



John Prepares People for Jesus' Coming

Luke 3:7-18

Preschoolers love helping with preparations for Grandma's visit or for the arrival of a new baby. Although John the Baptist is really preaching that people should clean up their lives prior to the arrival of Jesus, children will easily understand the analogy of getting the home ready in anticipation of a special guest. Use this lesson to help children understand what it means to get ready for Jesus.



► **Bible Point**
Get ready for Jesus.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started <i>about 5 min.</i>	Welcome and Celebrate Welcome each other, and praise God through music.	signal, CD player Teacher Pack: CD	
2 Key Verse Activity <i>about 10 min.</i>	The Gift for Each of Us Unwrap a gift to find hearts for each class member.	Bible, 1 box with lid, wrapping paper, tape, marker, 1 red paper heart per child	Use the gift-wrapped box from last week (remove the label), or gift-wrap a box so that the lid can be removed. Write each child's name on a paper heart. Put the hearts inside the box.
3 Bible Exploration <i>about 15 min.</i>	Puppy Pointers Hear how Theo wants to use his rag to clean his heart.	CD player, Theo puppet, cleaning rag, string Teacher Pack: CD	Tie the rag to Theo's paw.
	Bible Time: John Prepares People for Jesus Hear about John the Baptist preparing people for Jesus.	Bible, small pieces of sandpaper Teacher Pack: "John the Baptist" poster 	

Key Verse
"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).

Weaving Faith Into Life
Children will get their hearts ready for Jesus.

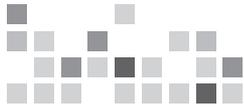
Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.



LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
<p>4</p> <p>Weaving Faith Into Life</p> <p><i>about 20 min.</i></p> <p><i>(Choose 2 centers.)</i></p>	<p>Center 1: A Clean House</p> <p>Create a picture of a child cleaning for company.</p>	My Bible Hugs, pen, paper towels, markers, glue sticks	Remove the Lesson 3 pages from each My Bible Hugs student book, and write children's names on them.
	<p>Center 2: Honey and Locust Snack</p> <p>Fix a snack of things John the Baptist might have eaten in the desert.</p>	pita bread, honey, antibacterial gel (optional)	
	<p>Center 3: Cleaning Up for Company</p> <p>Clean dirt off of paper hearts.</p>	red paper hearts, dirt, salt, tissues	
	<p>Center 4: Clean Tag</p> <p>Play Freeze Tag with a twist.</p>		
<p>5</p> <p>Lasting Impressions</p> <p><i>about 10 min.</i></p>	<p>Daily Challenges</p> <p>Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.</p>	My Bible Hugs, pens	
	<p>Action Prayer</p> <p>Respond to John the Baptist.</p>		
	<p>Weaving Faith at Home</p> <p>Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.</p>		

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.





Welcome and Celebrate Supplies

signal

CD player

Teacher Pack

CD: "Everybody Ought to Come" (track 3), "Are You Ready?" (track 6)

1 GETTING STARTED

Welcome and Celebrate

Tip Consistently use the same signal to announce a transition to the next activity. You could flip the lights off and on, use a train whistle, have a puppet rustling inside a bag, or sing cleanup songs. Keep it simple, consistent, and fun.

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

As the children arrive, greet each one with a smile. When it's time to begin, use your signal to gather the children together in a circle on the floor.

Lead children in singing "Everybody Ought to Come" (track 3 on the CD) to the tune of "Everybody Ought to Know." Encourage children to follow the motions in parentheses.

♪ Everybody ought to come, (motion with hand to come)

Everybody ought to come, (motion with hand to come)

Everybody ought to come (motion with hand to come)

To church with us.

At church, we learn (make a steeple with hands)

Of Jesus' love. (put arm around a friend)

At church, we learn (make a steeple with hands)

Of Jesus' love. (all kids connect arms around each other)

(Repeat 3x.)

Say: **I'm glad you're here today. We get learn how we ► GET READY FOR JESUS. Our next song will get us ready for learning about that!**

Lead children in marching around the room and singing "Are You Ready?" (track 6 on the CD) to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." The second time through, have children clap on the verse; on the chorus, have them each turn to a partner and sing to one another.

♪ Christmastime is coming;

It's a special time of year.

We must all get ready;

Jesus' birth is almost here.

We must open up our hearts

For the baby, oh, so dear.

Are you ready for our heavenly king?

Everybody's getting ready.

Everybody's getting ready.





Everybody's getting ready,
Ready for our heavenly king.

(Repeat from beginning.)

Say: **Christmas is Jesus' birthday. That's why we ► GET READY FOR JESUS at Christmas. Today we'll hear how we can get our hearts ready for Jesus all year long.**

2 KEY VERSE ACTIVITY

The Gift for Each of Us

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Have children form a circle and sit down. Show the wrapped gift. Say: **This is a beautiful present. I wonder what's inside.** Remove the lid, and show the children the hearts, but don't remove them from the box. Open your Bible to Isaiah 9:6, and show children the words. Tell kids the Bible is God's special book.

Say: **Listen while I read our Key Verse: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). This means that Jesus was born for us. Let's say our Key Verse together.** Lead children in saying the simplified Key Verse with you: **To us Jesus is born (Isaiah 9:6).**

Say: **Jesus wants each one of us to know he came for us.** Take each heart out of the box, and substitute each child's name in the Key Verse. For example, "To Michael, Jesus is born." Then hand that child his or her paper heart. After all the hearts have been handed out, lead children in saying the Key Verse again: **To us Jesus is born (Isaiah 9:6).**

Lead children in a simple prayer, thanking God for sending Jesus to be born for all of us.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- Why are you happy Jesus came for you?
- What can you do to get ready for Jesus at Christmas?

Say: **Jesus came for you! And every year at Christmas, we celebrate that. To thank God, we can ► GET READY FOR JESUS. Let's learn more about how we can get ready for him.**



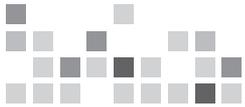
The Gift for Each of Us Supplies

- Bible
- 1 box with lid
- wrapping paper
- tape
- marker
- 1 red paper heart per child

The Gift for Each of Us Easy Prep

Use the gift-wrapped box from last week (remove the label), or gift-wrap a box so that the lid can be removed. Write each child's name on a paper heart. Put the hearts inside the box.





Puppy Pointers Supplies

CD player
Theo puppet
cleaning rag
string
Teacher Pack
CD: “Here, Theo” (track 2)

Puppy Pointers Easy Prep

Tie the rag to Theo’s
paw.

3 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Puppy Pointers

What You’ll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **Listen, everyone, Theo’s coming! He has something to show us. Let’s find out what it is.** Play “Here, Theo” (track 2 on the CD), and bring out Theophilus the FaithRetriever.

Theo: Hi, everybody!

Teacher: Hi there, Theo! Welcome back. That looks like a rag. You must be getting ready to clean.

Theo: Yep! I’m helping my mom clean the house—we’re having company!

Teacher: Oh! What a big, important job. I’ll bet your mom is busy getting everything ready for your guests.

Theo: She’s cleaned everything. She washed the windows, made the guest bed, and made a bazillion kinds of cookies—yum!

Teacher: It’s fun getting ready for a special guest, isn’t it? Children, what special guest have we been talking about? Let’s see if our Bible Point might help us remember. Let’s tell it to Theo. (*Lead children in saying the Bible Point for Theo:* ► **GET READY FOR JESUS.**)

Theo: You’re getting ready for Jesus! Wow! I’ll bet you have to clean a lot for that!

Teacher: We’re learning what it means to get ready for Jesus. We don’t have to dust or wash or bake. Instead we’ll think about how our hearts can get clean.

Theo: That sounds really important. Well, I need to finish helping my mom, so I’d better go.

Teacher: We’ll see you next week. Boys and girls, let’s all wave to Theo.

Encourage the children to wave or say goodbye to Theo. Then put Theo away in a safe place for next week’s use.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- Tell about a time you helped your mom the way Theo helped his mom.
- Why is it important to get ready for guests?
- What makes Jesus a special guest to you?

Say: **Theo had lots to do to help get ready for his guests. Today we’ll learn about a man in the Bible who helped others know that Jesus was a special guest. We’ll learn how they could ► GET READY FOR JESUS and how we can, too.**





Bible Time: John Prepares People for Jesus

What You'll Do

Open your Bible to Luke 3:7-18, and show children the words. Tell children that the Bible is God's special book.

Say: **Today we'll read in the Bible about Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist. John was excited because Jesus was coming. He told everyone to ► GET READY FOR JESUS.**

Show the "John the Baptist" poster and point to John. **When we're looking forward to someone coming, we get excited. We want to share the good news. In the Bible, John the Baptist was so excited that he left the desert where he'd been living and went into town.** Give kids each a small piece of sandpaper and let them feel the "sand" from the "desert."

Say: **John wore clothes made of camel hair. Most likely his beard was long. The Bible says he ate honey and locusts—which are bugs!** Invite children to talk about whether they'd want to eat bugs.

Say: **John the Baptist went around the country telling people to ► GET READY FOR JESUS.** Point out the people on the poster. **John knew that Jesus was coming to save everyone who believes in him. He wanted everyone to get ready.**

Let's act out the things John told people to do to ► GET READY FOR JESUS. John said: Be nice to others, and do what's right. Have children each hug a friend.

God's king, Jesus, is coming. Have kids place both hands on top of their heads, connecting fingers and pointing them upward to form a crown.

Get your heart ready now! Have kids rub their hands over their hearts.

Forgive others! Share what you have. Have children spread their hands out slowly in front of them.

Clean your heart. Praise and worship only God! Have children point to heaven.

Say: **Some people wondered if John the Baptist was the king he was talking about. But he said, "No, I'm not the king. But we must all ► GET READY FOR JESUS. He's God's Son."** John told the people to get ready by asking God for forgiveness for wrong things they'd done.



Bible Time: John Prepares People for Jesus Supplies

-
- Bible
 - small pieces of sandpaper
 - Teacher Pack**
 - "John the Baptist" poster





Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What did you think of the things John told the people to do?
- What can you do to get your heart ready for Jesus?

Say: **John told the people to get ready for Jesus. He wanted them to pay attention to their actions and choices. He wanted them to get their hearts ready by asking God for forgiveness. Like the people in the Bible, we ► GET READY FOR JESUS, too.**

4 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Choose at least two of the learning centers to help reinforce today's Bible lesson. Gather the needed materials, and put the supplies in an out-of-sight area until you're ready for them. Allow the children to choose which center they'd like to explore first. Then circulate among the children as they create and explore. Encourage them to make connections between their activities and the Bible by asking them the questions included with each center's description.

■ CENTER 1:

A Clean House

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Give each child a Lesson 3 page from My Bible Hugs. Say: **Today we're learning that we ► GET READY FOR JESUS. John the Baptist told the people to clean their hearts to get ready.**

Point out the picture on the My Bible Hugs student page. Say: **What are some ways you help with cleaning at home?** Invite children to share. They might get to dust the shelves or tables, put away dishes, or even help wash the car when getting ready for special visitors.

Say: **Draw your face and hair on the blank face to show that you help with cleaning at home.** Allow time. Then have kids each tear off a piece of paper towel to glue into the hand as a wash rag. Say: **Sometimes cleaning is hard work.**

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What jobs do you do when your family cleans up for special visitors?
- Why might you want to clean for Jesus?
- What are some ways you can get help with getting ready for Jesus?

Center 1: A Clean House Supplies

My Bible Hugs
pen
paper towels
markers
glue sticks

Center 1: A Clean House Easy Prep

Remove the Lesson 3 pages from each My Bible Hugs student book, and write children's names on them.





Say: **John told people to clean their hearts. He said to share what they had. He told them to forgive others. Sharing and forgiving are not always easy, but God will help us. To ► GET READY FOR JESUS, we can tell God we're sorry for things we've done wrong, and we can ask him to help us.**

■ **CENTER 2:**

Honey and Locust Snack

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Have children clean their hands and then sit down for the snack. Say: **Today we heard about John the Baptist. He was Jesus' cousin, and he lived in the desert. And one extra-interesting thing the Bible says about him is that he ate bugs dipped in honey! I have a special snack for you, kind of like that. Are you ready?** Pause for children to react. **Don't worry! We won't be eating bugs.**

Give each child half a piece of pita bread on a paper plate. Let the children drizzle honey into their pita bread. Say: **People living at the time that John the Baptist lived wouldn't buy honey from a store. Honeybees make honey, so the people would go to the honeybees' houses to get honey.** Invite the children to share anything they know about bees.

Say: **Sometimes bees sting you, so it might be a little scary to go to the honeybees' home where there are lots of bees and to take the honey from their house. Honey must've been a pretty special food to go to all that trouble to get it. Let's eat our special snack now.** Pray, and let the children enjoy their snack.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **Tell about special foods you have at Christmastime.**
- **What are some ways you can help get those special foods ready?**
- **What are some other ways you get ready for Christmas?**
- **What are some ways that you celebrate Jesus at Christmas?**

Say: **At Christmas we eat special foods, we spend time with family, and we celebrate. We go to a lot of trouble, like John did when he got his honey from the honeybees. Today John helped us know what's most important to get ready—and it's not the decorations or the cookies. He says to ► GET READY FOR JESUS—and he means for us to get our hearts ready.**



Center 2: Honey and Locust Snack Supplies

-
- pita bread
 - paper plates
 - honey
 - antibacterial gel (optional)

! **ALLERGY ALERT**





Center 3: Cleaning Up for Company Supplies

red paper hearts
dirt
salt
tissues

CENTER 3:

Cleaning Up for Company



Tip Ensure children know not to put their hands in their mouths during this activity.

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **John the Baptist told the people, “▶ GET READY FOR JESUS!” He told them to clean their hearts.** Give each child a red paper heart. Sprinkle a small amount of salt on half of the children’s paper hearts. Then sprinkle a small amount of dirt on the other children’s paper hearts.

Say: **Look at what I put on your heart. Touch it, try to smell it if you can, and look at it closely.** Allow time, and monitor children as they play with the dirt and salt.

Say: **Everyone has something on their heart that needs to be cleaned, but the things some people have on their hearts are easier to see than others.** Have each child switch hearts with another child who has the opposite substance. **Now look closely at the stuff on your new heart.** Encourage children to look, smell, and touch for about 30 seconds more.

Give kids tissues and tell them to wipe the dirt and salt off their hearts. Say: **Like our paper hearts, the hearts inside of us are dirty because of sin. Sometimes it’s easy for others to see the sin, like when we decide not to share with someone. But sometimes others can’t see the sin in our hearts, like when we think something mean in our heads.**

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- Tell about the two things you explored on your paper hearts.
- What happened when you tried to clean your paper hearts?
- What kinds of things do you think make the heart inside you dirty?

Say: **All of our hearts are dirty, but Jesus can clean them for us—and when he cleans them, there’s no dirt left over. Jesus cleans them so well that they look brand new! John knew that Jesus was special, so he told the people to get their hearts ready for Jesus. He wanted the people to think about the dirt on their hearts and to say sorry to God. He wanted everyone to ▶ GET READY FOR JESUS.**





CENTER 4:

Clean Tag

What You'll Do

Say: **John the Baptist helped the people notice that their hearts were dirty. He told them to ► GET READY FOR JESUS so they could be cleaned and freed by him. Let's play a game to think about that.**

Choose one child to be "sin" in the game. When this child tags others, they'll have to freeze in place. Say: **If you're tagged by "sin" you're stuck where you are, but don't give up! Look around and be ready because you never know when Jesus will come to free you!** Check for understanding. The difference between this game and freeze tag is that in this game, other children cannot unfreeze their friends—only Jesus can, and once Jesus unfreezes a child, he or she can never be frozen by "sin" again. You'll play "Jesus," but you won't reveal that at first.

Have children play, and when it looks like all the children are about to be frozen, begin to unfreeze children by saying "I'm Jesus. You're free and can never be frozen again!" Play until all the children are unfrozen and sin is defeated. Repeat the game as time allows, and let other children take turns being "sin" so everyone can experience being frozen and freed.

Talk With Kids

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What was it like to be frozen in this game?
- What did you do to make sure you were ready for Jesus in our game?
- What were you thinking and feeling when you were freed forever?

Say: **John knew how special Jesus is. As we saw in our game, he knew that no one can free us from our sin—except Jesus. That's why John told the people to ► GET READY FOR JESUS.**

5 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do

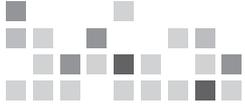
After the children have cleaned up their centers, bring everyone back to a circle area on the floor. Review the lesson activities and the Bible Point, and then encourage the children to share what they remember about what they learned from the Bible today.



Daily Challenges
Supplies

My Bible Hugs
pens





Also use this time to challenge kids in their faith. Encourage them to choose a Daily Challenge for applying today's lesson to their lives this week. Use this challenge for encouraging your children's growing relationships with Jesus.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Say: **Today we learned that we ► GET READY FOR JESUS. I would like each of you to choose a way to get ready for Jesus this week.**

Give kids these two challenges to choose from:

- **Say "I forgive you" to a family member who has hurt you. Then tell the person that Jesus helps you forgive the way he forgives you when you do wrong things.**
- **Pray with your parents about a rule that you have a hard time obeying. Ask God to forgive you and help you obey.**

Say: **If you want to forgive someone else, circle the choice with one dot. If you want to pray about obeying, circle the choice with two dots.** Check that each child circled a choice on his or her My Bible Hugs page. Make sure you tell kids the challenge you choose. Your commitment will inspire children and will give them an opportunity to see God at work in your life as well as in theirs!

Action Prayer

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Form a circle, and have the children sit down. Say: **Let's pretend we're John the Baptist telling others to get ready for Jesus.** Starting with the child on your right as "John," have him or her tell another child to get ready for Jesus. Encourage the second child to respond, "Dear God, help me to get ready for Jesus." Go around the circle, letting each child participate, until all have had a turn to be John and to pray. Then invite children to each tell God one way they want to get ready for Jesus. Finally, close the prayer: **In Jesus' name we pray, amen.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Have children take home their My Bible Hugs pages whether they worked on them or not. Have the children tell their parents the challenge they committed to in the "Daily Challenges" activity. Encourage the parents to help their kids fulfill this commitment during the week. By working together and focusing on the same goals, you and parents can help children weave faith into their lives!

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

