

THE COMBINED TEACHER'S GUIDE

WINTER QUARTER 2022/23

DECEMBER • JANUARY • FEBRUARY

Christian Education Department
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900 13th Avenue South • Nashville, TN 37212

BASIC SUPPLIES

Bible dictionary	writing paper
Bible pictures and maps	DVD recorder/player
CD players	milk crates
chart paper	paper – letter, drawing,
Christian music – books, sheets, recordings	pencils, pens, markers
Christian videos and DVDs	poster boards
crayons	robes, scarves
digital camera	old clothing
digital camcorder	scissors, glue, paste
drawing paper	video player

The Teacher's Guide

Liberating Faith Studies Lessons Winter Quarter: December-February 2022/23 Prepared by Rev. Dr. Linda E. Mouzon

Zechariah Hears from God

Lesson 1

December 4, 2022

Lesson Scripture: Luke 1:5-23

Focus Scripture: Luke 1:8-20

Key Verse: The angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John." Luke 1:13

Key Terms

- **Levite** – Tribe descended from Jacob that God assigned to work in the temple.
- **Zechariah** – "Yahweh remembers."
- **Elizabeth** – In Hebrew has two parts, *Eli* (my God) and *Sheva* (seven or swear): "In my God I swear," or "God is my oath."
- **Holy Spirit** – In Hebrew *Ruach HaKodesh*; the spirit of the Holy One.
- **John** – in Hebrew *Yochanan* is "God is gracious."
- **Priest** – *Cohen* in Hebrew; usually descendants of Aaron the high priest.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Remember God gives children as gifts.
2. Recognize the challenges and feelings that people experience when waiting for an answer to prayer.

3. Understand that God speaks during worship services.
4. Recognize that God calls babies before they are conceived.

Teaching Strategies

1. Discuss the challenges and feelings people experience who want children but are unable to conceive.
2. Compare the appearance of Gabriel to Zechariah with Gabriel's appearance to Mary (Luke 1:26-38) and Daniel (Daniel 8:15-27; 9:20-27). How are the responses of Zechariah and Mary alike? Different?
3. Discuss whether class members believe that God's messengers/angels still speak to people today.
4. Allow time to have class share the meaning of their name and what they think is a new name God will give them.
5. Suggest ways churches may create ministries designed for the mute and deaf community.

Resources:

Bible:

1. Miraculous births: Abraham and Sarah, Genesis 18:11; Rebekah, Genesis 25:21; Rachel, Genesis 30; Samson's mother in Judges 13:2; Samuel, in 1 Samuel 1–2.
2. Angel appearances: Exodus 15–16; Judges 6:22-23; 13:6, 22; 2 Samuel 6:9; Isaiah 7:14; Daniel 8:16-17; 10:10-11.

Internet:

1. The incense offering: https://www.chabad.org/multimedia/video_cdo/aid/3397744/jewish/The-Incense-Offering.htm
2. Herod's temple where Zechariah took the incense: <https://www.realmofhistory.com/2019/04/08/herods-temple-history-reconstruction/>

Zechariah Speaks

Lesson 2

December 11, 2022

Lesson Scripture: Luke 1:57-80

Focus Scripture: Luke 1:57-66, 76-79

Key Verse: “You, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways.” Luke 1:76

Key Terms

- **John** – “God has been gracious.”
- **Brit Milah** – The Jewish ceremony in which a baby boy is circumcised.
- **Bar** – “Son of.”
- **B'rakhah** – Blessing that shows total dependence on God.
- **El Elyon** - “The most high God.

“Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Recognize God's plan begins before birth.
2. Understand the importance of focusing on God when giving praise.
3. Know that community plays a significant role in celebrating infant birth.
4. Recognize that God expects Christian to prepare people for the next coming of Jesus.

Teaching Strategies

1. Have class discuss baby-naming ceremonies from various cultures.
2. Discuss blessings given by Jewish people for infants and what they say about their relationship with God (Number 6:24-26).
 - A. May the All-Merciful bless the tender infant who has been

circumcised on the eighth day of life, and may his hands and heart be firm with the Almighty, and may he be worthy to appear before the Shekhinah (Divine Presence) three times a year.

B. May God bless you and protect you.

May God show you favor and be gracious to you.

May God show you kindness and grant you peace.

3. Have class discuss why they believe people become frightened when they encounter something they cannot understand (Give instances from the Bible: Genesis 3:10, Ex 3:6;19:16)
4. Consider how Elizabeth must have felt following the birth of John, her husband unable to speak. Discuss the meaning of the name "John" (God is gracious) and how Zechariah regained his speech when he agreed to name his son John.
5. As a class, discuss how your evangelism ministry is similar to that of the call and ministry of John.

Resources:

Bible:

1. Infant births: Jeremiah 1:5; 1 Samuel 1:27; Genesis 25:21; Psalm 113:9.
2. Deaf healed: Mark 7:31-37.
3. God naming children: Genesis 16:11, 17:19; Hosea 1:4; Isaiah 8:3,49:1.

Internet:

1. Jewish Brit service: <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/planning-a-brit-milah-bris/>
2. Zechariah's song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CGsUQpfTMHA>
3. Jewish blessing over children: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VO3irwYbljE>
4. Deaf Bible: <https://deaf.bible/ASLCBT/god-creates-everything/intro>

John the Baptist

Lesson 3

December 18, 2022

Lesson Scripture: Luke 3:1-20; John 1

Focus Scripture: Luke 3:2b-6; 15-18

Key Verse: He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Luke 3:3

Key Terms

- **Tetrarch** – Ruler of a fourth or quarter of a region.
- **Tiberius Caesar** – Strong, powerful.
- **Essenes** – A Jewish mystical sect who engaged in ritual washing and tried to live pure through separation from others.
- **Wilderness** – Hebrew *eremos* (or *eremia*), an isolated place.
- **Threshing floor** – A level stone floor where the mixture of grain and chaff was piled.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand their role in calling people to repentance.
2. Recognize the need to prepare the world for Jesus' return.
3. Learn that they should evangelize with the same power and authority to government, business, and church leaders as they do with their peers.
4. Learn to listen for God's voice of instruction.
5. Learn the role baptism has in believers' lives.

Teaching Strategies

1. Have class discuss infant baptism and the three ways the AME Church baptizes (sprinkle, pour, and immersion).
2. Compare Matthew 3:7-10 and Luke 3:7-14. Discuss: What does the Luke passage contain that the Matthew passage does not?

What does this difference say about the gospel of Luke?

3. Have class share when God called them and what God called them to do.
4. Talk about love and repentance as they are reflected in this Advent season.
5. Compare the baptism of John and the baptism of Jesus. Discuss how John's baptism prepares the way for Jesus. How did John's and Jesus' baptism change the lives of people?
6. Discuss humility and how it is reflected in the work God calls us to do.

Resources:

Bible:

Called in the wilderness: Isaiah 38:4; Jeremiah 1:1-2; 13:3

Repentance: Joel 2:13; Zechariah 1:3b; Proverbs 1:23; Isaiah 30:15

Sandals: Leviticus 25:23-25; Deuteronomy 25:5-10; Ruth 4:8

Internet:

Threshing floor - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZy99QDPhpw>

Sandals in biblical time - <https://theshoeman647325124.wordpress.com/2020/02/11/sandals-in-biblical-times/>

Sandal and marriage covenant - <https://pearlofgreatprice.weebly.com/-the-marriage-covenant.html>

The Teacher's Guide
Senior Lessons
Winter Quarter
December 2022 – February 2023
Prepared by Rev. Faith Waters

Zechariah Hears from God

Lesson 1

December 4, 2022

(Second Sunday of Advent)

Lesson Scripture: Luke 1:5-23

Focus Scripture: Luke 1:8-20

Key Verse: The angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John." Luke 1:13

Words to Know

- **Lot** – one of a set of objects, such as straws or pebbles, drawn or thrown from a container to decide a question or choice by chance.
- **Sanctuary** – the section that is the holy of holies in the tabernacle and temple
- **Rejoice** – to be joyful
- **Righteous** – persons whose life is characterized by good morals and a faithful observance of God's laws
- **Mute** – to be speechless
- **Zechariah** – pronounced: zeh - kuh - RAI - uh
- **Elijah** – pronounced: ee - LAI - zhuh
- **Gabriel** – pronounced: GAY - bree - ul

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand that God hears our prayers and keeps God's promises, despite our doubts.
2. Compare the characteristics of Elijah and John the Baptist.
3. Demonstrate appreciation to God for God's undeserved favor (grace).

Teaching Strategies

1. Discuss the implications of being barren during biblical times.
2. Research and share information on the casting of lots. God ordained for Zechariah to go into the holy of holies to offer incense that specific day. It was not by chance or luck.
3. Incense burning was required at the temple twice a day (Exodus 30:7–8).
4. Be sensitive towards those who are enduring the consequences of bad decisions.
5. Someone in the class may be adopted or in foster care with no family history to draw from. Encourage them to go to websites cited to discover something new about their names.
6. Let one volunteer from the class create a short mime to demonstrate how Zechariah may have tried to explain to the people what happened inside the temple.
7. John was set apart by God to do a special ministry. He may have been forbidden to drink wine and other strong drinks as a part of a Nazirite vow. It was an ancient vow of consecration to God (Numbers 6:1–8). Samson was under the Nazirite vow as well (Judges 13).
8. This is the second week of Advent. If you do have an Advent wreath, turn on the second candle (battery operated is safest). For some, the second candle represents *faith* and is called "Bethlehem's Candle." Micah had foretold that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, which is also the birthplace of

King David. The second candle is also purple to symbolize preparation for the coming king. Encourage the class to make a journal entry for this Second Sunday of Advent, focusing on what having faith means to them.

Resources: Journal notebooks; Advent wreath

Zechariah Speaks

Lesson 2

December 11, 2022

(Third Sunday of Advent)

Lesson Scripture: Luke 1:57-80

Focus Scripture: Luke 1:57-66, 76-79

Key Verse: Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Luke 1:64

Words to Know

- **Mercy** – the kindness of God, who does not give us the punishment we deserve
- **Circumcise** – the act of cutting around the foreskins of Hebrew males who are eight days old as a seal of Jehovah's covenant with them
- **Prophet** – God's spokesperson who is a divinely called minister who announced the will of God to his people
- **Salvation** – to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, as well as forgives all sins
- **Peace** – a state of security and tranquility
- **Zechariah** – pronounced: zeh - kuh - RAI - uh

Lesson Goals: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Review the birth story of John the Baptist.
2. Evaluate the significance of John the Baptist's name.

3. Reflect on the prophecy given regarding John the Baptist’s life and ministry.

Teaching Strategies

1. This is the third week of Advent. For some, the third candle symbolizes *joy* and is called the “Shepherd’s Candle.” The angels announced to the shepherds in the field, “good news of great joy to all people.” This candle is pink because, in Christian history, the color rose signifies joy. Encourage youth to write in their journals about what gives them joy as a believer.
2. Discuss the meaning and importance of John’s name.
3. Discuss God’s plan for John as stated in Zechariah’s song.
4. John’s ability to write on a tablet (v. 63) indicates that he was a member of the scribal elite, as would be expected of one holding priestly status.
5. Brainstorm different ways to communicate with someone who is deaf/mute. For example, sign language.

Resources: Journal notebooks; Advent wreath

John the Baptist

Lesson 3

December 18, 2022

(Fourth Sunday of Advent)

Lesson Scripture: Luke 3:1-20; John 1

Focus Scripture: Luke 3:2b-6, 15-18

Key Verse: John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.” Luke 3:16

Words to Know

- **Repentance** – to turn your life around in obedience to God

- **Viper** – poisonous snake
- **Wrath** – the violent anger of God
- **Salvation** – to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, as well as forgiveness of all sins
- **Winnowing Fork** – the instrument used to toss grain and chaff in the air, and the wind would carry the chaff away, allowing the grain to fall in heaps on the floor
- **Exhortations** – an appeal; encouragement
- **Zechariah** – pronounced: zeh - kuh - RAI - uh

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand John's role in preparing the people for Jesus' ministry.
2. Identify the key points of John's message.
3. Commit to following the example of John, who was obedient to God's call on his life.

Teaching Strategies

1. Be sensitive toward those who have not accepted Jesus.
2. Be sensitive toward those who have different views on baptism.
3. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is connected with Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension at his first Advent. The baptism with fire is connected with judgment at his second coming.
4. Herod Antipas (4 B.C. – A.D. 39), who killed John the Baptist, was tetrarch of Galilee and Perea.
5. To be forgiven, we must turn away from sin and turn toward God.
6. Luke wrote for a non-Jewish audience. So, he quoted from Isaiah to demonstrate that salvation is for all people, not just Jews (Isaiah 40:3-5; 52:10).
7. There had not been a prophet in Israel for more than 400 years.

Many believed that when the Messiah came, prophecy would reappear (Joel 2:28-29; Malachi 3:1; 4:5). Therefore, the people thought John was the long-awaited Messiah.

8. John used the example of wheat and chaff to illustrate judgment. Those who refuse to live for God are like chaff, the useless outer husk of the grain. God will discard them because they have no intention of doing God's work. Those who repent and reform their lives are like the nourishing grain itself.
9. This is the fourth week of Advent. For some, the fourth candle represents *peace* and is called the "Angel's Candle." The angels announced that Jesus came to bring peace - he came to bring people peace with God and with each other again. This candle represents peace and justice that the angels and Christ bring to the world. It also can represent purity. This candle is usually purple or blue. Remind the class to write in their journals about this week's theme of peace.

Resources: Journal notebooks; Advent wreath

The Teacher's Guide
Intermediate Lessons

Winter Quarter

December 2022 – February 2023

Prepared by Dr. Kabrina Bass

**THE GOD OF THE BIBLE, THE SOURCE OF CREATION,
LOVES US AND CALLS US IN COVENANT THROUGH OUR
FAITH TO WORSHIP AND TO DO JUSTICE.**

General Instructions for the Quarter

“God Prepares the Way,” begins with two lessons on Zechariah from the opening chapters of Luke’s Gospel. Disappointment and doubt cloud Zechariah’s perspective until the promise of a son becomes reality. This extraordinary experience is the backdrop for Lesson 3 – the entrance of John the Baptist, God’s chosen voice to prepare the way for the Messiah. Lesson 4 on Christmas Day celebrates with Mary’s song as she rejoices in the news that God has chosen the humble.

Guidelines for Each Lesson:

Instruct: At the start of each lesson, we will spend a moment preparing for our lesson by listening to each other. We will learn to hear and listen to each other. Have participants practice being present during discussion during the lesson. If your session is online, encourage everyone to turn on their cameras and respond in the chat or by raising their virtual hand.

Instruct: If space allows, have the participants gather in a circle. If classes are virtual, review the ground rules of the virtual space. Explain the use of tools in the space, the chat room or the reaction features if available. **Share:** How we are present in the space, everyone listens to each other without judgement, comments or trying to fix it. Give everyone a turn, but don’t force participants to speak.

Share: Some lessons we will have breakout activities where participants can share with one another on a specific topic or discuss-

sion questions. Breakouts are designed to build fellowship with one another and an opportunity to know each other a little better. Remember, in breakout sessions take time to introduce yourself to others or check on one another. **Emphasize:** Belonging is a human need and each of you belong here and know we collectively care about you.

Zechariah Hears from God

Lesson 1

December 4, 2022

Lesson Scripture: Luke 1:5-23

Focus Scripture: Luke 1:8-20

Key Verse: The angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John.” Luke 1:13

Vocabulary

- **Angel (angelos)** – Messenger, a class of being that is a servant of the Lord and function as a messenger.
- **Lots (lanchanō)** – Implying divine choice; to be selected by a decision based on the casting of lots with the possible implication of reflecting divine choice.
- **Division/Section (ephêmeria)** – A priestly work group; persons who perform certain daily duties in the temple at Jerusalem.
- **Priest hierews)** – To serve; one who performs religious rites and duties on behalf of others.
- **Incense (θυμίαμα , thymiana)** – An aromatic substance that is burned for the sweet smelling smoke.
- **Elijah (E-lias)** – A Hebrew (Old Testament) prophet.
- **Gabriel (Gab-bre-el)** – An archangel.

Introduction

For the Teacher

Welcome everyone! In the Winter Quarter, we will share the unifying principle of today's lesson as people struggle with doubts and fears that limit their ability to hope. ***What impact do our doubts and fears have on our lives?*** While there is a consequence to Zechariah's doubt, it does not nullify God's hope-filled promise. Explain the lessons for the quarter is to explore the narrative of individuals chosen by God to prepare the way.

Invite: Participants to consider if they've ever made a promise.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Appreciate God's divine providence
2. Evaluate the characteristics of Angels
3. Understand the grace of God in the midst of correction

Teaching Strategies

Introduction – 5 minutes

Invite: Participants to share their answers regarding a promise.

Ask: How were they able to keep their promise? If they have never made a promise, be curious and ask, has anyone made a promise to you? **Ask** the class, what makes a promise important or is a promise important? **Introduce:** Today's lesson is about God's promise to Zechariah about the birth of his son, John.

Bible Story – 10 minutes

Request: Five volunteers to help with today's scripture reading; if you don't have five students, you will be the narrator and allow the students to participate as Zechariah or the Angel, Gabriel.

Ask: One volunteer (1) to read the words of Zechariah and one (2) to act out Zechariah's actions; ask another volunteer (3) to read the words of Gabriel and a fourth volunteer (4) to act out Gabriel's actions; finally, another volunteer (5) to be the narrator of the story.

Instruct: Everyone to listen to the story and to identify the promise made to Zechariah. **Ask:** What in the scripture reading caught your attention? **Based on their answers, elaborate:** Casting lots

(see video to explain); Zechariah's reference to age, explain how the Bible speaks to several women who were not able to give birth to children, but God blesses them in their old age to have children (Sarah Genesis 18:11; Rebecca Genesis 25:21; Rachel Genesis 30:1; Hannah 1 Samuel 1-2; and now Elizabeth) – if you don't know these women, please read their stories, and understand the significance of their children. Being a priest – share the role of the priest in their context – remind them that Zechariah was part of a priestly group who was responsible for the temple.

Life Application – 10 minutes

Ask: How do you make decisions? What method do you use, or are your decisions based on a process or do you just go with the flow? Allow time for participants to respond – pause for one full minute (silence is a blessing). **Remind:** Share the choices made in today's lesson – 1) Zechariah was chosen to go into the temple. **Remind:** Only Zechariah enters the temple. Invite participants to consider the holiness/separateness associated with the sanctuary of the Lord; 2) Zechariah had to choose to believe the angel. **Ask:** What was the consequence to Zechariah's decision? (He was muted) **Invite:** Have participants close their eyes and consider the following: Has there been a time in your life where God spoke to you? **Ask:** Participants if anyone wants to share.

Summary – 20 minutes

Invite: Participants to complete the activity sheet. Encourage them to work in groups – if virtual, use breakout rooms. Give them ten minutes to work on their activity sheet. **Alternative:** Invite participants to share their thoughts about angels. **Inquire:** Are angels real? **Ask:** What do they believe about angels? How do media, movies, books, and other platforms portray angels? Allow the conversation to happen and be curious regarding their responses. **Share:** God gives freewill to all creation and provides guidance if we listen. Our disobedience has consequences, however, by the grace of God we can repent (seek forgiveness) for our bad choices.

Invite: Participants to consider “How they know God is speaking?”

Share: In the student guide there are six (6) considerations to know it is God speaking; solicit students' thoughts.

Close – 5 minutes

Ask: Each participant to share one take away from the lesson.

Invite: One participant to close with prayer; the closing devotion may be used if this is student's preference.

Resources:

Puzzles: Fallen, criss cross, and hidden word puzzles

Videos: Casting Lots Today? - <https://youtu.be/ZXoQVNkoGWA>

Casting Lots - <https://youtu.be/vnidgj82wsU?t=46>

Angel Visits Zechariah - <https://youtu.be/FJapAoSzkBY>

Zechariah and Elizabeth's Story - <https://youtu.be/wzt5pygmJrc>
(end at 2:49)

Angels - <https://youtu.be/KsG6mabBBQE>

Review: YouTube video before class

Pinterest - <https://pin.it/79DsQZ3>

Greek Words Pronounced - <https://forvo.com/languages/el/>

Zechariah Speaks

Lesson 2

December 11, 2022

Lesson Scripture: Luke 1:57-80

Focus Scripture: Luke 1:57-66, 76-79

Key Verse: Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Luke 1:64

Vocabulary

- **Circumcise (peritemnō)** – The cutting off of the foreskin of the male member, symbolic of adherence to an agreement and hence identification with a certain group.
- **Sign (enneuê)** – A gesture to someone by means of part of

the body, especially by means of the head or hands, to motion, to nod, or to beckon.

- **Redeemed (poieo lytrois)** – To release or set free, with the implied analogy to the process of freeing a slave, to liberate, to deliver.
- **Salvation (soteria)** – The state of having been saved.
- **Covenant (diatheke)** – Promise in a solemn agreement; the verbal content of an agreement between two specifying reciprocal benefits and responsibilities.

Introduction

For the Teacher

Welcome, everyone, to today's lesson and share the unifying principle of today's lesson. The birth of a child is a transformative experience. ***How does the birth of a child bring hope to a community?*** With John's birth, God fulfills a promise to Zechariah who proclaims a larger promise to all the world. **Invite:** Participants to consider their name.

Lesson Goals: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Summarize the events that led up to the birth of John the Baptist.
2. Evaluate the naming of John the Baptist and its cultural significance.
3. Assess Zechariah's prophecy.

Teaching Strategies

Introduction – 10 minutes

Invite: Participants to share the story of their name. You can place them into small groups of two-three and allow them five minutes to share the story of their name. If participants don't know the story of their name, have them share a familiar story they know about something that was named, a city, a pet, or a historic area in their

community. After five minutes of discussion, return and **Ask:** Does anyone have a tradition regarding family names? *If no one has a tradition, share the tradition long ago in many families about how the first son of a father takes on their father's name.* **Ask:** Does anyone know of anyone whose name is Junior or the second? For example, John, Jr. or Malcolm, the second? **Introduce:** Today's lesson continues the story of Zechariah. Elizabeth has given birth, and it is now time to name the baby.

Bible Story – 10 minutes

Share: Today's lesson begins with Elizabeth and the newborn infant. It was the tradition that a child would not be named until after seven days. In accordance with Jewish practice, the circumcision takes place on the eighth day. For the commandment of practice, see Genesis 17:9-14; Leviticus 12:3. By fulfilling this commandment, Zechariah and Elizabeth demonstrate that they are exemplars of their faith. Circumcision was the sign of the covenant between God and Abraham. **Ask:** For volunteers to read the verses. **Alternative:** Have participants collaborate to create a comic strip to illustrate the narrative of John's naming ceremony. **Invite:** Participants to complete the activity sheet comparing Mary's and Zechariah's songs.

Life Application – 20 minutes

Invite: Participants to think about the challenges of believing something that is different from others. **Explain:** There are times when the traditional way we do things change. The angel told Zechariah the name of the newborn which was not in the tradition of the culture. **Ask:** What are some things today where there is conflict related to Christian's belief compared to non-Christians? (potential pro-life / pro-choice; gun rights; same-sex activity; unwed pregnancies; gender identity) This is *not a time to debate but an opportunity to share God's principles of love toward your neighbor.* (**Alternative:** Use the "people in box" video (4:24).) **Discuss:** "How can Christian's responses to individuals be seen as judgement and not love when addressing issues which the Christian faith does not support?" *Allow*

youth to discuss and speak their truth; be curious to their thoughts but refrain from “fixing it” and practice being present. If there are comments which concern you regarding their comments relating to their faith, jot it down, pray about it, and seek God for ways to address those concerns at a later date.

Summary – 10 minutes

Ask: Participants to share ways to tell others about John's birth and how his father shared with others that he would make a way for the Lord. Allow participants to brainstorm ways to share the good news. **Invite:** Participants to work in groups to create an elevator speech (a short message less than 200 words) to share with someone about today's lesson.

Close – 5 minutes

Ask: Each participant to share one take away from the lesson. **Invite:** one participant to close with prayer; the closing devotion may be used if participant desires.

Resources:

Puzzles: Fallen, criss cross, and hidden word puzzles

Videos: Labels - https://youtu.be/hNS_D-pw8y4

Naming John the Baptist - <https://youtu.be/YUVvTYLgoBM> (3:42)

Scripture of Luke - <https://youtu.be/DFaKM2USZRw> (3:40)

Summary of Zechariah's Experience - https://youtu.be/pczOHab_74M (1:58)

People in Boxes - <https://youtu.be/zRwt25M5nGw>

Create a Comix - <https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix/>

Review: Teamwork Can Make a Dreamwork

Pinterest - <https://pin.it/79DsQZ3>

Greek words pronounced - <https://forvo.com/languages/el/>

John the Baptist

Lesson 3**December 18, 2022****Lesson Scripture:** Luke 3:1-20; John 1**Focus Scripture:** Luke 3:2-6; 15-18**Key Verse:** John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." Luke 3:16**Vocabulary**

- **Repentance (metanoia)** – A change of mind which results in a change of life(style); to change one's way of life as the result of a complete change of thought and attitude and regard to sin and righteousness.
- **Winnowing (ptyon)** – A fork-like shovel for throwing grain in air and letting the wind separate the chaff.
- **Messiah (Christos)** – A title for the anointed one, God's special choice; proper name for Jesus of Nazareth.
- **Baptize** – To ceremonially cleanse, with the visible agent of water, to show purity and initiation into Christ through repentance.
- **Holy Spirit (pneuma)** – A title for the third person of the Trinity, literally "spirit," the unseen one; the invisibility of God; breath as having an independent existence.
- **Threshing Floor (halon)** – A surface of hard dirt or stone for beating or trampling grain heads.
- **Chaff (achyron)** – Grain husks; the husks of grain.

Introduction**For the Teacher**

Welcome everyone to today's lesson and share the unifying principle of today's lesson. People are looking for someone with power, authority, and compassion to lead them out from under the weight of oppression. **Where can such a leader be found?** John proclaims the good news of one more powerful than he who is com-

ing and will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Invite: Participants to think about a good leader.

Lesson Goals: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

1. Evaluate the role of John the Baptist.
2. Identify key themes in John’s message.
3. Develop a plan to follow the example of John the Baptist.

Teaching Strategies

Introduction

Welcome participants to class. **Ask:** Who are some great leaders? (Allow time for them to think and share the names of some leaders and listen to the names called.) **Discuss:** What makes these people “great leaders”? **Ask:** Can great leaders have some bad intentions? (Allow them to think and remind them that people follow leaders, and some leaders have bad intentions.) **Introduce:** Today, we are going to read the story of John the Baptist. He was born a few months before Jesus, and he led the way to the message of Jesus as the Messiah. **Ask:** What do you know about John the Baptist? Listen attentively as you will fill in the gaps based on what they know. *Allow participants to share their thoughts.*

Bible Story

Invite: Participants to read the printed scripture. **Discuss:** Which words stood out in the scripture? **Ask:** Participants to describe what they see in the scripture and have them describe the scene from the scripture. **Explain:** Luke writes the gospel. The story occurs during the time of Roman rule. During this time, Emperor Tiberius was the ruler (Luke 2:1-2). Luke set the stage for a message that Jesus did not come just for his own people, the Jews, but Jesus came for ALL nations, including the Gentiles. **Ask:** Why do you think John quoted the passage from Isaiah? Remind the participants that the Jews didn’t believe the Messiah was born or was there, so Luke is demonstrating the correlation from the scripture with what was occurring at that moment.

Life Application

Explain: John was preaching the *Good News*. Think about it; who walked around preaching about Jesus? **Ask:** Have you seen someone on the streets preaching about Jesus? What did you think when you heard the person preaching on the street? **Invite:** Participants to share their thoughts about people preaching on the streets. How effective do you think street evangelists are? Explain the answer. **Ask:** How do you share the news of Jesus with people you meet? Encourage participants to set a goal to share Jesus with others daily.

Summary

Ask: Participants to name ways they could share the *Good News* with others. Have them to image what it would look like if everyone was intentional to share the *Good News* daily in their communities. **Instruct:** Participants to use the hashtag #thresingfloor2022 to encourage their friends to share the message, "Jesus is the Good News." **Ask:** How many people can the class reach if everyone in class shares the message and hashtag? Write the number down. **Invite:** Participants to complete the *Activity Sheet* as this was the message of John.

Resources:

Puzzles: Fallen, criss cross, and hidden word puzzles

Videos: Methods of separating - <https://youtu.be/GKItOewzqTA>
Wheat Threshing and Winnowing - <https://youtu.be/KjLCqah-K2XY>

Humility - <https://youtu.be/j7EnXaBHjqM>

Review: Pinterest - <https://pin.it/79DsQZ3>

Greek words pronounced - <https://forvo.com/languages/el/>

The Teacher's Guide
Junior Lessons
Winter Quarter
December 2022 – February 2023
Prepared by Rev. Rachel Williams-Glenn

An Angel Visits Zechariah

Lesson 1

December 4, 2022

Lesson Scripture: Luke 1:5-23

Focus Scripture: Luke 1:8-20

Key Verse: The angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard." Luke 1:13a

Word Power!!!

- **Chosen by Lot** – The special method used to select the member of the priestly order that would represent that order in serving in the sanctuary.
- **Zechariah** – Means "Yahweh has remembered."
- **John** – Means "Yahweh has shown favor."
- **Spirit and Power of Elijah** – Description that suggests John will challenge the leadership and ordinary believers to turn to God.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Explore how God restores hope when doubt and fear threaten to keep us from claiming God's promises.
2. Show gratitude for God hearing us and acting to make things better for and through us.
3. Understand the significance of being chosen to prepare the way for Jesus.

Teaching Strategies

1. Share images of people who have been chosen for a once in a lifetime opportunity. For example, the case of Amanda Gorman, who was chosen as the first U.S. National Youth Poet Laureate. Even though she grew up with a speech disability, Amanda succeeded in overcoming this obstacle. Another example is Neil Armstrong, who was the first person to step on the moon. Armstrong was an overcomer in spite of being born with coronary artery disease.
2. Share songs about God desiring to have a relationship with people during the lesson. Listen to examples of the songs of Danny Gokay's "Wanted," Tasha Cobbs Leonard's "In Spite of Me," and Jekalyn Carr's "My Portion."
3. Remind students that this is the 2nd Sunday of Advent, and that it is a Sunday where we are reminded to keep our hope in God's promises alive.
4. Activity #1 – God's Really Serious About This answers: 1. Zechariah is chosen to represent his priestly order during their week of service. 3. The angel says Zechariah's prayers have been heard. 5. John will have the spirit and power of Elijah.

Resources: Pictures of Amanda Gorman, Neil Armstrong, and others; mobile device, speaker, and music App like Spotify, Amazon Music, Pandora, YouTube, etc.

A New Baby

Lesson 2

December 11, 2022

Lesson Scripture: Luke 1:57-80

Focus Scripture: Luke 1:57-68, 76, 80

Key Verse: "You, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways." Luke 1:76a

Word Power!!!

- **Eighth Day** – The day that boy babies were circumcised to show their commitment to God's covenant with Abraham. It was also when their name was officially announced within the community.
- **Prophecy** – This is a song/prayer of blessing that Zechariah gives to the people and his young son, John. It's often called the Benedictus.
- **Benediction** – A special prayer of blessing that clergy give at the close of a worship service or special event.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Discover how obeying God can help others experience the joy of getting closer to God.
2. Compare the events following John's birth to an infant baptism or dedication.
3. Understand how benedictions help communities put their faith in action.

Teaching Strategies

1. For the second part of the **Blessings on Blessings** activity, make sure to pause the music at different intervals. If someone speaks before the music stops or gives an answer out of order, assign them as a helper to another player.
2. Share benedictions found in *The AME Book of Worship* for special services or events. For example: Communion in the home, marriage or mortgage burning.
3. **Activity #1 – Blessings on Blessings** answers:

3	Zechariah's mouth opened and he began to praise God.
6	The child grew and became strong in the spirit
1	Elizabeth gave birth to a son
5	Zechariah told his child that he would prepare the way for the Lord
2	Elizabeth's neighbors rejoiced with her
4	Zechariah spoke a prophecy

Resources: Mobile device, speaker and music Apps like Spotify,

Amazon Music, Pandora, YouTube, Etc. and Anthony Brown and Group therAPy’s song “Blessings on Blessings”; *The AME Book of Worship*

John Prepares the People

Lesson 3

December 18, 2022

Lesson Scripture: Luke 3:1-18; John 1

Focus Scripture: John 1:6-8; Luke 3:15-18

Key Verse: There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. John 1:6

Word Power!!!

- **Testify** – To share the knowledge you have about someone or something.
- **Baptize with Water** – Special cleaning ceremony that helps prepare for service to and connection with God.
- **Baptize with Holy Spirit and Fire** – Gift that Jesus gives to his disciples, so they can live in right relationship with God and others.
- **Chaff** – The outer part the seed that’s left over when the seed is separated from the plant.
- **Paraments** – Cloths used to decorate altars and pulpits.

Lesson Goals: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Explore the way that John prepares the way for Jesus.
2. Appreciate the different roles John and Jesus play in connecting people to God.
3. Share ways students can point people to Jesus.

Teaching Strategies

1. For **Activity #2**, play the song “The Wind Beneath My Wings”

and have students identify careers/jobs that support the work of other careers/jobs. For instance, jobs may include paralegals and lawyers, dental hygienists and dentists, or stewardesses and pastors.

2. Have student create stress balls with flour after they use a sifter or strainer to remove the non-flour from a mixture of flour and rice or flour and cornmeal. Once the flour is separated out, place a funnel in a balloon and spoon the flour into the balloon. Tie the opening of the balloon and cut off the excess rubber. Take a second balloon and cut off the end. Then, place the first balloon inside the second balloon and tie a knot in the second balloon. Repeat the process with a third balloon. Then, close the opening of the balloon and use it as a stress ball.
3. **Activity # 1 – Who's the Guy?** answers:

	JB	JC
1. Is the light of the world.		x
2. Was the son of a priest.	x	
3. Gathers the wheat and burns the chaff.		x
4. Baptizes people with water.	x	
5. Baptizes with the Holy Spirit and fire.		x
6. Ministers near the Jordan River.	x	
7. Sent from God so people might believe through him.	x	

Resources: Mobile device, speaker and music App like Spotify, Amazon Music, Pandora, YouTube, Etc. and the song “Wind Beneath My Wings.” For Stress Ball: Flour, uncooked white rice or white cornmeal, flour sifter or strainer, balloons, spoon, and scissors.