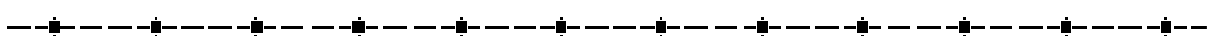


# GOD'S BIG PLAN

## A Messenger Luke 1:5-25

**Supporting Scriptures:** Isaiah 40:3-5; Malachi 3:1; Matthew 3:1-12; Mark 1:1-8; Luke 3:1-18; John 1:6-8, 19-27, 3:22-30



**Lesson Goals:** To see that God communicates with man.  
To see that man can come to God.

**Scripture Memory** Jesus must become more important, while I become less important. John 3:30 (CEV)

**NOTE:** Familiarize yourself with this story. Tell it as a STORY, not as “He said. . . She said” or read. To reinforce that these ideas are not your own, hold your Bible as you tell the story.

**The Lesson:** Let’s review what we have learned so far about God’s Big Plan. (Review the previous stories, encouraging more and more students to share.)

During the silence, the world continued to change. The kings and countries that had taken Israel captive were long gone. The kings and countries that had let Israel return home were gone, too. Now, the Romans were in charge. A man named Herod was king. God had announced the coming of His Son! But God wanted to make sure the people were ready for His Son.

**READ: Luke 1:5-7 and Mark 1:1-3 (Hold your Bible open throughout the story.)**

Zechariah, the priest, was working in the temple of God. While he was there, an angel appeared to him. The angel was from God. Zechariah was scared to death! But the angel said, “Don’t be afraid, Zechariah. God has heard your prayer and your wife Elizabeth is going to have a baby. She will have a boy and you must name him John. He will make you both very happy and he will be important to God.” The angel continued with some instructions, “Your son, John, should never drink any kind of alcohol. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit from the time he is born and He will bring people back to God.” But that wasn’t all. The angel kept sharing information, “John will have the same spirit and power as the prophet Elijah had. He will teach parents how to love their children. He will also teach people who don’t obey to be wise and do what is right. This is how he will get people ready for the Lord.”

How amazing! What a great gift from God! Zechariah and Elizabeth were going to have a baby in their old age. And not just any baby. Their son was going to be important to God. Their son was going to be a messenger; he was going to get people ready to meet God. In fact, the prophet Isaiah wrote something about John many years before John was born. Isaiah said, “A messenger is shouting in the desert, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord and everyone will see God’s salvation.’”

John was different; he wasn’t like everyone else. He grew up and his spirit was strong. John

didn't live like everyone else. He lived in the desert. John didn't dress like everyone else, either. John wore clothes out of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist. And John didn't eat like everyone else. John ate locusts and wild honey.

But that didn't keep people from coming to see John. Many people came to hear John preach. This is what he preached, "There is Someone coming after me who is so great that I'm not even good enough to untie His sandals." John also preached, "Turn away from your sins and God will forgive you." When the people turned away from their sins, John baptized them in the Jordan River. But John warned the people that once they had turned away from their sins and been baptized, that their lives should show it.

The crowds asked, "Then what are we supposed to do?" So, John told them "If you have extra clothes, share them with someone who doesn't have clothes. If you have extra food, share it. If you collect money from people, don't collect more than you should."

Many people thought that John was the One from God that they had been waiting for. But John wasn't the One. John was just a witness of the Promised One from God. God sent John to tell people about the One so that all people could believe.

**Review:**

Let's review what you have learned. Who would like to retell the story? (Ask if anything was left out or told inaccurately.) Would anyone else like to retell the story?

How about you? Have you done what John was preaching? Have you ever turned away from your sins to turn towards God? Are you tired of doing the wrong thing, of getting in trouble, of not being someone that can be trusted? Stop depending on what you can understand and choose God. He's waiting for you.

If you have turned away from your sins, turned towards God and been baptized, does your life show it? Your life should be different. Are you sharing with people who don't have as much as you do? Are you being honest? John realized that once Jesus started working in your life, you should be able to say the same thing John said, "Jesus must become more important while I become less important." What is most important to you right now, you or Jesus? Is your life showing it?

**Planning for Next Week  
Lesson 28 - It's a Boy!  
Luke 2:1-40**

# PRESCHOOL LESSON

**SING:** “Get All Excited”

**SHARE:** There once was a man named Zechariah. He was married to a lady named Elizabeth. They both loved God very much and obeyed Him by doing what He asked. Zechariah and Elizabeth didn't have any children, but they had prayed. They were both very old now.

Zechariah worked in the church. One day while he was there, an angel came to him. The angel was from God. Zechariah was scared to death! But the angel said, “Don't be afraid, Zechariah. God has heard your prayer and your wife Elizabeth is going to have a baby. She will have a boy and you must name him John. He will make you both very happy and he will be important to God.”

How amazing! What a great gift from God! Zechariah and Elizabeth were going to have a baby in their old age. And not just any baby. Their son was going to be important to God. Their son was going to be a messenger; he was going to get people ready to meet God.

As John grew up, he wasn't like everyone else. He grew up and had God living inside of him. No one else was like that. John didn't live like everyone else. He lived in the desert. John didn't dress like everyone else, either. John wore clothes out of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist. And John didn't eat like everyone else. John ate big grasshoppers and wild honey!

But that didn't keep people from coming to see John. Many people came to hear John preach. This is what he preached, “There is Someone coming after me who is so great that I'm not even good enough to untie His sandals. Turn away from your sins and God will forgive you.” When the people turned away from their sins, John baptized them in the Jordan River. John told the people that once they had turned away from their sins and been baptized, that their lives should show it. That means that they should do good things and not bad. “If you have extra clothes, share them with someone who doesn't have clothes. If you have extra food, share it. Be honest.”

Many people thought that John was the One from God that they had been waiting for. But John wasn't the One. John was just a witness of the Promised One from God. God sent John to tell people about the One so that all people could believe.

**PRAY:** Thank you, God, for people who tell us about Jesus!

# LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Memory Verse Activity - Divide your students into two groups. Assign to the first group the first half of the memory verse - "Jesus must become more important." Assign the second half, "while I become less important" to the second group. Practice saying the verse by having group one shout their half and group two whispering theirs. Have everyone say, "John 3:30." When they have learned their half, switch assignments!
- Make origami locusts (grasshoppers).
- Don't forget to work on memorizing the books of the Bible. Try printing the name of each book on tongue depressors or clothespins. Practice putting them in order.
- John told many people about Jesus. His job was to get people ready for God's promised One. Try playing with bubbles today. Pour bubble solution into a shallow pie pan or bowl. Use a fly swatter or paper cup with a hole cut in the bottom to make bubbles. Talk about how far and to how many places the bubbles go. Many people heard John tell them about Jesus. How many people can you tell?
- Bring honey to taste. (Be careful of food allergies.)
- For adults or older students: Talk a little more about baptism. The word used throughout the New Testament when either John or Jesus' disciples were baptizing (baptizo) is often confused with a word that simply means "dipping." A Greek poet and physician Nicander, who lived about 200 B.C., explained the difference clearly by explaining a recipe for making pickles! The recipe uses both words. "Nicander says that in order to make a pickle, the vegetable should first be 'dipped' (bapto) into boiling water and then 'baptized' (baptizo) in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution. But the first is temporary. The second, the act of baptizing the vegetable, produces a permanent change." Baptism itself doesn't change us, but it signifies a lasting, permanent change that has taken place within us as we come accepting Jesus and turning from our sins.

In light of word meanings, sample cucumbers simply dipped in vinegar and pickles. Ask students what the difference is between the two. Explain in as little or as great detail as is necessary, the similarities between the pickle and baptism.