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| **BIBLE SCHOOL - Kindergarten/Grade 1 Class**  **Lesson 1 - Work of John the Baptist, Preparing the Way** |

**Introduction**

WELCOME everyone! We are excited to be teaching you this year. We are going to look at lessons from the first few chapters of the gospel of John this week. Who wrote John? What do you know about John?

Just a few classroom “rules” to start …

* We expect everyone to listen carefully and participate.
* If you have a question or comment, please raise your hand.
* Please don’t speak while others are speaking.
* Please try and go to the bathroom before class starts.
* Have fun being together and learn lots!

**Background and Birth of John (Luke 1v1-23, 57-66)**

* It’s over 2,000 years ago … not long before Jesus was born.
* Zacharias and Elisabeth were faithful people … loved God. They were quite old, but sad … had no children.
* Zacharias = priest … took his turn working in the Temple. One day, his duty was to burn incense.
* Suddenly while everyone was outside praying, the angel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias … he was scared.
* The angel told Zacharias not to be afraid … he gave him good news … Elisabeth would have a son called John! He would have a very special job to do … teach the people and prepare them for the coming of Jesus.
* Zacharias couldn’t believe it … after all these years of waiting for a son! He wondered if he had heard the angel correctly and wanted to know how it was all going to happen since he was now old!
* Gabriel told Zacharias that he was going to be dumb … not able to speak … until John was born!
* And that’s exactly what happened … Elisabeth became pregnant and had a little boy called John. After he was born, Zacharias could speak again! What a long time to be quiet for! Do you know the first thing he did? He praised God! He was so happy to have a son! He told everyone about John’s special work.

**John the Baptist – Preaching in the Wilderness (Matt 3v1-6, Luke 3v1-18)**

* So John grew up and he lived in the wilderness of Judea. Anyone know what he wore? Garment of camel’s hair tied with a leather belt.
* What did JTB eat? Locusts and wild honey! Would we complain about eating that?! JTB didn’t – he was a simple man who was only concerned about the things of God.
* John preached near Jordan, saying, *“Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3v2)*. John was fulfilling words written by Isaiah in Isaiah 40v3!
* This was JTB’s special work … to prepare and make the people ready for when Jesus came.
* Lots of people came to see JTB and listen to him. He was quite a strange site … out in the wilderness, crying out to repent, wearing a camel’s coat and was probably quite hairy!
* Some people believed and repented of their bad ways. What does REPENT mean? To change our way and go in the opposite direction. Some then got baptised and lived a new way of life.

**Ways to Change (Luke 3v10-18)**

* People wanted to know HOW they could change their ways. JTB said:
  + If you have two coats, give one to someone that doesn’t have one.
  + If you have food to eat, share with others who don’t have food.
  + Don’t be selfish – share with others.
  + Tax gatherers … don’t take more tax then what they were supposed to.
  + Soldiers … don’t be rough and mean to people.

**Preparing for Jesus**

* Some thought JTB was the Messiah … but he told them Jesus was mightier than he was, and he was to soon come! JTB told them all about the work of Jesus.
* Lots of people were excited for the coming of Jesus … and they waited patiently for their Messiah!

**Baptism of Jesus (Matt 3v13-17)**

* One day while JTB was preaching near the River Jordan, Jesus came to him and asked him to be baptised! Imagine the Messiah coming to you to be baptised! John didn’t feel he was worthy enough to baptise Jesus.
* Jesus wanted to show everyone that he was giving his life to God … setting an example for others to change their ways.
* So John baptised Jesus … put him completely under the water.
* When Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens opened and the spirit of God came down like a dove and rested on Jesus. A voice from heaven said, *“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”*.
* Jesus was given God’s Holy Spirit. What is the Holy Spirit? God’s special power! What was Jesus able to do with God’s power? Heal the sick, make blind people see, raise the dead, give food to 1,000s of people!

**Main Lessons for Us**

* God keeps His promises! A special promise was given to Zacharias that they would have a baby … and God did exactly what He said He would do! What is the great promise He has given us that we’re waiting for? Kingdom! We know it IS going to come … because what God says, He always does!
* What did John ask the people to do? REPENT! Same for us … we are patiently waiting for Jesus to return and we need to stop doing bad things (selfish, rude, disobedient, lying etc), and instead replace them with good (sharing, gentle, obedient, truth).
* When we grow up and learn more about God and His ways, what do we need to do, like Jesus did? Be baptised and follow a new way of life!

**Lapbook items**

* *John the Baptist with camel skin coat.*
* *“What did John the Baptist eat?” accordion flap.*
* *“John baptises Jesus” oval flap.*

**Edible grasshopper craft ☺**