

Family Lesson 52

Principle: We must repent of sin. God was pleased with Jesus. Jesus came to save.

Bible Character(s): Jesus and John the Baptist

Scripture Reference: Luke 3:1-18, Matthew 3:1-17

1. Worship - Gather your family and play the [worship video](#) found on the curriculum resource page. Have fun, sing loudly, and follow along with the motions!

2. Skit Video - Watch the [skit video](#) with your family to hear a special message about what you will be learning this weekend.

3. Bible Lesson - Read through the lesson with your family. The bold font is meant to be read aloud along with the Scripture references.

Bible Lesson

Last week, we studied about Jesus when he was a young boy. Today, we are going to read about John the Baptist. Who remembers John the Baptist? (He is a man who lived in the wilderness, wore camel skin, ate locusts and honey, preached in the desert, and was Jesus' cousin.) **What was John the Baptist's purpose?** (He prepared the way for Jesus.)

Let's begin reading the Bible in Luke 3 [NLT].

Luke 3:1-2a

¹ It was now the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, the Roman emperor. Pontius Pilate was governor over Judea; Herod Antipas was ruler over Galilee; his brother Philip was ruler over Iturea and Traconitis; Lysanias was ruler over Abilene. ² Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests.

All of these people who are named are the religious leaders and rulers during the time of John the Baptist and Jesus. Let's continue reading the Bible.

Luke 3:2b

^{2b} At this time a message from God came to John son of Zechariah, who was living in the wilderness.

Matthew 3:4

⁴ John's clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey.

John is very different from the religious leaders mentioned in Luke 3. He has been living in the wilderness, where God prepares him to share his message with the people and prepare them for Jesus. John is more like the people he preached to, more ordinary, than the religious leaders. John is not the most powerful man of that time. Annas and Caiaphas have more power than John, but God chooses to use John as his messenger.

Let's keep reading the Bible in Luke 3 to see what John does with the message from God.

Luke 3:3-6

³ Then John went from place to place on both sides of the Jordan River, preaching that people should be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven. ⁴ Isaiah had spoken of John when he said,

"He is a voice shouting in the wilderness,
'Prepare the way for the Lord's coming!
Clear the road for him!"

⁵ The valleys will be filled,
and the mountains and hills made level.
The curves will be straightened,
and the rough places made smooth.

⁶ And then all people will see
the salvation sent from God."

During this time, when kings would travel, the people would physically smooth out the roads to

prepare for the king’s arrival. They would make the road smooth so that the king could travel on it easily. John the Baptist tells the people that the true King is coming. They need to prepare their hearts for the true King—just as they prepared roads for the king of a nation—so that they are ready to believe and trust in Jesus.

Part of preparing our hearts is confession and repentance. Let’s look at the definition of confession and repentance. **CONFESSION** is telling God how you have sinned. **REPENTANCE** is turning away from your sin and asking Jesus to change your heart. Can you see the difference between these two things? Confession is telling God how you have sinned. Repentance goes a step further. When you repent of your sin, you turn away from your sin and ask Jesus to change your heart. A changed heart leads to changed actions.

As we continue reading about John the Baptist, we will see that he continues to preach and teach that people need to repent and be baptized. Let’s continue to read the Bible in Matthew 3 to see how John preaches about repentance.

Matthew 3:7-10

⁷ But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to watch him baptize, he denounced them. “You brood of snakes!” he exclaimed. “Who warned you to flee God’s coming wrath? ⁸ Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. ⁹ Don’t just say to each other, ‘We’re safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.’ That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones. ¹⁰ Even now the ax of God’s judgment is poised, ready to sever the roots of the trees. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire.

The Pharisees and Sadducees are the religious leaders of this time. Do you think they are surprised to hear John the Baptist call them a “brood of snakes?” (Allow responses.) These leaders follow all the laws. They look down on other people who do not follow the laws. They

are not used to someone calling them names; they are used to people thinking they are perfect. If they follow all the laws, why is John calling them a “brood of snakes?” (Allow responses.)

John says, “Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God.” Even though the Pharisees and Sadducees are following the law, they are doing this to make themselves look good, not because they confess and repent of their sin. They live selfishly. When we truly confess and repent of our sins, our heart changes and the way we live our life is affected by this heart change. Our actions come from a desire to serve God instead of a desire to serve ourselves.

Let’s see how the Israelites respond to John’s message in the Bible in Luke 3.

Luke 3:10-14

*¹⁰ The crowds asked, “What should we do?”
¹¹ John replied, “If you have two shirts, give one to the poor. If you have food, share it with those who are hungry.”
¹² Even corrupt tax collectors came to be baptized and asked, “Teacher, what should we do?”
¹³ He replied, “Collect no more taxes than the government requires.”
¹⁴ “What should we do?” asked some soldiers. John replied, “Don’t extort money or make false accusations. And be content with your pay.”*

How do we live to please God? (Allow responses.) **We confess our sin (selfishness, unkindness, disobedience, unforgiveness, pride, dishonesty, etc).** **We repent by asking the Holy Spirit to change our hearts so that our lives show God and others how much we love him.**

God’s Word shows us how a heart changed by the Holy Spirit produces fruit (our actions):

Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control.

Optional Illustration

Print out (or display on device) “Tree Farm” picture (found on [Kids Resource page](#))

Look at the pictures and ask your child which picture represents the Pharisees and Sadducees, and which heart represents someone who has repented. Discuss the concept of the fruit of the Spirit.

After hearing John’s message, the people repent of their sin and are baptized. The act of baptism does not change them. Baptism is an outward symbol that they repent of their sin. It’s the same for us. When we believe in God and repent of our sin, we can be baptized so others know that we believe and trust in God. Have any of you been baptized? Why did you get baptized? (Teachers, if you have been baptized, please feel free to briefly describe when and why you got baptized.)

After this, Jesus goes to the Jordan River. Let’s read the Bible in Matthew 3 to find out more.

Matthew 3:13-17

¹³ Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to talk him out of it. “I am the one who needs to be baptized by you,” he said, “so why are you coming to me?”

¹⁵ But Jesus said, “It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires.” So John agreed to baptize him.

¹⁶ After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.”

For thirty years, Jesus lived as you and I do, but without sin. Jesus’ baptism is the start of his ministry of teaching and performing miracles. This is a pretty amazing start to Jesus’ ministry.

Here is verse 17 again: “And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.’” How did Jesus bring God great joy? How can you bring God great joy? (Allow responses.)

Prayer

Spend some time in prayer to close the lesson. Thank God for his love and mercy, even though we do not deserve it..

Activity

Preparing the Way

The purpose is to explore the ways we prepare our hearts for Jesus.

Supplies:

Worksheet – “Preparing for a King” (found on [Kids Resource Page](#))

Have the campers circle the things they would use to clean a house before the arrival of a king or queen. Then have them put a box around the things on the worksheet that would help them prepare their heart for the true King, Jesus.

1 John 1:9 tells us “But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.”

Tie It Together

Most of us do not have kings and queens visit our homes, but we do have friends or relatives visit our house. We prepare our houses for guests by cleaning and making sure we have everything they would need while staying with us. We also need to prepare our hearts for Jesus. We don’t need vacuums or feather dusters for that. We need to pray, read our Bible, confess our sin, and repent. These actions help prepare our hearts to follow Jesus.

