



Date: _____

Series: God Gives the Best Gifts
Winter Year 2, Lesson 29

John the Baptist is Born

Bible Event: Luke 1:5-25, 57-68

Take Home Point: *GOD GIVES THE BEST GIFTS –
Surprise! Surprise! Surprise!

*Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson. The leader will say the first part of the phrase (CAPS). The children respond with the second part of the phrase (*italics*).

Jesus Link: Jesus is God's gift to us and he is a wonderful surprise.

What kids will learn about God in this worship experience:

- Children will learn that our God is a giving God. He gives us gifts and talents and blessings every day. The season of Christmas, however, is about the best gift God has ever given us – his son Jesus. Just like John the Baptist was a surprise to his parents, Jesus was a wonderful surprise for all of us. Kids will take home the point: **GOD GIVES THE BEST GIFTS – *Surprise! Surprise! Surprise!***
- Children will respond to God's love as they pray to him, thanking him for loving them and giving them Jesus. They will offer him their songs of worship, their offerings, and their actions of love as they actively learn God's word.



Welcome Zone: (15-20 minutes)

Purpose: While kids arrive, give them a simple learning readiness activity that requires minimal supervision. This might include a video, games, blocks, or puzzles.

Video Suggestion: Choose a video and list it here.

Activity Suggestion: Blocks, toys, puzzles, paper and crayons.



Opening Worship: (10-15 minutes)

Children can bring forward the cross, candles, Bible, offering plate, and treasure box. The treasure box contains the props used to tell or dramatize the Bible event. Open with a simple prayer, having the children repeat after you. Collect offering and talk about how God will use it.

Praise Songs:

Choose two or three songs and list them here.

Bible Event: Video

Test your sound and video system beforehand. Cue the video to its precise beginning. For larger groups of children (15 or more), use a large screen TV or imager. Dim the lights before starting the video. To introduce a video, you might read from a Bible storybook and leave off the ending, inviting children to see what happens by watching the video. You could also introduce the video by inviting children to keep an eye out for special actions or words they will see during it.

Begin each week of the Advent series with the lighting of the appropriate candle of the Advent wreath.

Introduce the video by explaining that we are getting close to Christmastime. We are going to be talking about true Bible events leading up to the birth of baby Jesus! Today's event is about an old couple named Zechariah and Elizabeth. They were an old married couple that had always wanted to have a baby. One day, when Zechariah was working at church, an angel came and told Zechariah they were going to have a baby boy. This baby boy was going to be very important because he was going to tell everyone how special Jesus was! But Zechariah didn't believe the angel.... Let's watch and see what happens.

Show *John the Baptist: The Animated Stories of the New Testament*, Nest Masters Inc., 1990, from the beginning to 9 minutes 38 seconds. It may be ordered from www.nestfamily.com.

Recap the video by asking the children several simple fill-in-the-blank questions including:

- 1.) Zechariah and Elizabeth always wanted to have a... *(baby)*.
- 2.) When Zechariah went to work at church, an ...*(angel)* appeared to him.
- 3.) The angel said that they were going to have a ... *(baby boy)*.
- 4.) When Zechariah didn't believe the angel, the angel told him that he wouldn't be able to ... *(talk or hear)*.
- 5.) When the baby finally came, people thought his name should be Zechariah, but instead they named him ... *(John)*.
- 6.) After they named the baby John, Zechariah was able to ... *(speak again)*.

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.



Action Zones: (20-30 minutes)

Purpose: Children move at their leisure to the activities according to their interest. Adults are assigned to oversee each of the zones, watching for safety, assisting any activity, and helping the children connect to the lesson of the day. All zones are introduced at the beginning of Zone Time. Some suggested zones are included below. It is usually best to have all children go to the Snack Zone first. Sing a blessing song or say a snack prayer together before dismissing to the zones.

During the Zone Time, children may arrive from mid-service dismissal. If this is an option at your church, be prepared to welcome the children and invite them to choose a zone.

Snack Zone: Have Twinkies or Hostess cupcakes cut in half. (One half per each child.) Discuss how the snacks have a surprise treat in the middle just like God gives us surprises.

HEALTHY SNACK OPTION: Use oranges or apples or any fruit with seeds inside and talk about how the surprise inside (*the seeds*) is life when planted and taken care of. Just like John was life inside of Elizabeth!

Drama Zone: Provide an angel costume, robes, a beard or wig, and a table for an altar so children can reenact the scene.

Puppet Zone: Let the children use puppets to talk about times they have been surprised or excited.

Felt Zone: Use felt board materials to show the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth from today's Bible event. (For example, use Lesson #95, "An Angel Visits Zechariah," from *Betty Lukens Through the Bible in Felt*.)

Craft Zone: Children will paint an angel using sponges. Provide black or blue construction paper, white paint, and sponges in several shapes, including a circle, a triangle and a heart. If positioned correctly, the circle will serve as the angel's head, the triangle will serve as the base for the angel and the heart will serve as the wings. Allow children to use their own creativity to create an angel, if you like. Attach a pre-made label: "Surprise, surprise, surprise: John the Baptist is born."

Play Zone: Provide games or activities that children can complete in pairs without talking, just like Zechariah. For example: a silent matching game or puzzles.

Quiet Reading Zone: Basket of books. Include any that feature the story of John the Baptist's birth.

Music Zone: Your choice of music.

Coloring Zone: “John the Baptist” or “Zechariah and Elizabeth” coloring page.



Closing Worship: (20 minutes)

Purpose: As you empty the zones and clean up, begin the music so the children can start wandering over.

Worship Songs:

Choose one or two songs and list them here.

Bible Application with Puppet Presentation:

Purpose: The puppet demonstrates the need that will be met in today's lesson. The scripts are not written verbatim, but give a story line in which the group leader can interact with the puppet.

Bubba knows that today's lesson is about surprises, but he's never heard of John the Baptist before. He wants to know why he's so special. The presenter explains that John the Baptist was very special because he was a friend of Jesus. He told other people about Jesus and explained why Jesus was so special. Today we learned about how John the Baptist was born. The presenter then asks the kids to help him tell the story to Bubba.

The presenter starts telling the story, but inserts silly surprises and lets the kids correct him. For example:

- 1.) When Zechariah was in the church, he got interrupted by a cell phone.
(angel)
- 2.) The angel said that Zechariah and Elizabeth were going to have a big surprise. That surprise was pizza. (a baby)
- 3.) The angel said that because Zechariah didn't believe him, he was going to grow big ears. (wouldn't be able to hear or speak)
- 4.) The name of the baby boy was Bubba. (John)
- 5.) The special thing about John the Baptist was that he could point out polka-dotted elephants. (He told people how special Jesus was.)

I made up silly surprise answers, but God's surprises aren't silly. He gave Zechariah and Elizabeth the surprise of a baby boy. God gives us the special surprise of sending his son Jesus. That is the best gift of all. That's why Christmas is such a special time – we get to remember that God sent Jesus to be born in a manger for all of us! Remember: ***GOD GIVES THE BEST GIFTS – Surprise! Surprise!, Surprise!**

Prayer Time:

Purpose: Allow children to contribute their own prayers. This will teach them to turn to God in both good times and in times of trouble. End with the Lord's Prayer.

"Children Pray" Options: (select one from the options below)

_____ **Prayer Train Option:** Children line up and take turns stepping in front of the microphone and speak their brief prayers of thanksgiving.

_____ **Prayer Chair:** Children stand in a circle around one child sitting on a chair in the middle. All children in the circle will lay a hand on the child sitting in the chair as they say a prayer together.

_____ **Popcorn Prayer:** The leader moves through the crowd with a microphone and taps children on the head to stand and speak their prayer.

Lord's Prayer: Lead the children through the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase, or let them pray the entire Prayer along with you.

Blessing:

May God, who is all around you,
pour his love upon you.

(Beginning at the bottom of the circle, slowly make a large circle with your hands. Finish by bringing your hands down and wiggling your fingers to resemble rain.)

And Jesus, his life a sacrifice,
walk right there beside you.

(Slowly make a large sign of the cross. Then move your hands out to the sides.)

And may God's Holy Spirit,
the one who lives inside you,

(Cross hands over your heart.)

keep you strong,
comfort, lead and guide you!

(Move to a "strong man" position. Then cross your arms with your hands on corresponding upper arms to communicate comfort. Bring one hand forward with "lead" and the other with "guide" to complete the blessing.)

Song of Sending:

Choose one song and list it here.



Closing Zones:

Purpose: *Children go to an activity zone, such as the coloring zone, quiet reading zone, and children's Christian music video zone, as they wait for their parents.*

Supplies:

Welcome Zone:

- blocks, toys, puzzles, paper, and crayons

Opening Worship:

- cross, candles, Bible, offering plate, and treasure box—the treasure box contains the props used to tell or dramatize the Bible event
- *John the Baptist*: Animated Stories from the New Testament; Nest Family Entertainment, 1990—order from http://www.nestfamily.com/store/product_detail.asp?productID=JBD

Action Zones:

Snack:

- Twinkies, Hostess cupcakes, or other snack with a surprise center (half per child)
- *Healthy Snack Option*: apples, oranges or any fruit with seeds inside

Drama:

- angel costume
- robes
- beard or wig
- table for an altar

Craft:

- black or blue construction paper
- white paint
- sponges cut in shapes (circles, triangle, hearts)
- pre-made label “Surprise, surprise, surprise: John the Baptist is born”

Play:

- memory game or deck of cards
- puzzles

Quiet Reading:

- basket of books including any with topics around John the Baptist

Music:

- your choice

Puppet:

- various puppets

Felt:

- materials to reenact story (For example, use Lesson #95, “An Angel Visits Zechariah,” from *Betty Lukens Through the Bible in Felt*.)

Coloring page

- “John the Baptist”

Closing Worship:

- Bubba, the puppet

Closing Zones:

- colored pencils
- paper
- basket of books