

John the Baptist_Family Bible Time

John the Baptist was a fiery preacher who preached a convicting message of repentance. He boldly proclaimed God's message to both the common man and the hypocritical Pharisees of his day. John fulfilled prophecy by preparing the way for the Messiah. If John convicted them to repent then they would truly be ready to hear the coming Messiah. He did this by preparing the hearts of men and softening them through repentance.



Scripture References: [Luke 3:2-18](#) and [Matthew 3:1-12](#)

Suggested Emphasis: We should have soft and repentant hearts so that we can learn about God

Group Share Time

Share experiences about being in the desert. What is a desert like. What would you see, smell, hear or touch? Talk about what it would be like to live in the desert. What kinds of food would you eat. What would you drink?

Story from the Bible

An adult or young reader can read the words below as the slides are shown.

1. Cover: John the Baptist
Luke 3:2-18 and Matthew 3:1-12
2. Ever since John was a baby his parents knew that he would be special. Just the fact that he was born was a miracle. It was a miracle because his parents were very old when he was born - way too old to have a baby. Only God could make that happen.
Another special thing about John was that he was the cousin of Jesus. They were born only a few months apart.
3. When he grew up John lived in the desert. There is not much food in the desert. John had to learn to eat all kinds of unusual things. He found some wild bees and was able to eat some of the honey from the honeycomb. He also ate something else that was unusual. John ate bugs! Sometimes people back then would eat locusts. In some places today, people still eat locusts.
John also wore unusual clothes. He wore animal skins instead of regular clothing.
4. John was a good man. He obeyed God and always tried to do the right thing. God gave John a special job. John's job was to get people ready for Jesus to start preaching. This was a job that was planned by God many, many years before.
What kind of things do you think he needed to do to get the people ready? John did not build a church building or hand out invitations to hear Jesus preach. John knew that Jesus would want people to have good hearts. So John taught people how to have soft hearts. If a person has a "hard heart" that means that their

heart will never change. If they have a “soft heart” they will let God change their heart into the kind of heart that he wants. John knew that the people needed to have soft hearts so they would be ready to hear Jesus preach.

5. John did not preach at the temple or in a church building. John would go down to the Jordan River and begin to preach by the water. Soon crowds of people gathered around John and listened to his message.
6. When John talked about soft hearts there was one word he used to say a lot. That word was “REPENT”. John told all the people they needed to repent.
To repent means being very sorry for the bad thing or things you have been doing. But repentance is more than saying you are sorry.
To repent means to be sorry and then to also stop doing the bad thing. But repentance does not just mean being sorry and then to stop doing the bad thing.
Repentance also means to be sorry, stop doing the bad thing AND THEN to change your life and start doing good things instead.
To repent means to change both your heart AND your actions.
7. Many people came to hear John preach. Some of them wanted to change their hearts and their actions and some did not. Some asked John what they should do.
8. John told some that changing their hearts meant that they must stop being selfish. They must repent and start sharing the way God wanted them to.
He told the tax collectors that they had to stop cheating people. They must repent and start being fair like God wanted them to.
9. He told the soldiers that they needed to stop blaming people when things were not their fault. The soldiers must repent and stop complaining about people.
10. Then John told the people who were listening that they needed to be baptised in the Jordan River to show that they really meant what they said. The baptism would mean that they repented of the things they were doing wrong. It would show that their hearts were soft and good.
Many people were baptised when John preached. That is why he is called “John the Baptist”.
11. All of the Jewish people knew that a Messiah would come some day to save the people. John the Baptist was a great preacher. Was John the Baptist the Messiah?
No! John the Baptist was just the one who was getting everyone ready to listen to the Messiah. JESUS was coming. JESUS was the Messiah who would save his people.

Verse(s) to Think About

“Create in me a pure heart, God. Make my spirit right again.” Psalm 51:10

“In the past, people did not understand God, but God ignored this. But now, God tells everyone in the world to change his heart and life.” Acts 17:30 (ICB)

“God has been very kind to you, and he has been patient with you. God has been waiting for you to change. But you think nothing of his kindness. Perhaps you do not understand that God is kind to you so that you will change your hearts and lives.” Romans 2:4 (ICB)

“In the same way, I tell you there is much joy in heaven when 1 sinner changes his heart. There is more joy for that 1 sinner than there is for 99 good people who don’t need to change.” Luke 15:7 (ICB)

Choose Activities and Learn Together

Select activities that suit your family or group. Consider ages and abilities and how to involve everyone present in at least one of the activities.

- **AT HOME** Use sidewalk chalk and draw hearts on your driveway, footpath or other surface. Alternatively, use dry-erase markers and draw on the inside of glass window panes. You could also write out the verse [Psalm 51:10](#).
- **EXPLORE:** Investigate online articles or books about the human heart. What is its function? How vital is it to survival? Why do you think people refer to the heart as a place where we feel emotion?
- **IN THE WORD:** Read [Luke 3:7-14](#) together. John said actions show a changed heart. List the different people who asked “What should we do?” and then John’s answer. Now list groups of people today. If those people asked the same question what do you think John would answer? Finally, what would John the Baptist answer if you asked “What should I do to show my changed heart?”
- **GAME/ACTIVITY:** Explain that our behaviour is a reflection of what is in our hearts. Repenting means changing our behaviour. For this activity individuals or pairs prepare and then act out a bad behaviour (like throwing a fit or stealing something). When the group calls out “REPENT” the actors will change their behaviour and act out how to good.
- **CREATIVE:** Read [Matthew 3:4](#). Provide paper and crayons or markers for everyone and have them draw a picture of John the Baptist. Adults and children can team up and do pictures together.
- **LIFE APPLICATION:** Using the [Acrostic Application activity](#) write the words S-O-F-T H-E-A-R-T vertically down the left side of a paper. For each letter invite participants to think of a way they will prepare their heart to accept God this week.
- **LITTLE ONES:** Practice drawing or cutting out heart shapes.
- **LITTLE ONES:** John the Baptist [colouring page](#) to download. [Click here for new ways to use colouring pictures.](#)
- **FOOD FOR THOUGHT:** Heart shaped cookies are always fun. Alternatively, make honey sandwiches. To discuss John the Baptist, you might want to put candy “bugs” (like gummy grasshoppers) inside the sandwich. That will be a fun surprise. Alternatively, play a game where you blindfold someone and tell them you will serve food from the story. Serve a spoonful of honey and let them guess what it is. Then serve a Rice Krispie treat or something else that is crunchy and ask them to guess what it is from the story. The audience will love hinting that it is a treat made from locusts.

Song Suggestions:

Singing does not have to be a performance. Don’t take yourself too seriously. In the privacy of your own home or within a small group allow yourself to just be genuine and enjoy the experience together.

Singing songs yourself is more reliable than viewing them online. If you are viewing published videos online on forums such as YouTube be sure and preview them first to make sure there are not unhelpful advertisements. To avoid long pauses due to internet speed issues play the song through once before you begin and then hold it paused and ready to go at the beginning of the song.

- [I Can Be a Missionary Song](#)
- [I’ve Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy Song](#)
- [These are the Days of Elijah \(YouTube audio published by ColAcoustic\)](#)
- [Create in Me a Clean Heart Oh God \(Video by Acapella Company on YouTube\)](#)
- [Lord We Come Before You Now \(audio by Acapella on YouTube\)](#)
- [More songs to choose from](#)

Additional Mission Bible Class Resources

- [Instructions for Family Bible Time and Intergenerational Groups here.](#)
- [More teacher information and additional ideas for today's lesson here.](#)
- [How to Plan a Bible Class for Children](#)
- [How to Teach Children at Various Ages](#)
- [Ideas for Teachers](#)
- [Songs for Bible Class](#)
- [Praying With Children](#)
- [Movement and Dance](#)



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