

John the Baptist

Lesson At-A-Glance

Scripture Reference
Luke 3:1-18

Lectionary Sunday/
Church Season
Advent 3

Lesson Focus
It's good to be prepared.

Bible Memory Verse
"I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming." Luke 3:16a



Gather (10 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Arrival Activity Kids consider how they got ready for Sunday school today.	Activity Pages 	Paper, markers, tape, pencils
Opening Conversation Kids discuss what they do to prepare themselves for the day.	Leaflets	Pencils
Opening Prayer Kids pray a popcorn prayer about what God provides.	None	None

Open the Bible (20 minutes)


	Spark Resources	Supplies
John the Baptist Story Kids read the story and interact with the characters.	Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers, Leaflets	Pencils
John Got 'Em Ready Crossword Kids do a crossword puzzle about what John did to prepare people for Jesus.	Spark Bibles, Leaflets	Pencils
Look It Up! Kids consider the connection between baptism and dying and rising with Christ.	Spark Bibles	None

Activate Faith (10 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Ready Living Kids list ways they think they've been prepared to live in the world as Christians.	Leaflets	Pencils
A Soundtrack for Getting Ready Kids reflect on the way music is often used to help get us prepared and ready to do things.	Leaflets	None

Send (5 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
Closing Conversation Kids discuss the value of preparation.	Leaflets	None
Closing Prayer Kids pray for patience and faith.	Family Pages 	None

 Visit www.sparksundayschool.org for more Spark content! Watch a short Lesson Prep Video that will prepare you and give you confidence to explore this Bible story with the kids you are leading. You will also find four downloadable resources for this lesson: an Activity Page, a Family Page, and two additional in-class activities.

Gather (10 minutes)

Arrival Activity

If some kids arrive earlier than others and you need a lesson-based activity, make copies of the Activity Page and set them out for kids to try.

Make three signs: Had breakfast with my family, Had breakfast alone, Didn't have breakfast. Tape the signs in three areas of the room. As kids arrive, ask them to gather under the sign that describes their breakfast experience before Sunday school. One group is for those who had breakfast with anyone in their family, another for those who ate breakfast by themselves, and the last group for those who didn't have breakfast at all.

Everybody gets ready in the morning a little differently. Among the others in your group, discuss what you had for breakfast, why you chose that, or why you didn't have breakfast at all. When they're done, gather them back together as a whole. **For those of you who did eat this morning, why do you have breakfast?** (*I was hungry, habit, so I don't get hungry later, it's healthy, helps me concentrate*) **For those of you who didn't, why didn't you have breakfast?** (*no time, not hungry in the morning, there was nothing I wanted to eat*) Be sensitive to kids whose families may have limited resources so that kids do not have access to breakfast. **Breakfast is a good way for us to get prepared for our day. Many people say it's the most important meal of the day, because it helps start you off with energy so that you can get through your day.**

Spark Resources
Activity Pages



Supplies

Paper
Markers
Tape
Pencils

Opening Conversation

Who was able to try a Faith on the Go! activity this past week? Tell us what you did. Allow some time for sharing.

Who can tell me the Bible Memory Verse (BMV) from last week? If kids remember the BMV, invite them to recite it for the group. Guide the kids to help them remember parts they don't.

Pass out leaflets and pencils. Have a volunteer read the Life Question on the front page of the leaflet: What does it take to get you ready? **What are some other things you "get ready" for, besides school in the morning?** (*church, a sport/game, recital, test*) **How do you prepare for those things? What do you do to get ready?** (*Encourage a variety of responses.*) **Do you sometimes go unprepared?** Share a story of a time when you weren't ready to do something because you hadn't prepared. You could talk about a big exam, drivers test, a date, or a big game or performance. Ask the kids to share any stories of times they weren't prepared.

Today we're going to be looking at how important it is to be prepared for things as they come. Find Morning Prep on the second page of your leaflet. Ask a volunteer to read the text, then invite kids to number the pictures as instructed. When all have finished, compare the preparation routines of the kids.

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
Pencils

Opening Prayer

Lead kids in a popcorn prayer. **In a popcorn prayer, anyone at any time can randomly shout out a prayer concern. There's no order and no limit on the number of concerns a person can share. We've talked a lot about all the ways we get ready for the things we do. But, God also helps us so that we can get through our days. As we pray a popcorn prayer this morning, shout out any thing God does or any thing God gives you that helps prepare you for the rest of your day. I'll start.**

Dear God, I thank you for keeping me healthy. Take time to listen to kids' petitions that pop up. After all the petitions are in, finish the prayer. **For all of these ways you prepare us for our day, and for the many gifts we've forgotten to mention—we give you thanks. Amen.**

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

None

Open the Bible (20 minutes)

John the Baptist Story

Today's story is about John the Baptist. John knew people weren't ready for Jesus yet. He needed to prepare them for the messages Jesus was going to teach. Pass out Spark Bibles and pencils. **Our story is from the gospel of Luke again today. Who can tell me where Luke is?** (*New Testament*) **What other books are surrounding it?** (*Matthew, Mark, John, Acts*) Help kids find Luke 3:1-18 on page 1132 of the Spark Bible. Ask volunteers to read the story out loud.

There are lots of characters in this story who heard John's message. Starting with verse 10, who are they? (*crowds, tax collectors, soldiers*) **What are they doing?** (*getting baptized by John*)

Ask these questions about each of the characters. **Do you think these characters were excited or happy with John and his message? Do you think they were prepared for Jesus?** Kids' answers will vary according to the character.

Invite kids to use their stickers to mark something in the story they liked or didn't like, or something they want to know more about. They can also sketch a valley, mountain, or road in the margin.

Invite kids to find Did You Know? on the second page of the leaflet. Help them find Isaiah 40 on page 777 of the Spark Bible. The first 11 verses point to John as the voice crying in the wilderness.

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles

Spark Bible Stickers

Leaflets

Supplies

Pencils

John Got 'Em Ready Crossword

John had a big job to do to prepare people for Jesus. He did a lot! Just what did he do? Turn to the third page of the leaflet and do the John Got 'Em Ready Crossword puzzle. There were about 10 different things John did to prepare the way for Jesus. The verses in the clues will help you answer the crossword.

Answer Key

Across

1. Fulfilled
3. Taught
5. Exhorted
8. Warned
9. Proclaimed

Down

1. Forgave
2. Prophesied
4. Answered
6. Rebuked
7. Baptized

Why do you think John had to do all of these things? Share some historical information about the time of John and Jesus. (At the time when John and Jesus lived, the Jews lived under Roman control. They weren't able to live freely and there was much corruption. The people were waiting for a Messiah, a Savior who would come to be their king and to save them. John knew this, but also knew that they had to open their hearts more so that they could be fully ready for Jesus.) Be open to kids' comments and questions about the challenging and sometimes harsh language that John used.

Look It Up!

Ask kids to find Look It Up! on the third page of the leaflet. Help them find Romans 6:3-5 on page 1249 of the Spark Bible. Invite everyone to read the passage. **The book of Romans was written by the Apostle Paul. According to Paul, what happens when we are baptized?** (*When we are baptized into Christ, we die with him and are raised with him, so that we will walk in the newness of life.*) **What does this mean to you?** Allow time for discussion. Be sensitive to the fact that not all kids may be baptized.

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles
Leaflets

Supplies

Pencils

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles

Supplies

None

Activate Faith (10 minutes)

Ready Living

The Good News that John proclaimed was exactly what the people needed in order to be ready for what Jesus would do in their lives. John prepared the people to be followers of Jesus.

Have the kids turn to the third page of their leaflets, and ask a volunteer to read Ready Living out loud. Give kids time to write responses in their leaflets. **What are some of the difficulties or challenges you could experience in your life? How might being a Christian help you overcome those challenges or get you through those hard times? What, or who, prepares you for the hard times?** Let the kids answer independently in their leaflets and then discuss the questions and answers as a group.

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
Pencils

A Soundtrack for Getting Ready

Now turn to the back page of your leaflet. When you think of John out in the wilderness, what do you hear? Just his voice booming out his proclamations? How about a drum tapping out a march as he calls to people? How about a trumpet sounding? We don't know if John used any music, but we do know that music is a good way to get people hyped up! Read A Soundtrack for Getting Ready from the leaflet. **Do you listen to music to get you ready for things? Like what?** (*studying for tests, sporting events, cleaning your bedroom*) Have the kids give examples. Share your musical tastes so kids know what you listen to when you're getting ready for something.

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
None

Send (5 minutes)

Closing Conversation

We've talked a lot about how to be prepared today. What are some of the things we get ready for? Take time to listen to kids' responses. **There are a lot of ways that we get prepared. Who or what are some of those things that help us get ready?** (*Encourage answers like parents, teachers, books, rules, music, healthy food, exercise, etc.*) **One important tool we have to help us get ready for things is the Internet. What kinds of things can the Internet help you with?** (*writing a paper, doing research, getting directions to someone's house, paying bills*) Have kids read aloud Faith on the Go! on the back page of the leaflet. **The next time you use the Internet, whether at school or home, think about all of the cool ways it helps you prepare.**

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
None

Closing Prayer

Recalling how they responded to the Ready Living activity, invite kids to offer a prayer of thanks for one way they've been prepared for God's work in the world and for living through all of life's troubles.

Gracious God, you have promised to stand by us, from our births and baptisms to our dying days. You are faithful in shining a light when we're lost in the dark and for opening our eyes and hearts when we're blinded to the world. We offer you these thanks for always helping us, guiding us, and preparing us for what's ahead. Take time for kids to offer their prayers. In your name we pray. Amen.

Be sure to send the leaflets and a Family Page home with the kids.

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None

