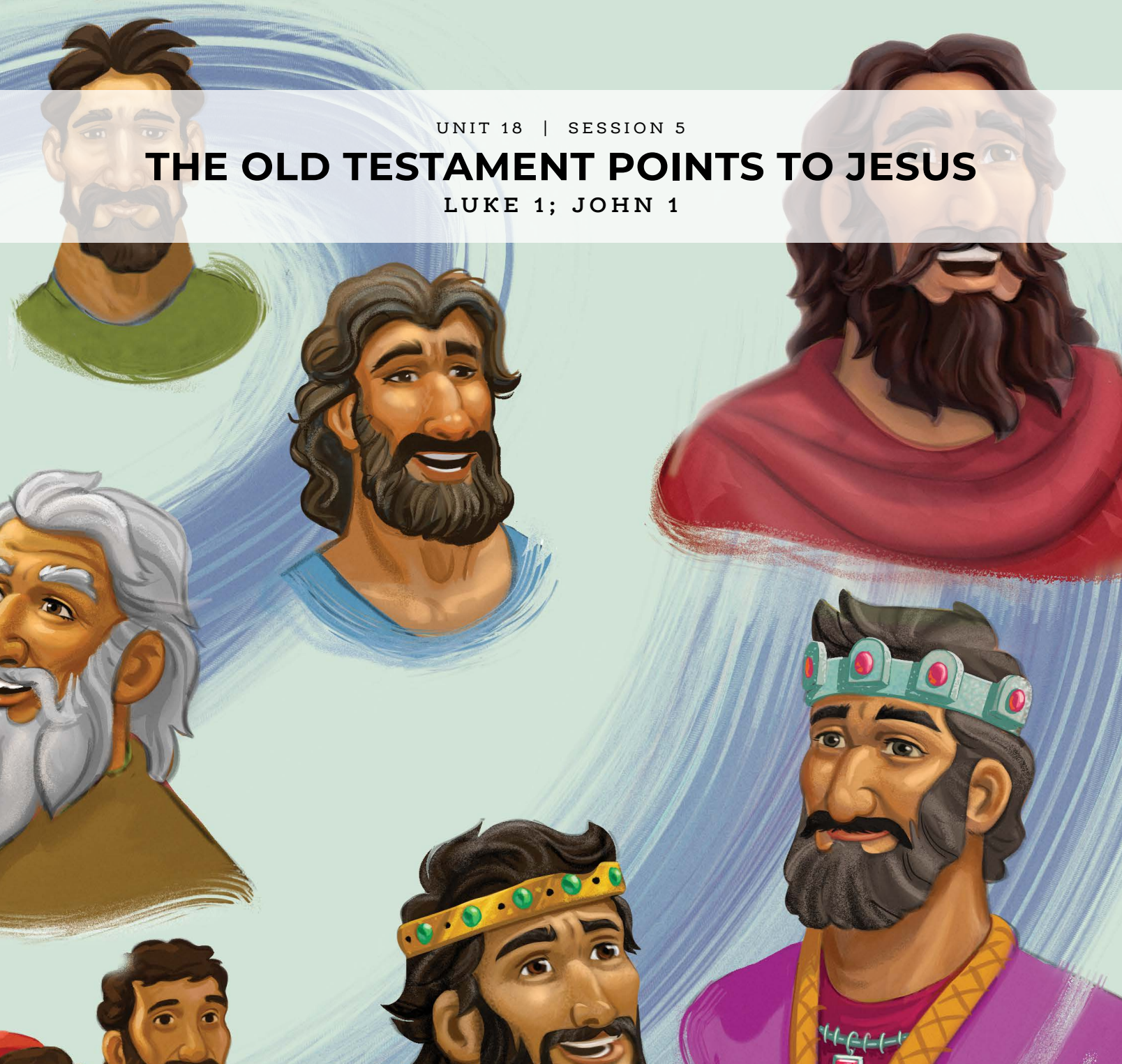


THE OLD TESTAMENT POINTS TO JESUS

LUKE 1; JOHN 1



KEY PASSAGE: John 20:31

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is the Bible about? The Bible is the story of God's plan to save people through Jesus.

CHRIST CONNECTION: God spoke through His prophets in the Old Testament, like Isaiah and Malachi, and shared His plan to send Jesus into the world to save people from sin. When the time had come, God called John to be a witness for Jesus. Anyone who trusts in Jesus will be saved.

STORY POINT: John was sent by God as a witness to the coming Messiah.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

As we turn the page in the Bible from the Old Testament to the New Testament, we remember that the Bible tells one grand story, and at the center of that story is Jesus. From Genesis to Malachi, the Old Testament weaves a story of God's love and compassion for His people and of their inability to be faithful to Him. The Old Testament leads to the moment when God sent His Son to fulfill His plan to save people from their sin.

The first verse of John echoes the first verse of Genesis, reminding us of the cohesiveness of the Old Testament and the New Testament. This echo also reveals that Jesus is not merely a prophet or a teacher—He is God Himself, who became human. The Word of God, who spoke creation into existence, humbled Himself, taking the form of man, and dwelt among sinners so that those who believed in Him would become children of God (John 1:11-14).

In another Gospel account, Luke 1 introduces us to another person vital to God's plan. An angel appeared to a priest named Zechariah. Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, like many couples in the Old Testament, had not been able to have children. The angel told Zechariah not only would they have a child, but their child would have the power of Elijah and would be the forerunner to God's Messiah. John's birth and ministry was the fulfillment of Isaiah and Malachi's prophecies, where God promised to send a messenger to prepare the way for the Messiah. John's ministry can be viewed as a bridge between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Reflect on the foreshadowing of Christ seen all throughout the Old Testament and help kids see how it revealed what was to come in the New Testament. The sacrifices of the law point toward the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus. To David, God promised an everlasting kingdom—a promise that finds its fulfillment in Christ's everlasting reign. Jesus is the Prophet, Priest, and King that Israel longed for throughout their history. The Savior God promised in the Garden of Eden—the One who would crush the serpent's head—had finally come. Jesus would defeat evil and sin and make the way for people to be saved. But this victory would come at a great cost—His own life.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ "All about Jesus" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ inflated balloons, 4 per group
- ☐ strips of paper, 4 per group

Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ timer



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ cardstock, 1 per kid
- ☐ stickers

Reflection and Prayer

- ☐ Bible story coloring page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video
- ☐ Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ "The Old Testament Points to Jesus" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- ☐ "Unit 18, Session 5" Questions from Kids video

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "Life in His Name (John 20:31)" song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)
- ☐ music



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “When was a time you were able to tell someone something important or exciting? How did it feel to share that message with someone?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “All about Jesus” activity page.

SAY “All throughout the Old Testament, God promised to send the Messiah. Today, we will see how God sent an angel to share an important message with a man named Zechariah.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: HIS NAME WILL BE ...



Before this activity, inflate four balloons for each group of three or four kids. Write the letters J O H N on strips of paper, and place a strip of paper in each set of four balloons. Form kids into groups of three or four and direct them to spread out around the room. Distribute a balloon set to each group. When you say, “go,” challenge kids to work together to pop the balloons and find the paper inside the balloon. Encourage them to collect all the papers and place them in the correct order. The first group to pop all their balloons and place the papers in the correct order wins.

SAY “Today, we will learn about a man named John whom God had chosen for a special purpose. We’ll learn that **JOHN WAS SENT BY GOD AS A WITNESS TO THE COMING MESSIAH.** Let’s get ready to hear more.”

☐ OPTION 2: STAY SILENT!



Explain that kids will play a game where they must stand still and silent like statues. Set a timer for one minute. While kids remain silent, the leader will try to get them to break their silence by doing different things, such as telling funny jokes, making silly faces, asking random questions, and walking around acting goofy. If a kid breaks her silence, she must sit down. Play until the one minute timer is up. Then play again, and invite a kid to try to make the other kids break their silence. Play as time allows.

SAY “Was it challenging to stay silent? In our Bible story, we’ll see how a man named Zechariah was unable to speak because he didn’t believe the words an angel spoke to him. Unlike the game we played, Zechariah really could not talk until God allowed him to. Let’s hear our story to learn when Zechariah was able to speak again.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “Welcome, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m so happy to see you. If you brought a Bible, can you hold it up? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Today, we will be in the New Testament. In fact, we will be in the Gospel books of Luke and John. Can you find the book of Luke in your Bible? [Assist kids as needed.]

We have learned about so many stories in the Old Testament, starting all the way back in Genesis. But do you know that all the stories in the Old Testament point to Jesus? God spoke through prophets like Isaiah and Malachi and shared His plan to send the Savior—Jesus—into the world. Today, we will see how God used a man named John to prepare the way for Jesus’ ministry on earth. We’ll learn that **JOHN WAS SENT BY GOD AS A WITNESS TO THE COMING MESSIAH.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray together: ‘Dear God, thank You for Your plan to send Jesus into the world. Give us ears to hear and eyes to see Your truth today. Amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “Let’s review our big picture question: **What is the Bible about?** What is the answer? [Allow responses.] **The Bible is the story of God’s plan to save people through Jesus.** Let’s say the answer one more time: **The Bible is the story of God’s plan to save people through Jesus.**

As we begin studying the New Testament, we clearly see how Jesus came to earth to save people from sins. But as we have learned, the whole Bible points to Jesus. The Old Testament first made known God’s plan to send a Savior, Jesus, into the world. Way back in Genesis, we learned how God promised to send a Rescuer to defeat the serpent. And throughout all the stories, God kept reminding His people of His promise to send the Messiah who would provide the only way to be saved from sin and made right with God. Even in our story today, we’ll learn how Zechariah praised God for keeping His promise to save people from sin. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “God spoke to His people through the prophets—men like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi. We saw that Malachi was the last prophet of the Old Testament. Malachi warned the people of their sin and encouraged them to remember the promised Messiah. Then God was silent for 400 years. Today, we will learn how the time had finally come for God to raise up another prophet to speak to His people again. We’ll see that a man named **JOHN WAS SENT BY GOD AS A WITNESS TO THE COMING MESSIAH.** ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Luke 1; John 1. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “The Old Testament Points to Jesus.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

THE OLD TESTAMENT POINTS TO JESUS

“A priest named Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth lived rightly before God. They were both old and had no children because Elizabeth was not able to have a baby.

One day, an angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah in the sanctuary of the Lord, and he was afraid! But the angel said, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because God has heard your prayer. Your wife Elizabeth will have a son, and you will name him John. He will have the spirit and power of Elijah. He will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and make the people ready for the Lord.” This was spoken to fulfill what the prophet Malachi said would happen.

Zechariah asked the angel, “How can I know this will happen? After all, my wife and I are very old.”

The angel answered, “You will become silent and unable to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words.” When Zechariah came out of the sanctuary, he couldn’t speak.

Elizabeth became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When it came time to name the baby boy, Zechariah wrote, “His name is John.” Immediately after writing these words, Zechariah could speak again.

Then Zechariah praised God, saying, “Blessed is the Lord because he has provided salvation for his people. You, my son, will be called a prophet of the Most High, and you will go before the Lord and prepare his ways.” God had kept the promise He made to Abraham and his descendants.

When John grew up, God sent him to be a witness for Jesus in the wilderness of Judea so people might believe in Jesus. John said, “I am a voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord—just as Isaiah the prophet said.”

Christ Connection: God spoke through His prophets in the Old Testament, like Isaiah and Malachi, and shared His plan to send Jesus into the world to save people from sin. When the time had come, God called John to be a witness for Jesus. Anyone who trusts in Jesus will be saved.”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Review it: Tell kids that Luke 1:69-70 shares how God’s prophets told about the coming Messiah. Then review some of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming Messiah, such as Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5; Isaiah 7:14; and Micah 5:2

Active listening: Invite kids to listen for the phrase, “prophet of the Most High,” and direct them to shout “John” when they hear it.



2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “God is always faithful to His promises. He works according to His perfect timing because He knows the beginning from the end. Today, we saw that after 400 years of silence, God sent an angel to a man named Zechariah to share that the words Malachi spoke about the coming messenger were going to come true. What did the angel announce? **[Allow responses.]** The angel announced that Elizabeth would have a son named John, who would be filled with the spirit and power of Elijah. He would prepare the people for the coming of the Lord, fulfilling what the prophet Malachi had foretold.

But Zechariah struggled to believe the angel’s message because he and Elizabeth were very old. What happened to Zechariah because he doubted the angel’s message? **[Allow responses.]** The angel told Zechariah that he would be unable to speak until the angel’s words came true. When Zechariah left the sanctuary, he was unable to speak, just as the angel had said. Soon, Elizabeth became pregnant, proving that God’s promise was true.

When the baby boy was born, Zechariah wrote, ‘His name is John,’ obeying what the angel had said. Immediately, Zechariah could speak again, and he praised God. He declared that John would be a prophet of the Most High, preparing the way for the Lord. Zechariah praised God for how all the words He spoke to the prophets in the Old Testament were coming true! Who was John going to prepare the way for? **[Allow responses.]** John would be the one to prepare the way for the Messiah—Jesus. John would call people to repent of their sin, helping them to see their need for a Savior. **JOHN WAS SENT BY GOD AS A WITNESS TO THE COMING MESSIAH.** ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “God spoke through His prophets in the Old Testament, like Isaiah and Malachi, and shared His plan to send Jesus into the world to save people from sin. When the time had come, God called John to be a witness for Jesus. Anyone who trusts in Jesus will be saved. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 18, Session 5” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. How did people who died before Jesus died on the cross get into heaven?
2. Can you think of an Old Testament story that points to Jesus? Which one?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Remind kids that Brian Bowman and Valley Life Church desire to start more churches in Phoenix, Arizona. Discuss how starting new churches not only involves training leaders to lead the churches but also includes sharing the gospel so new people can become part of the church plants.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

Invite kids to think about how they might share the gospel with people. Direct kids to think about ways they might invite people to come to church. Form kids into groups of three or four and guide them to write down their responses. Prompt kids to think about church events that other kids might like to participate in.

SAY “We don’t need to have all the answers to questions people may ask about God or the gospel, but we can be willing to share Jesus and invite others to church. Like Valley Life Church, we can share the hope of Jesus with others so they can be saved from their sin.”

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud John 20:31 together.

SAY “John prepared the way for Jesus, the Messiah. God promised all throughout the Old Testament how He would send a Savior so we can have forgiveness of sins and eternal life.”

Gather kids in one group. Begin playing music and direct kids to move around the room as the music plays. Then, stop the music and challenge the kids to freeze and shout out the first word of the key passage. Continue playing and pausing the music until the entire key passage has been said. Repeat as time allows.

Lead kids to sing “Life in His Name (John 20:31).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “Lord, thank You for sending Jesus into the world to save us from sin. Thank You for keeping Your promises You made all throughout the Old Testament. You are always faithful. Help us share the good news of Jesus with others. In Jesus’ name, amen.”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





LOVE

THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Luke 1. Explain that the book of Luke is part of the Gospel books in the New Testament. Share how the Gospels tell us the stories of Jesus life, death, and resurrection.

Consider pointing out the area between Beer-sheba (K3) and Bethlehem (I4) on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map, where some scholars believe John might have been from. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Luke 1:18-20 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY “ Zechariah and Elizabeth were faithful followers of God, but when Zechariah heard the angel’s message, he questioned how he and his wife would be able to have a baby because they were old. The angel told Zechariah that because he doubted God’s Word, he would be unable to speak until the baby was born.

Nothing is impossible for God, even when it seems impossible to us. When God makes a promise, He always keeps it. We can always trust what He says. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ Zechariah remembered God’s promises to provide salvation for His people, and he praised God. What Old Testament stories can you remember that point to Jesus? ”

Review various Old Testament stories such as how God saved Noah from the flood, just as Jesus would save people from sin. Or how God promised He would bless the whole world through Abraham’s family, and Jesus is the fulfillment of that promise. Invite kids to share what they’ve learned throughout the Old Testament.

SAY “ Why was John called a prophet of the Most High? ”

Tell kids that John was called a prophet of the Most High because God gave him the special job of preparing people for the coming of Jesus. A prophet is someone who delivers God’s message, and John’s message was to call people to repent (turn away from their sins) and get ready for the Savior. Yet unlike other prophets, John pointed people directly to Jesus, calling Him “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

SAY “ John was a witness for Jesus. How can you be a witness for Jesus? ”

Share how God tells us that if we have trusted Jesus as our Savior, we are to be witnesses for Him in the world, sharing the good news with other people. Believers want to share the gospel so others can experience forgiveness and hope through faith in Jesus. Remind kids that we can also be a witness through our actions as we live in ways that honor God and point people to Jesus.

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: GOOD NEWS MEGAPHONE

Distribute a sheet of cardstock to each kid. Provide kids with tape, markers, and stickers. Demonstrate how to roll the paper to create a cone shape. Then tape the seam. Cut the top and/or bottom of the megaphone to make the edges even. Next, encourage kids to use markers and stickers to decorate their megaphones.

Then distribute Bibles to each kid and invite kids to look up the following verses: Luke 1:69; John 1:23; John 1:29. Invite kids to shout the verses in their megaphones.

SAY “**JOHN WAS SENT BY GOD AS A WITNESS TO THE COMING MESSIAH.** He prepared the way for Jesus by sharing the good news and calling people to repent. He had an important message to share and so do we! God wants us to share the good news of Jesus with others. We can tell people how Jesus is the only way to be saved from sin.”

☐ OPTION 2: GET READY!



Form kids into groups of three or four and provide each group with four pieces of paper. Tell kids to write the following names on individual papers: angel, Zechariah, Elizabeth, John. Explain that you will call out phrases spoken in the Bible story or characteristics of the people or angel in the story. Challenge kids to guess who said the statement or who the statement describes. Choose a variety of statements such as, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah.” “How can I know this will happen?” “She was married to Zechariah.” “I am a voice of one crying out in the wilderness.” Direct kids to hold up the paper with the name they think is the correct answer. Award a point if they get it right. The group with the most points wins.

SAY “Great job! You had to get ready and be prepared with the correct paper to receive a point. All throughout the Old Testament, God was preparing His people for the coming Messiah through the words of the prophets. Then God raised up John to be the messenger who would prepare the way for Jesus, the Messiah. God wanted His people to be ready to trust in Jesus for salvation.”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.



THE GOSPEL

GOD'S PLAN FOR US

The gospel is the good news—the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use these prompts to share the gospel with your kids.



Ask: “Who is in charge at home?” Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.



Ask: “Have you ever done something wrong?” Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.



Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.



Ask: “What is the best gift you’ve ever received?” Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: “Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus.” Read Romans 10:9-10.

THE GOSPEL PROJECT

The Gospel Project is designed to help your kids **LEARN** the gospel story of Scripture, **LOVE** the Author and Subject of that gospel story, and then to **LIVE** out their part in this ongoing gospel story.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

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