



LESSON 2 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Prepares the Way for Jesus

SCRIPTURE: Luke 1

WORD OF WONDER: From Isaiah 9:6

During Advent and Christmas, I usually spend time thinking about what traditions will help my kids understand who Jesus is. Storybook Bibles. Family devotionals. Songs and carols. Wreaths and candles. What will point them to Jesus? If I'm honest, it all makes me a bit anxious. What if I mess it up or say the wrong thing? Sometimes teaching them about God's big story feels daunting.

Read Luke 1:5–25. The story of Elizabeth and Zechariah—and the promised birth of John the Baptist—shows how God was preparing the way for Jesus. He was getting the world ready. Perhaps God's preparations feel as finished to you as the expected conclusion of the Nativity story, but God is still working. He is still preparing people to meet Jesus. He works through all kinds of things to kindle and nurture a person's faith. He might even work through a dad who sometimes says the wrong thing or a kids' ministry volunteer who feels in over her head.

God invites us to be part of His big story as we follow Jesus day by day, year by year. What does God have in store for you this week? How is He preparing you to know Jesus more? And how might He work in you and through you to nurture another person's faith? God prepares the way for Jesus, from ancient days until kingdom come. God is at work. He hasn't stopped.

—Michael Rade

Care & Support Ministry Assistant; Itinerant Preacher

Contributor to Wonder Ink

LESSON 2 FOR LEADERS ELIZABETH AND ZECHARIAH

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Zechariah was a descendant of Aaron and a priest of the division of Abijah. Each division served at the temple for about two weeks every year, so Zechariah probably had another occupation while not serving. Zechariah's wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron, the first high priest and brother of Moses.

WHAT?

The angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah in the temple to tell him his wife Elizabeth would bear a son, despite her old age. They were to name him John. John would be filled with the Holy Spirit and prepare God's people for the coming Lord.

WHERE?

The angel appeared to Zechariah in God's temple in Jerusalem. He appeared on the right side of the altar of incense, which was located in the part of the temple called the holy place. Zechariah and Elizabeth lived somewhere in the hill country of Judea.

WHEN?

This story takes place in the time of Herod, king of Judea, close to the end of his rule in 4 BC. Elizabeth became pregnant about six months before the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to tell her she would give birth to Jesus.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Through the birth of John the Baptist, God was preparing the way for Jesus, the everlasting King. John spent his days spiritually preparing people for the appearance of Jesus, who then proclaimed the kingdom of God and defeated the powers of darkness.



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

LESSON 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Activity: Baby Play

SUPPLIES: baby doll, baby blanket, baby bottle

Greet the kids warmly and welcome them to church.

Welcome! Today we're going to hear a story about a special baby being born who would prepare the way for Jesus. The baby in today's story is named John. How do people prepare for a baby? What kinds of things do they need? Allow the kids to respond.

Show kids the baby doll. Wrap the baby in the baby blanket and pass the doll around to each of the kids to hold and pretend to feed with a bottle.

Let's pretend to take care of this baby just like John's parents took care of him in our story today!



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LESSON 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **God, thank You for showing us who You are through Your Word. May we have ears and eyes to hear and see the things You want to teach us through Your Spirit. May we see how You prepare the way for Jesus! In Jesus' name, Amen.**

God's Big Story

Pull out the Bible

Ask: What is this called? The Bible

Ask: Why is the Bible special? Because it is God's word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.

Tell the Bible Story

The Big Picture Bible, page 172 – John's Birth Was Predicted

And

page 180 – John the Baptist Was Born

Word of Wonder

WORD OF WONDER

A child will be born to us. A son will be given to us.

He will be called the Prince of Peace.

—from Isaiah 9:6

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **How did the prophet Isaiah prepare the way for Jesus to be born long ago? What did God promise through Isaiah's message?**
- **How has Jesus brought peace into your life?**