

John the Baptist Prepared the Way for Jesus Christ

Lesson

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| Purpose | To help the children understand that they were foreordained to do an important part of Heavenly Father's work on earth. |
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| Preparation | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Prayerfully study Luke 1:5–25, 57–80; Matthew 3:1–6; and Doctrine and Covenants 84:27–28. Then study the lesson and decide how you want to teach the scripture account (see “Preparing Your Lessons,” p. vi, and “Teaching from the Scriptures,” p. vii).2. Select the discussion questions and enrichment activities that will involve the children and best help them achieve the purpose of the lesson.3. Materials needed:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. A Bible or a New Testament for each child.b. A paper with the words <i>I am a choice spirit</i> printed on it for each child.c. Picture 7-2, John Preaching in the Wilderness (Gospel Art Picture Kit 207; 62132). |
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| Suggested Lesson Development | <p>Before class privately ask one of the children to give the papers you have prepared to the other children right after the opening prayer.</p> <p>Invite a child to give the opening prayer.</p> |
| Attention Activity | <p>Have the child pass out the papers to the class members. Explain that before class started you chose the child who passed out the papers to do this service. Foreordination is like this. (Write <i>Foreordination</i> on the chalkboard.) Heavenly Father foreordained us in premortal life when he chose us to do a special work for him on earth. Being foreordained does not mean that we have to do the work; we still have our freedom or agency, but the opportunity is ours if we choose. Explain that in this lesson the children are going to learn about John the Baptist, who was foreordained or chosen to carry out an important mission on earth. Have the children read aloud the words on their papers. Tell them that the scriptures they will study explain that John the Baptist was a choice spirit, chosen in the premortal life to prepare the way for Jesus Christ.</p> |
| Scripture Account | <p>Teach the story of John the Baptist's birth, childhood, and mission from the scriptures listed in the “Preparation” section. Display the picture John Preaching in the Wilderness at an appropriate time. (For suggested ways to teach the scripture account, see “Teaching from the Scriptures,” p. vii.) Help the children understand that John the Baptist was foreordained to prepare the people to listen to Jesus Christ.</p> |
| Discussion and Application Questions | <p>Study the following questions and the scripture references as you prepare your lesson. Use the questions you feel will best help the children understand the scriptures and apply the principles in their lives. Reading the references with the children in class will help them gain insights into the scriptures.</p> |

- What do we know about the parents of John the Baptist? (Luke 1:5–7.)
- Why was Zacharias struck dumb so that he could not speak? (Luke 1:18–20.)
- Why did Zacharias and Elisabeth name their son John? (Luke 1:13.)
- What do we know about John’s childhood? (Luke 1:80; D&C 84:27–28.)
- What was John the Baptist foreordained to do? (Luke 1:15–17, 76–77.)
- How did John the Baptist fulfill his foreordained mission to prepare the way for Jesus Christ? (Matthew 3:1–6.)

Explain that just as John the Baptist was a choice spirit chosen to help build Heavenly Father’s kingdom by preparing the way for Jesus Christ, we are choice spirits chosen to help build Heavenly Father’s kingdom by helping people know more about Jesus Christ.

Read this quotation by President Ezra Taft Benson: “You are choice spirits, many of you having been held back in reserve for almost 6,000 years to come forth in this day, at this time, when the temptations, responsibilities, and opportunities are the very greatest” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1977, p. 43; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1977, p. 30).

- How does it make you feel to know that Heavenly Father knows you personally and chose you to come to earth at this time?
- What are some of the things we might have been foreordained to do to help build Heavenly Father’s kingdom? (Serve missions, be good examples by keeping our covenants, hold the priesthood, raise righteous families, fulfill Church callings.)
- How can you find out what Heavenly Father wants you to do here on earth? (Pray about decisions, listen to the Spirit.) Explain that Heavenly Father has also given us the opportunity to receive patriarchal blessings from a stake patriarch when we are old enough. Patriarchal blessings often indicate what callings we might receive or what Heavenly Father wants us to do with our lives. How can you prepare yourself to do what Heavenly Father wants you to do?

Enrichment Activities

You may use one or more of the following activities any time during the lesson or as a review, summary, or challenge.

1. Prepare a paper with the following statements on it (without the answers) for each child, or write the statements on the chalkboard:

John the Baptist:

- a. Lived in the _____ .
- b. Was _____ months older than Jesus.
- c. Wore clothing made of _____ and _____ .
- d. Ate _____ and _____ .
- e. Prepared the way for _____ .

Answers: a. wilderness; b. six; c. camel’s hair, leather; d. locusts, wild honey; e. Jesus Christ.

Have the children read Luke 1:26–27, 35–36, 76 and Matthew 3:1, 4 to fill in the blanks. (If the children don't know what locusts are, explain that they are large flying insects.) Help them realize that even though John the Baptist lived a simple, humble life in the wilderness, he faithfully fulfilled his mission and prepared the way for Jesus Christ.

2. Have the children read the following scriptures to discover others who were foreordained for their earthly missions:

Jeremiah 1:5—Jeremiah

1 Nephi 11:18—Mary, the mother of Jesus (vision given to Nephi)

Ether 3:14—Jesus Christ

Doctrine and Covenants 138:53, 55—Joseph Smith and others

Abraham 3:23—Abraham

Conclusion

Testimony

Bear testimony that just as John the Baptist was foreordained to prepare the way for Jesus Christ and be a witness for him, so each of us was foreordained to our mission on earth. Express your feelings about the importance of living the gospel and being worthy to do whatever Heavenly Father foreordained us to do.

Suggested Home Reading

Suggest that the children study Luke 1:5–23, 57–80 and Matthew 3:1–6 at home as a review of this lesson.

Invite a child to give the closing prayer.