



Date: _____

Series: Real Life Stories of God Sightings
Winter Year 3, Lesson 28

Zechariah and Elizabeth

Take Home Point: *God can do amazing things in our lives! *Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Event: Luke 1:5-25, 57-80. An angel tells old Zechariah that he and Elizabeth will have a baby who will be John the Baptist.

Key Verse: Luke 1:69, "He has raised up a mighty Savior for us in the family of his servant David."

We will help kids know:

- The Bible event of the angel visiting Zechariah; Zechariah's disbelief in the angel's news; and the birth of his son, John the Baptist.
- John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus.
- God can do amazing things in our lives so we can point others to Jesus.




We will help kids feel:

- Amazement over God's power.
- Special because God would choose them to point to Jesus.

We will help kids do:

- Identify people they can pray for who need the Savior.
- Make Christmas cards or cards of invitation for their Christmas programs or special worship services.

THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
Small Group Warm-Up 	3	Communication is difficult without speech. Today's game will illustrate communication by drawing a picture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • markers • sheets of paper for each child
Large Group 	3 7 13	Overview Puppet Presentation: "Gordy Goes for God Sightings." Presenter and Gordy interview Zechariah. Appendix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sign – see appendix • scene board • backdrop of biblical city • costumes for Gordy and reporter (see details on page 7) • incense sticks with clue (page 14) • comb with gray hair and clue • Zechariah's costume
Small Group Application 	4	Kids discuss the Bible event of Zechariah and Elizabeth to remember that <i>*God can do amazing things in our lives</i> . They also make invitations for those who might not know Jesus as Savior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • construction paper • markers • envelopes • pre-made labels with Christmas Service information

Small Group Warm-Up: 15 minutes



Purpose: *Get pointed in the right direction!* Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.

Needed: markers and a blank sheet of paper for each child

Explain to kids that today you will play a game like Pictionary. The object of the game is to draw an exciting event and have kids guess what it is within the time limit without giving any audible clues. Set the time limit for one minute. If working with younger children or a smaller group size, you may increase the time limit to two minutes.

Have kids take turns drawing a picture of something exciting that happened to them in the last month. While drawing, the kids cannot tell anyone what they are drawing or describe the event. Drawing in silence ties into today's Bible event how Zechariah had good news to speak but could not tell it.

Conclude with the following.

Today we are going to meet an old man in the Bible who received great news. He had been waiting for this news his entire life. When the man heard the exciting news, he didn't think it could happen, even though he heard it from an angel. As a result of his disbelief, the man lost his voice and could not talk.

Listen closely today and find out what was so important to the old man, how he got his voice back, and how this fits into Christmas.

Today we will learn that **God can do amazing things in our lives!*

Large Group Overview: 20-30 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

Puppet Presentation: "Gordy Goes for God Sightings"—A child is selected to guess from two clues, burning incense and a comb with gray hair, that the guest interviewed is the old priest, Zechariah.

Zechariah shares his story from Luke 1 about how an angel appeared to him and told him that he and his wife Elizabeth would have a son. His son would be John, a man who spent his life pointing the way to Jesus, the Savior of the world.

Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.

Observation Questions: What happened?

With Bibles open to Luke 1:5-25, 57-80, review the Bible event. Try to adjust the questions to fit the reading and learning level of the children in your group.

What job did Zechariah have and what did he do at his job? *(Luke 1:5, 9. He was a priest. He burned incense in God's temple.)*

What was Zechariah's wife's name? *(Luke 1:6. Elizabeth.)*

What was Zechariah and Elizabeth's greatest disappointment? *(Luke 1:7. They never had children and now they were old.)*

When Zechariah was performing his duty, what amazing thing did he see to the right of the incense altar? *(Luke 1:11. He saw an angel of the Lord.)*

How did he feel? *(Luke 1:12. He was troubled and overcome with fear.)*

What did the angel say to Zechariah? *(Luke 1:13-17. The angel told Zechariah not to be afraid. God had heard Zechariah and Elizabeth's prayers and was giving them a son to be named John.)*

How did Zechariah show doubt? *(Luke 1:18. He asked for proof.)*

What proof did he get? *(Luke 1:20. Zechariah would not be able to speak until his son was born.)*

What was the angel's name? *(Luke 1:19. Gabriel.)*

Did everything happen as the angel said it would? Explain.

Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?

John was later known as John the Baptist. What was his main job?
(*To prepare the way for Jesus or to point the way to Jesus.*)

After Zechariah received his child and his voice back, what do you think he was looking forward to most? Do you think he was looking forward to Jesus, the Messiah being born?

Application Questions: What does this mean to me?

Zechariah and Elizabeth's son grew to be one of the greatest men in God's sight to have ever lived. He was John the Baptist and he pointed the way to Jesus by identifying Jesus as the Son of God.

God can do amazing things to point the way to Jesus. He did an amazing thing by letting John the Baptist be born to an old couple like Zechariah and Elizabeth.

What are amazing things that have happened to you that point the way to Jesus? What are ways we can point to Jesus during this Christmas season? What are things we can do to celebrate Christmas that point to Jesus? (*Advent celebrations, Christmas worship, doing something special for others in need, etc.*)

Are there people you know who do not normally go to church but might accept an invitation to a special Christmas worship service? Maybe they would be willing to come see your Christmas program. Would you invite them?

When you invite others to hear about Jesus, you point the way to Jesus. Let's make invitations that you can give someone to point the way to Jesus.

Remember **God can do amazing things in our lives.* He can even move in the lives of people who don't normally attend church. These people need two things: someone to invite them or point out Jesus to them, and someone to pray for them so that they would be ready to receive such an invitation.

One of the most amazing things that can happen to anyone is to come to know Jesus. A life is changed for eternity when this happens. What an amazing blessing we receive when we point the way for someone to know Jesus!

Application Activity:

Pass out various sizes of construction paper, markers, and envelopes. The times of your church's Christmas services can be printed on labels so the children can attach those to the inside of their invitations.

As the children make their cards, they can talk about the people they are making the cards for. While making the invitations, encourage the kids to pray silently for those they will invite. They may even want to pray Zechariah's prayer from Luke 1:69 and 77.

"He has raised up a mighty Savior for us... his people will know that they can be saved through the forgiveness of their sins."

Another wonderful conversation topic for the kids while they are making their cards is to describe how they were first invited to know Jesus or to come to church. Who pointed the way for them? Help the kids see their own responsibility of pointing the way for their friends.

Closing Prayer:

At the conclusion of the activity, gather the kids in a close circle with the cards on the floor and in the center of the group. Pray specifically for the friends to whom the children are going to give their invitations. Pray that God would use these cards and the love the kids have for their friends to help convince those people of how much God loves them and wants to be their friend through Jesus.

Safety and Security: Safety and security procedures are important for each church to carefully define and implement according to their unique needs. The security, safety, illness and accident procedures described in this curriculum are provided for example purposes only and may not be appropriate, applicable or adequate for every situation. Each church is responsible for determining whether any security, safety, illness and accident procedures contained in the curriculum are appropriate, applicable or adequate for its unique situation. The activities described in this curriculum require adult supervision and may not be suitable for each child and each situation. Each church is responsible for ensuring that adequate adult supervision is provided for all activities and for determining whether an activity is appropriate for each child and each situation. Kids Kount Publishing disclaims all liability for the implementation of any procedures or the performance of any activities described in this curriculum.

Large Group Presentation

Gordy Goes for God Sightings

Puppet Script

Take Home Point: **God can do amazing things in our lives.*

For the next six weeks, the presenter will role play as an investigative reporter looking for real life stories of God sightings. Gordy will serve as his sidekick detective.

Props needed:

- *“Real Life Stories of God Sightings” sign*
- *any props to create the setting of a live interview such as a director’s scene board clapped in front of the camera before the action goes live*
- *backdrops of palm trees and first century Judea villages could be used—use your imagination and facility to create a setting that resembles the landscape of Jesus’ birth*

Costumes:

- *The investigative reporter (presenter) needs costuming that fits his role—add a baseball cap with a front label, “God Watcher,” or the character could also sit behind a desk in a suit coat and tie*
- *A child volunteer with safari-like costume*
- *Gordy would need a similar hat and could be in a safari shirt and/or have a set of binoculars around his neck*
- *Adult volunteer costumed to look like a biblical Zechariah*

Each week the puppet drama will involve a volunteer looking for clues that give the identity of the person interviewed. After the child finds the clues, the character will enter and give his or her story based on the interview questions posed by the investigative reporter.

In advance:

For this week’s lesson, have an incense stick burning in the back of the room or in the hall. A child will look for the origin of the scent. Post this clue next to the burning incense: “This person had the job of burning incense inside the Holy Place in the temple of the Lord. Only a person of this occupation could enter to do it. What was his occupation?” (See appendix.)

In another more obvious location, place a comb with a strand of gray hair taped to it along with the following clue. “This person had hair of this color. Why was it this color and how old do you think this person was?” (See appendix.)

Mr. King: Hello, boys and girls. Welcome to our special investigative report where we are looking for real life stories of God sightings. We will discover the truth of who God is. We will find God and point him out.

Gordy: Speaking of pointing him out, how about pointing over here?

Mr. King: Oh, I need to introduce my special assistant, Gordy.

Gordy: You mean the special *reporter*, Gordy, and the special *assistant*, Mr. King.

Mr. King: Whatever you say, Gordy.

Gordy: Well, I just want to point out the facts! We want to keep the story straight!

Mr. King: Okay, Gordy. I'm prepared to follow. Tell me where we are and who we are looking for.

Gordy: According to the Gospel of Luke, we've traveled back to the time just before Jesus was born. We're in the city of Jerusalem.

Mr. King: Evidently, there has been a God sighting at this time. This is the real life story of someone who has been able to point out God.

Gordy: Well, who is he? Let's get to the interview.

Mr. King: Gordy, you're supposed to know whom we are interviewing. I thought you were the reporter.

Gordy: But you're the assistant. Now assist me! We've got a God sighting here so let's get to the bottom of it.

Mr. King: Let me call a kid up to be my assistant. He/she can help me unravel these clues that might help us identify the person who had a real life story of a God sighting.

Invite a child forward from the audience and introduce him/her.

Mr. King: Here is the first clue: To find out the occupation of this person, go to where the strange smell is coming from. You will find a clue there.

Gordy: Well, that's easy. His occupation was a bug exterminator. That stuff smells so strong; it smells like the bug exterminator has been here.

Mr. King: I don't know, Gordy. Let me check with my assistant.

Have the child try to answer the clue. He/she can ask the audience for help, if necessary.

The answer is: *a priest.*

Gordy: Is that all the clues?

Mr. King: No, there is one more. Look for a comb. Next to it will be an important clue as to who this person might be.

Gordy: *(After the child has found the comb and notices the gray hair)* Well, it's obvious! That white hair means the mystery person is Santa Claus. Hey, wait a minute! If Santa Claus has a God sighting, that means that God lives at the North Pole!

Mr. King: Gordy, I don't think that is accurate. Let me ask my assistant. What color of hair is that?

Child: Gray.

Mr. King: What kind of person may have gray hair?

Child: Grandma or Grandpa.

Mr. King: Do you think this person might be too old to have a baby?

Child: Yes.

Mr. King: Today we are going to interview an older man named Zechariah. All of his life he prayed that he would have a baby, but his prayer was never answered. Now he and his wife, Elizabeth, are very old. He is a godly man who serves in the temple as a priest. One day an angel visited him.

Gordy: And that's when he saw God!

Mr. King: No, not exactly. Let's hear from him. Zechariah, would you please join us?

*Zechariah, an older character with a gray beard and hair and in period costume, comes hobbling out. He tells the story from the first person point of view. He repeats the take home point several times: *God can do amazing things in our lives!*

The actor should be very familiar with the story so he can tell it accurately. The set up questions from Gordy and Mr. King can help him navigate the story. His part is in bold italics below, but the original Bible account needs to be studied more thoroughly than this suggested part.

Mr. King: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to “Real Life Stories of God Sightings.” Today we have with us Mr. Zechariah.

Gordy: Wow! You’re old!

Zechariah: *Yes, about the time when Jesus was born, I was an old man. Yet, it was only then that I became a father myself.*

Gordy: No way! How could that happen? Did God come down and just give you a baby?

Zechariah: *Let me tell you the story. I was working in the temple and my job was to go into the Holy Place. I was to take burning coals from the Great Altar and carry them to the Holy Place. There I would offer incense upon the Golden Altar of God.*

Gordy: Yeah, that’s the stuff that stinks so badly!

Zechariah: *Actually, we thought it smelled good. It reminded us that our prayers rise up to God. I had a very special job, you know.*

Gordy: Sure. You were the bug exterminator.

Mr. King: No, he wasn’t, Gordy. He was a priest.

Gordy: Oh, yeah. That’s what I meant.

Mr. King: Let’s be quiet and let him tell his story.

Zechariah: *All my life I had been praying with my wife Elizabeth to have a baby. Our prayers were never answered. Then we grew too old to have children. We were as old as grandparents, so we had given up hope.*

On the special day that I was chosen to go into the Holy Place and burn incense, I saw him right next to the altar. It was amazing!

Gordy: There it is! It was God! It was a God sighting!

Zechariah: *No, it wasn’t God. It was an angel!*

Gordy: No way! What did you do?

Zechariah: *I was so afraid that I fell to the ground. The angel said, “Don’t be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayers have been heard. Your wife will soon have a son. You are not to name him Zechariah. Name him John. Many people will be happy when he is born. He will be very special because God’s Spirit will be with him.*

He will have the spirit and the power of Elijah. He will lead people to repent of their sins and they will serve God.”

Gordy: No way! That's amazing! You and your wife were too old to have a son!

Zechariah: That's what I thought myself. I said, "How can this possibly be true? My wife and I are too old." It's true, though, that God can do anything. *He can do amazing things in our lives!

Gordy: So what happened?

Zechariah: The angel said, "I am the angel Gabriel. I stand in God's presence. He has sent me to tell you this good news. Yet, you do not believe what I tell you and you ask for a sign as proof. I will give you a sign. You won't be able to speak another word until the child is born." Then the angel was gone as quickly as he had appeared.

Gordy: Wow! What did you say then?

Zechariah: (Makes muffled noises.)

Gordy: What did you say, Zechariah?

Still no response from Zechariah.

Mr. King: I think he is saying that he couldn't talk until the child was born.

Zechariah: That's right. I couldn't talk until the child was born. This is how it happened. About nine months later, my wife had a baby. Everyone was surprised and happy. All during that time I could not say a word. After he was born and he was eight days old, our custom was to officially give him his name. Since I couldn't say anything, everyone thought that his name should be that of his father, Zechariah. How surprised they were to hear Elizabeth say, "No. His name shall be John."

"That doesn't make sense," people said. "You have no relatives by that name."

I knew what to do. I motioned for them to bring me a writing tablet. When they brought it, I wrote in plain letters for all to read, "His name is John." Then I could speak again! I praised God for giving us this wonderful baby. Everyone heard about this remarkable thing. Elizabeth and I had a baby and I got my speech back.

Gordy: Is that when you had a God sighting?

Zechariah: *No, I didn't see God but I did see how he worked in my life so that I could help point to him and the coming of his Son, Jesus.*

Gordy: What do you mean?

Zechariah: *You see, my son John grew up to be John the Baptist. John the Baptist was in God's sight the greatest man whoever lived. John prepared the way for Jesus, the Son of God. John spent his whole life pointing to Jesus and saying, "He is the promised one!" Jesus gave his life for all of us when he went to the cross.*

Mr. King: So what did you learn, Zechariah?

Zechariah: *I learned that God can do anything. *God can do amazing things in our lives! I bet he can even use some of these boys and girls to point to Jesus just like my son, John the Baptist did.*

Gordy: Well, there you have it. It's a real life story of a God sighting.

Zechariah: *Yes, God worked in my life in an amazing way! He can do anything.*

Mr. King: Thank you for visiting us, Mr. Zechariah. Maybe we will discover, as well, that **God can do amazing things in our lives*, so that we can point to his Son Jesus as the Savior of the world. We can do that just like you and your son, John the Baptist.

Gordy: Mr. Zechariah, do you think God will do that?

Zechariah: *He sure will. Remember: *God can do amazing things in our lives!*

Mr. King: Gordy, would you close us in prayer?

Gordy: Sure. Dear God, you really do work in people's lives, don't you? That's great. Thanks. And you can do anything. You even gave us your Son Jesus. We just want to say "thanks." This Christmas season, help us remember that **God can do amazing things in our lives!* Then we can point others to him, as well. In Jesus' name. Amen.

REAL LIFE STORIES OF GOD SIGHTINGS

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