



LESSON 2 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Is God's Son

SCRIPTURE: Mark 1; Matthew 3

WORD OF WONDER: From Colossians 1:15

Take a moment to read Matthew 3 and Mark 1:1–12. Who do you identify with? The eager crowds? The suspicious religious gatekeepers? Or with John, who obeyed God's call to preach His word even when he didn't fully understand what was happening?

What John *did* understand is that he had a part to play in the work of God. He boldly shared the message he'd been given, but he was quick to get off the stage when Jesus showed up.

When Jesus arrived at the Jordan River, I imagine the crowd sensed something special was happening. And when Jesus was baptized, God, like any proud father, spoke words of identity and blessing over His Son. Only Jesus has the power to touch hearts and change lives. To rescue us from evil and darkness. Jesus truly is the Son of God, and that changes everything.

Take time this week to remember how Jesus has transformed (and is transforming) your life. How has He turned things upside down, made wrong things right, and brought the kingdom of God to you? Then as you hold the wonder of the moment when Jesus stepped into history and changed your eternity, ask God how you, like John the Baptist, can help prepare kids' hearts to encounter Jesus, God's Son, too.

—Lise Caldwell

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DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

John the Baptist was the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth. He was filled with the Holy Spirit before he was born. He was a prophet—like Elijah—who prepared people for the Messiah and God's kingdom. He was eventually imprisoned and executed by Herod Antipas.

WHAT?

John preached in the Judean desert and baptized at the Jordan River. Many people came to repent and be baptized, including Jesus Himself. When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit came down on Him and a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son."

WHERE?

The Judean desert was between Jerusalem and the Jordan River. John was baptizing "at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan" (John 1:28, NIV). This indicates the eastern bank of the river, slightly north of the northernmost tip of the Dead Sea.

WHEN?

Jesus was about 30 years old when He began His ministry (Luke 3:23). John baptized Jesus at the outset of this ministry, around AD 26–29. After Jesus' baptism, the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert, where He was tempted by the devil.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Old Testament prophets like Joel looked forward to a day when God would give the Spirit freely to all people (see Joel 2:28). John baptized with water but spoke of Jesus as the One who would baptize with the Holy Spirit. It is through Jesus that God's Spirit is poured out!