



GOD'S MOUTHPIECE

Life & Ministry of Jesus • U1#4 1st-3rd Grade • July 2 , 2023

Concept

God provides.

Goal

Students will learn that John the Baptist prepared the way for people to see their need for Christ's forgiveness.

Passage

Isaiah 40:3, Luke 3:2-6; 10-10-14; 21-23

Key Verse: "Just as the prophet Isaiah said, 'Behold I send my messenger before you, who will prepare the way.'" Mark 1:2

Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3-4 decks of cards <p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bible, 1/class• <i>Laminated, magnet-backed visual aids</i> <p>Learning Activity #2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Piece of paper for baton, 1/class	<p>Activity Station:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mouth verse printed on cardstock w/key verse on back, 1/student• Craft sticks, 1/student• Crayons & markers• Scissors• Tape

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information/Teacher Helps

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“Jesus was a model son, and probably a carpenter after Joseph’s trade, until, at the age of thirty, He went down to the Jordan River to be baptized by John the Baptist. The Baptist was a formidable man who wore camel skin and ate locusts and wild honey. He was considered by many a prophet, Israel’s first in some four or five centuries, and he stirred up considerable excitement among the common people, many of whom responded to his call for repentance.

He was also fearless, speaking out against those of the religious and political authorities who were wicked men and declaring God’s impending judgment on them. Some of the people even considered him the Messiah, but he denied it, quoting Isaiah to define his mission: [I am] the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare a road for the Lord. (See Matthew 3:3) He did say that One was coming after him, One whose sandal he was not fit to untie.

When Jesus went down to be baptized, it was to identify with John the Baptist and reveal to him that Jesus was that ‘One.’ John baptized Jesus only at His insistence, and as He was baptized, John saw the Spirit of God descend on Him as a dove. At that moment, a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased’ (Matthew 3:17). With the descent of the Spirit, John recognized Jesus as the Messiah Redeemer and later said, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world (see John 1:36). Jesus, having received the testimony of His Father, was now ready to begin His ministry.”¹

As we complete the Prophecies and Promises unit, the goal for the children is to learn and understand how John the Baptist prepared the way for Christ’s ministry. John exposed sin and proclaimed God’s requirement for all to repent and turn back to Him. John the Baptist was God’s mouthpiece to show people their need for Christ. As believers we, too, can be God’s mouthpiece/messenger to our friends, family and co-workers. We can be used in a mighty way if we would simply “open our mouths.” Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ is an awesome way to be used by God. Pray for opportunities to open your mouth and for ways to encourage the believing children to do the same.

¹ McCallum & Hamblin, *God’s Incredible Plan*, Fleming H. Revell Co., Tappan, New Jersey, 1978, pp. 70, 71.

Set Up

For the Lesson make the following chart on the white board. Make enough space between the rows to allow space for the picture/word cards.

Mouthpiece/Messenger:

Problem:

Need:

Solution:

Incorporation Lg. Group

Goal: To recognize there is a problem and the teachers can provide the solution.

- **Card Game – Memory**

- **Instructions:** Divide a deck of cards in 2 parts & remove some of the cards from each. As students enter the room, provide cards to a group of students. Place the cards face down in rows and have the students find as many matches as possible. The problem is that some of the cards will have no match. When the students realize there are not duplicates to match all cards and notify a teacher, the teacher will provide the needed missing cards.

- **Craft – Mouth**

- **Instructions:** Give each student a printed mouth. Cut around the edge of the face and color it with the markers. Tape a craft stick to the back so it can be held up to the face to look like the person's mouth.

Introduction Lg. Group

During the last three weeks we've looked at some amazing OT prophecies which were written about Christ's birth. These prophecies were written about His birth years before they happened and were completely fulfilled because God's word is the truth. If God says something will happen, He keeps his promises. The book of Isaiah provides many details about Christ's birth and life. This book was written 700 years before Christ was born. Isaiah 40:3 mentions an important prophecy about a future messenger who would take an incredible message to the Jews. He would prepare the way for the work Jesus came to earth to do. Our key verse, Mark 1:2 tells about this messenger and his work. "Just as the prophet Isaiah said, 'Behold I send my messenger before you, who will prepare the way.'" Just as God promised, He provided this messenger 700 years later. His name was John the Baptist. Today we'll learn how he fulfilled this prophesy and prepared the way for Christ's work here on earth.

Transition

Everyone come sit down.

Lesson Lg. Group

Isaiah 40:3 says: "A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

Now let's turn to **Luke 3** and read verses 2-6.

Lesson Lg. Group Continued

Our key verse comes from Mark's account of John the Baptist. Mark 1:2 says, "Just as the prophet Isaiah said, 'Behold I send my messenger before you, who will prepare the way.'" John the Baptist is the messenger who cried in the wilderness. Sounds like a wild kind of guy... dressed in camel hair, ate locusts and wild honey. It's pretty funny trying to picture a guy like that, isn't it? Isn't it amazing – John, a "nobody" living in the wilderness, fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy made 700 years before.

The important message that John preached was to repent. Repent means to change your mind or turn away from sin (include an age appropriate example of changing your mind).

Visual Aid Instructions: Lay out the chart transparency; then as you go through the correlation, place the correct answer in the blank space.

"Mouthpiece":

John the Baptist

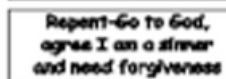
YOU

Problem:



SIN separates us from God

Need:



Solution:



So what is the problem that all people have? (We are all sinners and separated from God.) (Attach Sin separates us from God.) It says in Mark 1:5 that people were baptized, confessing their sins. Baptism showed that they had turned to God and away from their sins, which is repentance.

John had an incredible job to do. He told the people that their sin separated them from God. The black heart represents our sinful nature. John encouraged the people to repent and live for God. (Attach Repent: Go to God, agree that I am a sinner and need forgiveness.) By doing this, John prepared the way for Jesus' forgiveness through His death on the cross. Once the people admitted they were sinners, chose to repent of their sin and turn to God, they still needed one final thing... FORGIVENESS! That is what Christ's life and ministry is all about. Christ came to earth so He could die on the cross. As a result of Adam and Eve's sin, nobody can ever be perfect and sin free. We are all born with sinful hearts. In order to have a personal relationship with God and live forever with Him in heaven, you have to do one of two things: (1) be absolutely perfect and sin free, which is totally impossible; OR (2) you can be forgiven. In order to be forgiven of your sins you have to accept Christ's death on the cross as payment for your sins. You have to repent which is to personally admit you sin and then accept Christ's death on the cross as punishment for your sins.

Transition

Learning Activity#1 Sm. Groups

Let's get in small groups now to talk about what this has to do with us.

God used John the Baptist as a prophet to prepare people to listen to Jesus. Some people actually thought that John was the promised Messiah. (Read Luke 3:15, 16.) John was not the Messiah but God's mouthpiece or messenger sent to prepare people to receive Jesus' forgiveness. God uses Christians today as His mouthpiece/messenger to point people to Christ. One day while John was preaching and baptizing people, Jesus came and was baptized by John. Let's consider this a minute. If people were baptized to show they turned away from sin, why did Jesus want to be baptized? After all He was perfect! He didn't need to be baptized for repentance. Read Luke 3:21-23. So what was the purpose of Jesus' baptism? (The purpose of Jesus' baptism was to identify Him as the Messiah and to begin His public ministry. The Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove and a voice from heaven said, "This is my son in whom I am well-pleased.") Once again, God's prophecy was fulfilled.

Let's read Luke 3:10-14. As we read, think about what is it that God might be challenging you to do differently this week at school or at home or with your friends. What do you need to change your mind about and what would show that you have changed your mind? (Teachers, have a personal, age-appropriate example ready to share with your students.)

Luke 3:10-14 "What should we do then?" the crowd asked. John answered, "Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same." Even tax collectors came to be baptized. "Teacher," they asked, "what should we do?" "Don't collect any more than you are required to," he told them. Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?" He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely—be content with your pay."

Missions Prayer: Talk about and pray for the Oasis giving campaign.

Let's pray. If there is something you'd like us to pray for you this week – an attitude or situation that you want God to help you change – pray for that and let us know that you would like us to pray for you as well.

Let's have a relay race to pass along our message. Have students sit in a line.

Put students into teams of 2-4 depending on how many students are there. Roll up a piece of paper to use as a "baton" for each team and tell students that this baton is the message they will need to pass to their teammates, even if the task seems really hard!

Transition

Learning Activity#2 Lg. Group

Learning Activity# 2 Continued

Have half of the team stand on opposite sides of the room (ready to have a relay) Think of different things that the students will need to do as they take turns passing the baton across the room to their teammates (i.e. jumping jacks across the room, scoot across the room on stomachs, hop on one foot, crawl)

Debrief: could relate this game back to John the Baptist seeing the message as so important he was willing to do whatever he needed to do to pass it on to people!

Review

“... ‘Behold I send my messenger before you, who will prepare the way’”
(Mark 1:2).

- Isaiah predicted that a messenger would come to get people ready for Jesus (John the Baptist)
- He was God's mouthpiece sent to prepare the people to receive Jesus' forgiveness. John the Baptist told the people that they had a big problem. (We are sinners and our sin keeps us from being friends/close with God).
- When Jesus died on the cross He took the punishment we deserve for our sins so that we can be forgiven and be friends with God! We can ask God to forgive us for our sins and become our friend!

Today God still provides mouthpieces or messengers to tell others about Jesus!