

John the Baptist



Bible verses:

Luke 1:5-17; Matthew 3:13-17
Jesus is baptised by John



Aim:

To learn about John the Baptist's self-control and obedience



Today's fruit:

Self-control



In today's story we meet John the Baptist, who can teach us a lot about self-control and obedience.

As we continue to discover more about the life of Jesus, we meet John who was born around the same time as Jesus. John was given the task of preparing the people to hear the message of God's love. He carefully followed God's instructions, which led to a rather unusual lifestyle.

John the Baptist trusted Jesus and showed self-control by doing exactly what he was asked to do.

Each child will need:

- White card, white paper, orange/yellow card, pencil/pens, a CD/DVD to draw round, scissors, glue and cartoon eyes / googly eyes (optional)
- A paper straw, grey/blue and white card, a stapler (all optional) – see Action it
- *Explore It ideas* handout

You will need:

- Today's fruit sign: *Self-control*
- To watch *The Holy Spirit Dove* by Kelly Hahn and perhaps make your own version
- A craft knife to help children with their craft activity
- A flipchart, paper and pens
- *Self-control prayer* poster



Start it

Today's session is all about self-control and how we all need to follow God's instructions carefully. Our starter activity is a little unusual (just like John the Baptist) but will be lots of fun once the children get going. Play the clip and see if the children, and leaders, can follow the clapping instructions.

Video

Bim, bum (a clapping game song) by Visual Musical Minds (4:06)

Sing it

Say:

In today's session we are learning about John the Baptist. John followed Jesus throughout his life, preparing the way for God's love to be shown to the world. John placed his faith in God, even though he didn't know exactly what the future would hold. Our memory verse for this month helps us to understand what it means to put our faith in God.

Let's share it together.

Memory verse

'Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.'

(Hebrews 11:1 NIV)

Say:

We're going to sing a song that will help us to remember our memory verse for this month.

Song

'Faith' (Hebrews 11:1) by Lantern Music (3:13)

Tell it

Say:

Throughout December and January we have been learning about the birth of Jesus. However, another baby was born around the same time.

Ask:

Which other baby was born around the same time as Jesus?

Read:

‘During the time Herod ruled Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah. He belonged to Abijah’s group. Zechariah’s wife came from the family of Aaron. Her name was Elizabeth. Zechariah and Elizabeth truly did what God said was good. They did everything the Lord commanded and told people to do. They were without fault in keeping his law. But Zechariah and Elizabeth had no children. Elizabeth could not have a baby; and both of them were very old.

‘Zechariah was serving as a priest before God for his group. It was his group’s time to serve. According to the custom of the priests, he was chosen to go into the Temple of the Lord and burn incense. There were a great many people outside praying at the time the incense was offered. Then, on the right side of the incense table, an angel of the Lord came and stood before Zechariah. When he saw the angel, Zechariah was confused and frightened. But the angel said to him, “Zechariah, don’t be afraid. Your prayer has been heard by God. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give birth to a son. You will name him John. You will be very happy. Many people will be happy because of his birth. John will be a great man for the Lord. He will never drink wine or beer. Even at the time John is born, he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will help many people of Israel return to the Lord their God. He himself will go first before the Lord. John will be powerful in spirit like Elijah. He will make peace between fathers and their children. He will bring those who are not obeying God back to the right way of thinking. He will make people ready for the coming of the Lord.”’

(Luke 1:5-17 ICB)

Ask:

The angel said lots of special things about John and what would happen when he grew up. What were they?

The following clip and discussion questions will help the children understand more about the story of John the Baptist and his life of obedience.

Video

God’s Story: John the Baptist by Crossroads Kids’ Club (4:04)

Watch: 0:00-1:34 ‘But don’t worry, you don’t have to eat bugs to follow Jesus.’

Ask:

- What did Isaiah say about John the Baptist, hundreds of years before he was born?
- Why was John called John ‘the Baptist’?
- What did the angel say to John’s dad, Zechariah, before John was born?
- Why was John important?
- How were John and Jesus related?
- How was John unusual?

Watch: 1:35-2:49 'Well, even though John told everybody about Jesus, he was actually waiting for the rescue too.'

Ask:

- Why did John come back from the desert?
- What did he tell the people about Jesus?

Say:

Some of the people thought John was the Messiah they were waiting for, but John knew that it was Jesus who was on the way to rescue them.

Ask:

- What point did John make about Jesus' feet?

Watch: 2:50-end.

Ask:

- What did Jesus ask John to do? How did John respond?
- What happened when John baptised Jesus?

Read:

'At that time Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River. He came to John and wanted John to baptise him. But John tried to stop him. John said, "Why do you come to me to be baptised? I should be baptised by you!"

'Jesus answered, "Let it be this way for now. We should do all things that are right." So John agreed to baptise Jesus.

'Jesus was baptised and came up out of the water. Heaven opened, and he saw God's Spirit coming down on him like a dove. And a voice spoke from heaven. The voice said, "This is my Son and I love him. I am very pleased with him."

(Matthew 3:13-17 ICB)

Display the *Self-control* sign.

Say:

John didn't feel that he was worthy to baptise Jesus. It would have been easy for John to refuse and decide to do his own thing. Instead, he trusted Jesus and showed self-control by doing exactly what he had been asked to do.



Action it

Say:

Both Jesus and John the Baptist experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in today's story.

Ask:

What bird was the Holy Spirit described as in today's Bible story?

Explain to the children that it is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that John the Baptist was able to show self-control and be obedient to God.

Dove craft

To remind them of the power of the Holy Spirit descending like a dove, the children are going to make their own dove. A clip is provided for the leader's use to explain how to make the dove. If you don't have cartoon or googly eyes, the children can draw their own. For safety reasons, the leader should use the craft knife to make the slits for the wings.

The clip also shows how to make clouds, but you may want to just make the paper dove.

Video

The Holy Spirit dove (Baptism of Jesus Sunday school crafts) by Kelly Hahn (3:06)

Pray it

Discuss with the children the times and areas where they find it difficult to show self-control. Jot them down on a flip chart so that the children can refer to them. Spend some time praying together as a group. The children could take it in turns to pray the following prayer (display the *Self-control prayer* poster):

Dear Jesus,

I struggle to show self-control when _____.

Help me to _____ so that I can be obedient to you.

Amen

Video

The Self-Control Song by Cheeky Pandas TV (3:01)

Finish with a prayer together.

Say:

Dear God,

Thank you that you are always with us. Thank you that you are growing the fruit of self-control in each one of us. Help us to live a life of obedience like John the Baptist did. May everything we do point to Jesus and tell others about his love.

Amen.

Explore it

Remember to send home the *Explore It ideas* for children and families.



John the Baptist

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



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Discover

Watch the clip to find out more about self-control.

Skuppets at the Farm (Self-control) by Saddleback Kids



Bake

This week we discovered that John the Baptist liked to eat locusts and honey. There are no locusts in this recipe, but why don't you and an adult at home have a go at making some delicious honey flapjacks to share with others.

Easy honey flapjacks by BBC Good Food
www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/easy-honey-flapjacks



Song for the week

'Faith' (Hebrews 11:1) by Lantern Music



Memory verse

'Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.'

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Start it

John the Baptist was chosen by God to let everyone know that Jesus was coming. John carefully followed what God had asked him to do. In today's story we hear about the moment that John baptised Jesus.



Tell it

Share a child-friendly version of Matthew 3:13-17 or watch the following clip.

The baptism of Jesus by Saddleback Kids (1:50)

Sit in a circle and ask the group to share together:

- What did John the Baptist tell everyone he met about Jesus?
- Why didn't John want to baptise Jesus?
- How did Jesus change John's mind?

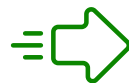
- What amazing thing happened when John baptised Jesus?
- What do you think is the most special thing about Jesus?



Sing It

'Great big God!' Vineyard Kids, Vineyard Worship UK and Ireland (2:51)

'Jesus song' by Saddleback Kids (2:45) This song tells us about the amazing thing Jesus did.



Action it

Games and activities to reinforce the Bible passage:

- Pretend to be John the Baptist and shout to everyone that Jesus is coming.
- Act out being baptised and splash about in the water to celebrate.
- Imagine you are the dove coming down from Heaven to land on Jesus and act it out.
- Use lots of different colours to draw a picture of what it might have looked like when the heavens opened above Jesus.