



LESSON 2 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Prepares the Way for Jesus

SCRIPTURE: Luke 1

WORD OF WONDER: From Isaiah 9:6

During Advent and Christmas, I usually spend time thinking about what traditions will help my kids understand who Jesus is. Storybook Bibles. Family devotionals. Songs and carols. Wreaths and candles. What will point them to Jesus? If I'm honest, it all makes me a bit anxious. What if I mess it up or say the wrong thing? Sometimes teaching them about God's big story feels daunting.

Read Luke 1:5–25. The story of Elizabeth and Zechariah—and the promised birth of John the Baptist—shows how God was preparing the way for Jesus. He was getting the world ready. Perhaps God's preparations feel as finished to you as the expected conclusion of the Nativity story, but God is still working. He is still preparing people to meet Jesus. He works through all kinds of things to kindle and nurture a person's faith. He might even work through a dad who sometimes says the wrong thing or a kids' ministry volunteer who feels in over her head.

God invites us to be part of His big story as we follow Jesus day by day, year by year. What does God have in store for you this week? How is He preparing you to know Jesus more? And how might He work in you and through you to nurture another person's faith? God prepares the way for Jesus, from ancient days until kingdom come. God is at work. He hasn't stopped.

—Michael Rade

Care & Support Ministry Assistant; Itinerant Preacher

Contributor to Wonder Ink

LESSON 2 FOR LEADERS ELIZABETH AND ZECHARIAH

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Zechariah was a descendant of Aaron and a priest of the division of Abijah. Each division served at the temple for about two weeks every year, so Zechariah probably had another occupation while not serving. Zechariah's wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron, the first high priest and brother of Moses.

WHAT?

The angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah in the temple to tell him his wife Elizabeth would bear a son, despite her old age. They were to name him John. John would be filled with the Holy Spirit and prepare God's people for the coming Lord.

WHERE?

The angel appeared to Zechariah in God's temple in Jerusalem. He appeared on the right side of the altar of incense, which was located in the part of the temple called the holy place. Zechariah and Elizabeth lived somewhere in the hill country of Judea.

WHEN?

This story takes place in the time of Herod, king of Judea, close to the end of his rule in 4 BC. Elizabeth became pregnant about six months before the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to tell her she would give birth to Jesus.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Through the birth of John the Baptist, God was preparing the way for Jesus, the everlasting King. John spent his days spiritually preparing people for the appearance of Jesus, who then proclaimed the kingdom of God and defeated the powers of darkness.



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

LESSON 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Curiosity Activity: Charades

In God's big story today, we're going to learn about a man who could not talk for a while! People who can't talk have to communicate in other ways. One of the ways to do that is by acting out what they want to say. We're going to play a game where I will pretend to do something, and you can guess what I'm acting out!

Leader Tip: If time allows, you could have kids take turns acting out situations and letting the other kids guess as well.

Act out the following situations (or make up your own!):

- Eating an ice cream cone
- Reading a book
- Jumping rope
- Catching a fish using a fishing pole
- Riding a bike
- Brushing your teeth
- Talking on the phone
- Sleeping
- Walking a dog
- Taking care of a baby

You did a great job figuring out what I was trying to do even though I didn't use any words! Our story today has to do with the last thing that was acted out—a baby! We're going to hear how God worked through a man who couldn't talk for a while—and his family—to help prepare the way for Jesus.



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LESSON 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **God, thank You for showing us who You are through Your Word. May we have ears and eyes to hear and see the things You want to teach us through Your Spirit. May we see how You prepare the way for Jesus! In Jesus' name, Amen.**

God's Big Story

Pull out the Bible

Ask: What is this called? *The Bible*

Ask: Why is the Bible special? *Because it is God's word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.*

Tell the Bible Story

Big Picture Bible, page 172 – John's Birth Was Predicted
and
page 180 – John the Baptist Was Born

Word of Wonder

WORD OF WONDER

**A child will be born to us. A son will be given to us.
He will be the Prince of Peace.**

—from Isaiah 9:6

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **How did the prophet Isaiah prepare the way for Jesus to be born long ago? What did God promise through Isaiah's message?**
- **How has Jesus brought peace into your life?**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **What did the angel tell Zechariah to name the baby?** (*John*)
- **What happened to Zechariah when he didn't believe what the angel was saying?**
(*He couldn't talk.*)
- **Why was John born?** (*To prepare the way for Jesus*)
- **What did Zechariah do as soon as he could talk again?** (*He praised God.*)
- **How would you react if an angel appeared to you to tell you a special message from God?**
- **How can you help prepare the way for Jesus?**

Zechariah and Elizabeth had an important job. They were going to be parents of a special baby. God sent John to prepare the way for Jesus.



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LESSON 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Craft: Pipe Cleaner Christmas Tree

SUPPLIES: Tree template, pony beads, star sticker

Give each kid a tree template. Show them how to fold each side of the branches across the middle to make the tree branches. Then allow them to put a few beads on the tree as ornaments. Top with a star and add the twine to make an ornament.



LESSON 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Responding in Worship: Sign Language

One of the ways we worship is by using our voices to sing to God, but did you know you can worship God even if you can't talk? Allow the kids to respond.

Can you think of some ways we could worship God without using our voices? Allow the kids to respond. If no one suggests it, ask if anyone has ever heard of sign language. **Sign language is used by people who can't talk or who can't hear to communicate. Today we're going to use some sign language to worship God.**

Make It Inclusive!

If you have a child or adult in your ministry who is hearing-impaired, allow that person to share how he communicates. If the person knows sign language, invite him to teach signs to the kids.

Encourage kids to sit quietly and watch you closely. **The first thing we are going to learn to say is "I love you, Jesus," but remember, we can't use our voices.** Demonstrate the sign for "I love you" to the kids. **To sign "I love you," hold up your pinkie, index finger, and thumb. Keep your ring finger and middle finger down. Hold your hand out facing away from you and move it slightly back and forth.** Have the kids practice making the sign for "I love you."

The last part of our phrase is "Jesus." For "Jesus", you will take the middle finger from each hand touch the palm of the opposite hand and go back and forth. Demonstrate the sign for "Jesus" and have the kids mimic the motion.

Invite the kids to sign the whole sentence "I love You, Jesus" together. **We can worship Jesus by telling Him we love Him using sign language!**

We can sign "I love You, God" as well. To sign God, hold your hand up like you want someone to give you a high five. Turn it sideways so that your thumb touches your forehead and then move your hand down

