

**HEROES**

**OF THE**

**FAITH**

Ordinary Men and Women . . .  
Super Ordinary Power

**30**

**JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY FOR  
THE LORD**

**HEROES OF THE FAITH CURRICULUM—2012**

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## **JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY FOR THE LORD**

### **Memory Verse:**

From one man [God] made all the people of the world. Now they live all over the earth. He decided exactly when they should live. And He decided exactly where they should live. God did this so that people would seek him. (Acts 17:26-27a NIV)

### **Lesson Goals:**

#1 - Understand how ordinary John the Baptist was

#2 - Discover what faith led John the Baptist to do

#3 - Desire to let God do extraordinary things in the life of the ordinary student

### **Audience:**

Young, un-churched learners

Adaptable for all ages, including adults (See **For more training** on Activities page)

### **Scripture to Study:**

Isaiah 40:3, Malachi 4:5-6

Matthew 3, 14, 21:32

Mark 1:1-14, 6:14-29

Luke 1, 3:1-22, 5:33, 11:1

John 1, 3:22-36



## JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY FOR THE LORD

Luke 1, 3 and John 1

Who can tell me what a hero is? A hero is someone who is courageous and brave and compassionate. There are heroes and heroines in the Bible. All of them are brave and courageous and more, but not in the way you would expect.

**Our hero:** John the Baptist

**His Heroic Feat:** Helps People Return to God

Helping people return to God may not sound very heroic, but let's look at the facts and see what you think when you have heard the whole story!

In the Old Testament, after Nehemiah helped the people rebuild the wall around Jerusalem, the temple was also rebuilt. There was a problem though; after all they had been through, the people still disobeyed God. God's presence left the temple and God was silent for hundreds of years. All that the people had as a word from God was what had been written or handed down to them before and that was enough to know how to follow God. There were also the prophecies, things that God had promised, but that hadn't happened yet. There was the promise of the Messiah, the One sent from God to rescue His people. And oh, how the people were waiting for Him! But before the Messiah, someone would come to prepare the way for him.

God's silence was broken when the angel Gabriel came from God with a message for Zechariah the priest. God had heard Zechariah's prayer and was going to give him and his wife a child. They were to name him John. Gabriel told Zechariah that John would bring joy to many people. He would be a great man for God. Gabriel even said, "He will help many people of Israel return to the Lord their God . . . He will . . . bring those who are not obeying God back to the right way of thinking, to make a people ready for the coming of the Lord." (Luke 1:16, 17 NCV) Everything happened just as the angel said it would. After John's birth, His father was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied. He said, "Now you, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High God. You will go before the Lord to prepare His way. You will make His people know that they will be saved by having their sins forgiven." (Luke 1:76, 77 NCV) What news! What responsibility!

John grew up like other children, but he also became strong in spirit. John lived in the desert until he started preaching to the people of Israel. John wore clothes made of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist. For his meals he ate locusts with wild honey. And even though John was very different, once he began preaching, his message drew people to him. People came from all over the area to hear John. Some even began to follow him.

When the people came, John didn't talk about himself or the weather. John told them not to simply depend on having Abraham as their "father." He baptized them in the Jordan River to show they had turned away from their sins and he told them to practice what they said they believed. So the people asked what they should do. John told them to share with those who were in need. The tax collectors came and asked what they should do and he told them to be fair. Soldiers came, as well, and John told them to be satisfied with what they had. When the people began to wonder if he was the One God had promised long ago, John pointed them all to Jesus. He told them that there was One coming after him who was greater than he was. John quoted Isaiah 40:3 to explain who he was. (Read Isaiah 40:3)

Jesus also came to John to be baptized. John knew that Jesus was the One sent from God, the Messiah. John told his followers, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the One I was talking about . . ." (John 1:29-30 NCV) Two of John's disciples left him and began following Jesus. And when Jesus' disciples, who were also baptizing, had more people following them than John did, John guided his disciples. He reminded them that he wasn't the Christ (or Messiah). He compared himself to the bridegroom at a wedding. The groom was the one who married the bride. The bridegroom was happy for the groom. Jesus is the Messiah. His bride are those of us who follow. John was the bridegroom. He was excited for the groom and happy to hear His voice. Then John said, "He must become greater, and I must become less important." (John 3:30 NCV) You see, John knew why he was alive—to help people return to God, to point them to Jesus Christ, nothing more, nothing less.



### **YOU CAN BE A HERO, TOO!**

When you live a life of faith in Jesus Christ, you don't have to leap tall buildings to be a hero. John the Baptist helped people return to God. John knew from birth that this was what he was born for.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we were born knowing what God wants us to do. Our memory verse says that, "From one man [God] made all the people of the world. Now they live all over the earth. He decided exactly when they should live. And he decided exactly where they should live. God did this so that people would seek him." (Acts 17:26-27a NIV)

If you don't know God, did you know that you are exactly where you are so that you will seek Him? And if you do know God, did you know that you are exactly where you are to point people to Jesus the way John did?

# PRE-SCHOOL!

## LESSON

Who can tell me what a hero is? A hero is someone who is courageous and brave and compassionate. There are heroes and heroines in the Bible. All of them are brave and courageous and more, but not in the way you would expect.

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Helping people return to God may not sound very heroic, but let's look at the facts and see what you think when you have heard the whole story!

After many years with no message from God, God sent the angel Gabriel to Zechariah the priest. God had heard Zechariah's prayer and was going to give him and his wife a child, John. Gabriel told Zechariah that John would bring joy to many people. He would be a great man for God. Gabriel even said, "He will help many people of Israel return to the Lord their God . . . He will . . . bring those who are not obeying God back to the right way of thinking, to make a people ready for the coming of the Lord." (Luke 1:16, 17 NCV) Everything happened just as the angel said it would. After John's birth, Zechariah said, "Now you, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High God. You will go before the Lord to prepare His way. You will make His people know that they will be saved by having their sins forgiven." (Luke 1:76, 77 NCV) What news! What responsibility!

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When the people began to wonder if he was the One God had promised long ago, John pointed them all to Jesus. He told them that there was One coming after him who was greater than he was. And then Jesus came to John to be baptized. John knew that Jesus was the One sent from God, the Messiah. John told his followers, "[Jesus] must become greater, and I must become less important." (John 3:30 NCV) You see, John knew why he was alive—to help people return to God, to point them to Jesus Christ, nothing more, nothing less.

# ACTIVITIES!

- Memory Verse Activity - Print copies of your city, state or nation. Mark your home town with a star. Print the memory verse over the top of the map.
- Continue adding heroes' names and heroic feats to your "Heroes Banner."
- Sing "Victory in Jesus," "The Mission," "Tell the Good News," "Go Tell it On the Mountain," "He's Changing Me," "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" or other praise songs related to the lesson.
- Bring honey grahams and gummy insects for snack!
- Make camel hair vests from paper grocery sacks and yarn. Act out Matthew 3:1-17.
- **For more training:** Read and discuss Luke 1:67, 76-79 in light of the lesson.
- **For more training:** When asked if he was the Messiah, John pointed the leaders to a verse they would know well, Isaiah 40:3-5. Read those verses and discuss them in light of the lesson.

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all the people of the world.  
Now they live all over the  
earth. He decided exactly  
when they should live.  
And He decided exactly  
where they should live.  
God did this so that  
people would seek Him.

Acts 17:26-27

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# ***HERO IN TRAINING***

John the Baptist  
Prepares the Way for the Lord

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Arlington † Metroplex  
*Taking church to the people*



# HERO TRAINING!

**Scripture:** Luke 1, 3 and John 1

**Memory verse:**

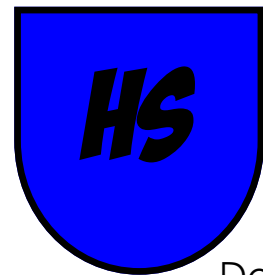
From one man [God] made all the people of the world. Now they live all over the earth. He decided exactly when they should live. And he decided exactly where they should live. God did this so that people would seek him. (Acts 17:26-27a NIV)

**Our Hero:** \_\_\_\_\_

What did our hero do that was so heroic? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What can you do to be a **Hero of the Faith**? \_\_\_\_\_



What power do Heroes of the Faith possess?

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have the power? \_\_\_\_\_

Read Luke 1:13-17 and review the memory verse. How can you be like John? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# HIDDEN MESSAGE!

Can you crack the code to find the Hidden Message?  
Why are you here? Why do you live where you do?  
Why do you live at this exact moment in history?  
Find the answers in the memory verse below



Where do you live? \_\_\_\_\_  
When were you born? \_\_\_\_\_  
Why? (Read the memory verse below.) \_\_\_\_\_

From one man [God] made all the people of the world.  
Now they live all over the earth.  
He decided exactly when they should live.  
And He decided exactly where they should live.  
God did this so that people would seek Him. (Acts 17:26-27)

WORD

SEARCH!

B	S	M	C	G	N	R	L	P	L	I	Y	E
D	M	O	A	N	A	I	J	O	H	N	E	X
P	L	E	I	R	B	A	G	L	E	G	N	A
H	S	D	B	K	A	H	N	O	M	L	O	B
E	P	H	A	I	S	S	E	M	U	U	H	E
Y	E	C	P	S	D	L	O	H	S	N	D	D
C	R	E	T	T	S	E	N	E	T	U	N	N
I	S	I	I	I	N	M	X	R	I	X	A	S
T	I	R	Z	A	C	A	D	S	N	M	T	G
I	A	C	I	D	R	C	M	F	C	D	S	O
S	I	P	N	A	H	C	A	I	R	E	U	N
F	A	S	G	A	N	D	P	R	E	Y	C	N
V	T	Z	E	C	H	A	R	I	A	H	O	E
G	N	T	N	L	V	I	C	T	S	R	L	H
P	R	E	P	A	R	E	T	H	E	W	A	Y

- Zechariah
- angel Gabriel
- John
- prepare the way
- Messiah
- camel's hair
- locust and honey
- baptizing
- He must increase

# HIDDEN MESSAGE!

Answer Page

Can you crack the code to find the Hidden Message?  
Why are you here? Why do you live where you do?  
Why do you live at this exact moment in history?  
Find the answers in the memory verse below



Where do you live? \_\_\_\_\_  
When were you born? \_\_\_\_\_  
Why? (Read the memory verse below.) so that people would seek God

From one man [God] made all the people of the world.  
Now they live all over the earth.  
He decided exactly when they should live.  
And He decided exactly where they should live.  
God did this so that people would seek Him. (Acts 17:26-27)



# WORD

# SEARCH!

Answer Page

B	S	M	C	G	N	R	L	P	L	I	Y	E
D	M	O	A	N	A	I	J	O	H	N	E	X
P	L	E	I	R	B	A	G	L	E	G	N	A
H	S	D	B	K	A	H	N	O	M	L	O	B
E	P	H	A	I	S	S	E	M	U	U	H	E
Y	E	C	P	S	D	L	O	H	S	N	D	D
C	R	E	T	T	S	E	N	E	T	U	N	N
I	S	I	I	I	N	M	X	R	I	X	A	S
T	I	R	Z	A	C	A	D	S	N	M	T	G
I	A	C	I	D	R	C	M	F	C	D	S	O
S	I	P	N	A	H	C	A	I	R	E	U	N
F	A	S	G	A	N	D	P	R	E	Y	C	N
V	T	Z	E	C	H	A	R	I	A	H	O	E
G	N	T	N	L	V	I	C	T	S	R	L	H
P	R	E	P	A	R	E	T	H	E	W	A	Y

- Zechariah
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