Who is in charge at home?" Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11. | Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23. | Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16. | Ask: "What is the best gift you've ever received?" Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21. | Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: "Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus." Read Romans 10:9-10. |



THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

1 THINK ABOUT THE STORY

- How did people, who died before Jesus died on the cross, get into heaven?
- Can you think of an Old Testament story that points to Jesus? Which one?

2 GROUP DISCUSSION

Distribute Bibles. Guide preteens to open their Bibles to John 1. Choose a volunteer to read aloud John 1:23.

Remind preteens that when a group of religious leaders named the Pharisees asked who John was, John told them that he was the one the prophet Isaiah had said would come to prepare the way for the Messiah. John was not the Messiah, but he was sent as a witness, to point others to what is true: Jesus is the Messiah, the Savior of the world. Like John, we can be a witness for Jesus. We can tell others what we know is true about Jesus and how He came to save people from their sins. All Christ followers are called to be Jesus' witnesses, sharing the gospel so others can be saved. Choose another volunteer to read aloud John 1:23 again. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

1. How did John's birth fulfill God's words in the Old Testament?

Tell kids that both Isaiah and Malachi prophesied about the messenger who would prepare the way for the Messiah. This happened hundreds of years apart, but both prophets received the same true words from God. Emphasize God's words can always be trusted. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Peter 1:20-21.)

2. How does the Old Testament point to Jesus?

Remind kids that all the stories in the Bible tell one big story about God's plan to save people through Jesus. Point out past Bible stories kids have learned, highlighting the Christ Connections to help kids see how those stories point to Jesus.
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Luke 24:27.)

3. What are some specific ways you can be a witness for Jesus?

Tell kids that before they can be a witness for Jesus, they first have to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Jesus calls all His followers to be witnesses for Him by sharing the gospel and telling others about how Jesus saved them. Help kids understand that God empowers Christians through the Holy Spirit to share the good news of Jesus so others can be saved. Invite kids to share ways they have been a witness for Jesus.
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Acts 1:8.)

BIG PICTURE QUESTION

What is the Bible about? The Bible is the story of God's plan to save people through Jesus.



THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

1 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Instruct kids to open their Bibles to John 20:31. Lead them in reading the key passage aloud together. Before this activity, write the words of the key passage on sticky notes and hide them around the room. Create two sets, each on a different color of sticky note. Lead kids in reading John 20:31 aloud together.

Tell preteens they have worked so hard to learn their key passage. You want to see how quickly they can find the key passage words and put them in the right order.

Form kids into two teams. Challenge kids to race to collect all their teams' sticky notes and arrange them in the correct order the fastest.

2 PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, thanking God for sending Jesus as our Savior and asking Him to help us share the good news of the gospel with others.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

BE A WITNESS RELAY

Before this activity, use tape to create a starting line on one side of the room. Form kids into two teams and direct them to line up behind the starting line. Direct the first kids from each team to run to you and receive an action to perform for their team, such as "making a sandwich," "eating an ice cream cone," "walking a dog," etc. Once kids receive the action, they will run back to their team and act it out. When their team guesses correctly, the next kid runs to the leader to receive the next action. Continue playing until each kid has had a turn. The first team to complete the relay wins.

Remind the kids that today, they learned that John was sent by God as a witness to the coming Messiah. Believers are sent by God to be a witness to others, sharing about the hope they have in Jesus. Just as the kids ran to their teams to share the action, believers should have an urgency to share the good news about Jesus with others.