

REFRESHING WATER ☆

We use water for many things, and it can be quite refreshing to drink. However, John the Baptist used water in a special way to prepare the way for Jesus.

by Kristy Thornton

TOPICS:

Baptism, John the Baptist, Repentance

MATERIALS:

Paper cups
Pitcher of water
(Optional) Whiteboard, markers

DURATION:

Approximately 5 minutes



WHAT YOU WILL DO:

Pour a cup of water for each child. Before letting them drink it, discuss the benefits and uses for water. You will compare the different ways we use water to the special way John the Baptist used water to symbolize repentance and to prepare the way for Jesus.

WHAT YOU WILL SAY:

I am going to pour everyone a cup of water. However, don't drink it yet. I'll let you know when to do that. (Pour water into each cup.)

I know that water in front of you looks refreshing. Water is good for us. We use water for many things. What are some of the ways we use water? (Allow the children to respond. As an option, you can write their suggestions on the board.)

That's a good list of different ways we use water. Okay, now, go ahead now and drink your water.

A nice drink of cool water is refreshing. It cleanses us. It revives us. It gives our body strength and energy. However, John the Baptist used water in a different way to refresh people. He baptized them in the water of the Jordan River. He baptized people in water to symbolize repentance and to prepare the way for Jesus.

John the Baptist said, **"I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." Matthew 3:11 NIV**

© Kids Sunday School Place, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

LESSON 2: PREPARING THE WAY ☆

Lessons in this series: [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [Overview](#)

In this lesson, children will discover how God called John the Baptist to prepare the way for the Messiah. Children will also learn that God calls them to prepare the way for others to know Jesus.

by Kristy Thornton

TOPICS

Baptism, John the Baptist, Repentance

AS KIDS ARRIVE (5 MINUTES)

Refreshing Water (Object Talk) [Click here](#)

OPENING PRAYER AND PRAISE (5 MINUTES)

Further info? [Click here](#)

MEMORY WORK (5 MINUTES)

"I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." Matthew 3:11 NIV

Divide the class into four teams. If you have a small class, you can have the children work individually or with another child. Assign one part of the verse to each of the teams. Start by having the first team say the first part aloud and then quickly have the other teams say their parts in order. Everyone will say the reference together. Continue this way, going faster and faster until there are no errors or hesitations. Then, switch parts and do it again.

SCRIPTURE READING AND DISCUSSION (15 MINUTES)

Introduction:

Today, we are going to read from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke about how John the Baptist prepared the way for the Messiah. John baptized people with water in the Jordan River. It was a time of confession and repentance for the forgiveness of sins. This encouraged the people. It gave them strength and hope. Baptism in the Jordan River did not save them, but it prepared them for the coming of Jesus, the Messiah.

Read Matthew 3:1-11 (John the Baptist Prepares the Way)

Discussion Questions:

1. According to Matthew 3:2, what did John the Baptist say in the wilderness? (*"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."*)
2. What major prophet foretold of John's coming? (*Isaiah.*)
3. How would you describe John the Baptist? (*He wore clothes made from camel's hair, and he ate locusts and wild honey.*)
4. John baptized with water. John said one more powerful than he would come. To whom was John referring? (*Jesus.*)
5. With what would Jesus baptize people? (*With the Holy Spirit and fire.*)

Read Luke 3:1-18 (John the Baptist Prepares the Way)

Discussion Questions:

1. What did John the Baptist say would happen to every tree that didn't produce good fruit? (*It would be cut down and thrown into the fire.*)
2. After the people asked John for advice, what did he say a person with two shirts (tunics) should do? (*Share one with a person who had none. And the same goes for food.*)
3. What did John the Baptist tell the tax collectors to do? (*Collect no more than what was required.*)
4. Whom did the people think John the Baptist was? (*They thought he was the Messiah.*)
5. How did John the Baptist prepare the way for Jesus? (*He preached a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins, symbolic of what Jesus would actually do for us. John persuaded the people to live godly lives in preparation for following Jesus.*)

CLASS EXERCISE (15 MINUTES)

Preaching and Believing (Game) [Click here](#)

ALTERNATE CLASS EXERCISE (15 MINUTES)

Molding the Words of Isaiah (Activity)

Divide the class into at least three teams and give each team plenty of play dough. Assign each team one of the following phrases from the prophet Isaiah as he describes John the Baptist in Matthew 3:3.

- "A voice of one calling in the wilderness"
- "Prepare the way for the Lord"
- "Make straight paths for him"

Have each team work together to form a visual depiction of their phrase with play dough. When finished, display the teams' creations in the correct order according to the scripture.

APPLICATION (4 MINUTES)

God called John the Baptist to prepare the way for Jesus. People needed to make a change in their hearts in order to enter God's Kingdom. John told the people that being children of Abraham was not enough. They also had to admit that they were sinners and then repent. John's baptism symbolized the change in the hearts of the people, and showed that they were ready for the Messiah who would bring actual forgiveness. After we receive Jesus into our hearts, we are baptized in obedience to Him for the forgiveness of our sins and to walk a new life. Jesus said, **"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name**

of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20 NIV

Discussion Questions:

1. What is similar between John’s baptism and our contemporary baptisms when someone chooses to follow Jesus? (*Allow for answers.*)
2. God called John to prepare the way for Jesus. What has God called us to do? (*Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them God’s commands.*)

NEXT WEEK

John’s ministry did not last very long. Find out how it ended next week.

CLOSING PRAYER (2 MINUTES)

Further info? [Click here](#)

TAKE HOME PAGE

Give one copy to each child at the end of the class to take home. Click here for [NIV](#) or [KJV](#) [PDF]

© Kids Sunday School Place, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

PREACHING AND BELIEVING ☆

Children learn firsthand how difficult it was for some people to believe the message John the Baptist preached.

by Kristy Thornton

TOPICS:

Believing, John the Baptist

MATERIALS:

None

DURATION:

Approximately 15 minutes



WHAT YOU WILL DO:

Find three volunteers who enjoy speaking in front of others. These volunteers will play the part of "preachers." Assign them one of the following subjects: AIR, SOUND WAVES, or GOD. The object is for the "preachers" to convince the rest of the class members that their subject is real, by using whatever convincing verbal arguments they choose. They can start by telling the class what subject they have before presenting their arguments. For example, one "preacher" can begin by saying, "Hello. My subject is AIR. You can't see air, but air is real because..."

Each "preacher" will have three minutes to speak, one at a time. The other children in the class will raise their hands when they believe the "preacher" adequately proves that his or her subject is real. The "preacher" who can get the most kids in the class to raise their hands in three minutes, or the one who can get the entire class to raise their hands in the shortest amount of time, is the winner.

WHAT YOU WILL SAY:

We have three brave volunteers who are going to act as preachers. They will preach to you about something that you cannot see. Their job is to convince you that it is real. When you think they have done a good job convincing you that their subject is real, raise your hand and keep it up. I will give each "preacher" three minutes. After the three minutes are up, we will count how many of you have your hands up.

(After the game.) This game was probably difficult, especially for our "preachers." They had to convince a group of people that something that cannot be seen is real. This was similar to the task given to John the Baptist. He had to convince people that the Messiah was really coming. However, up until then, no one had seen Jesus or heard Him preach. John told the people that someone was coming who was greater than he was. Someone whose shoes he was not worthy to untie. Many people were convinced, but not everyone. Some did not believe. For those who did believe, John was able to baptize them in the Jordan River, and prepare them for the coming of Jesus.

© Kids Sunday School Place, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TAKE HOME PAGE

To parents:

This page lets you know what your child learned in Sunday school today. In addition, you will find this week's memory verse, a suggested activity, and a short prayer to reinforce the lesson. Being involved and interacting with your child can be very rewarding for both of you.



What we learned:

Today, the children discovered how God called John the Baptist to prepare the way for the Messiah. The children also learned that God calls them to prepare the way for others to get to know Jesus. (Scripture used: Matthew 3:1-11, Luke 3:1-18)



Memory Verse:

"I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." Matthew 3:11 NIV

Practice this verse several times with your child during the week. This will help him or her remember the verse and it will also help to reinforce what he or she learned during class.

Suggested Parent/Child Activity:



Read Matthew 3:1-12 with your child. Then, do some role-playing. Have your child play the part of John the Baptist, while other family members pretend to be the people coming to see John at the Jordan River. For added excitement, create a costume for your child that looks like what John wore. Then, have your child stand up in front of the family and pretend to be John the Baptist, preaching and baptizing the people.



Daily Prayer:

Dear Lord, thank You for sending John the Baptist to prepare the way for Jesus, our Savior. Help me prepare my heart to receive Jesus to be my Lord. Show me how to preach about the Good News with the same boldness as John the Baptist. Amen.