

Preparing a Path for the Promise

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December 4, 2011

Bible Background

Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was part of the levitical priesthood. When Gabriel appeared to him with a promise of a son, Zacharias was performing a one-time ritual of lighting the incense in the Temple. Incense symbolizes prayer, and so it is not inconceivable to realize that promises often come while in prayer. However, it was Zacharias's unbelief and reluctance to profess his promise that caused his temporary handicap of muteness.

Later, we see a different Zacharias—obviously now a believer—following Gabriel's instructions to the letter, literally. When the question over the child's name was disputed, Zacharias wrote it on a tablet and professed it to those all around, "His name is John!"

If there are promises that you are keeping in silence, be encouraged to profess them openly and let your open profession become open praise!

Teacher Insight

Primaries can be moved easily by the Spirit of God toward repentance. Today's lesson briefly touches on the plan of salvation in Do the Word. If the atmosphere of your class lends itself at this point to an altar call, forego any planned activities and encourage prayer. The ultimate objective is preparation of the student's soul for Jesus to come inside. There is no better way to prepare for Christ's coming than an outpouring of the Holy Ghost in your classroom!

Before the Lesson

- *Welcome:* Obtain extra large bag of dog food.
- *Bible Story:* Collect four kitchen stools. Chairs will work fine, but stools would elevate the participants for more impact. Make or collect the four headdresses needed: a priest's mitre (resource packet), a halo, a bandana, and a plastic or cardboard king's crown.
- *Life Application:* On cardstock, make copies of the Musher's Journal cover (one for each student). Copy and collate one set of journal pages for each student. (See page 10 for copying instructions.)



Welcome to the Word

Welcome

Introduce the theme. Let students explore the room. **This quarter our theme is the famous Iditarod race. How many of you have heard of the Iditarod? Can you tell the class about it?** Allow time for students to share what they know about the sled dog race. After students have discussed the race, fill in any details that may have been missed.

The first step in a 1000-mile journey of this magnitude requires much planning and preparation. Show the Musher's Supply List poster from the teacher's resource packet. **This poster lists the typical things a musher has to gather for the Iditarod race.**

Obtain the largest bag of dog food available to you. (Perhaps a pet owner in your church can help out with this.) Note the weight and use this as a visual to

Lesson Objective

To know that John prepared a way for Jesus.

Bible Point

Make room for Jesus!

Unit Bible Verses

"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet" (Matthew 1:21-22).







Scripture Text

Luke 1:1-25, 56-80

Key Words

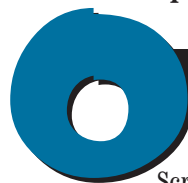
prepare, path, promise

Lesson at a Glance

	<p>Welcome Attention Getter</p>	<p>Musher's Supply List poster from resource packet, large bag of dog food, calculator</p>
	<p>Memory Work</p>	<p>white board or chalkboard</p>
	<p>Bible Story</p>	<p>Bible, four headdresses, scarf, four stools/chairs, incense sticks, matches, white board and marker</p>
	<p>Life Application Student Paper Snack Optional Activities</p>	<p>copy of Musher's Journal cover  on cardstock (one per child), pencils, sets of journal pages  (one per child) pencils honey-laced cereal, milk, plastic cups/spoons Option #1: hats from Bible story Option #2: key words from Bible story on slips of paper; chalkboard or white board, chalk or dry erase markers Option #3: no supplies needed Option #4: Special Memory Passage article from resource packet</p>

compare with the chart. Have a calculator available and calculate how many bags/pounds of each item would be necessary for the Iditarod. Discuss the importance of preparation and how the stage must be set in advance in order for a successful finish to be accomplished.

- **When you go on a long trip, what are some things you take for the journey?**
- **What do you have to do in order to get ready for a long trip?**
- **What things do your parents have to do before you can leave on a trip?**
- **How is preparing for a trip like or unlike preparing for heaven?**
- **What preparations do we need to make for a heavenly trip?**



Open the Word

Reminder: In an effort to help students retain life-applicable Scriptures in their long-term memory, the same two verses of Scripture are studied this unit. This means students will work on these two Scriptures for four weeks. This method will enable students to have a better understanding of the Scriptures, make a life connection with the verses, and commit them to memory.

Memory Work

“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet” (Matthew 1:21-22).

Write the memory verse on the white board or chalkboard. Inform students that this will be your focus verse for the entire unit instead of learning a new verse each week. For today's activity write the three focus phrases of the first verse in different colors. The second verse can be written in black.

We will start by focusing on three things this verse tells us. It says, “she shall,” “thou shalt,” and “he shall.” All the girls will read what “she shall” do. Girls respond by saying, “And she shall bring forth a son.”

I will read what “thou shalt” do. “Thou shalt call his name JESUS.” Now, the boys will read what “he shall” do. Boys respond with the phrase “for he shall save his people from their sins.”

These are the words that were spoken by the angel of the Lord to Joseph, Jesus’ earthly father. Let’s say them again in turn and pick up the speed so the sentence flows smoothly. Review the three “shalls” again, instructing each group to repeat in order what she/thou/he shall do.

Now that we have the first verse down, let’s say the second one together. This verse tells us why the angel spoke these words. “Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet.”

- Did you notice that everyone in these two Scriptures had a job to do?
- What was Mary’s job?
- What was Joseph’s job?
- What would Jesus do after Mary and Joseph finished their jobs?
- What part did the prophet play in preparing the world for Jesus’ coming?

R

Reveal the Word

Bible Story

Preparing a Path for the Promise

Before you begin the lesson, set four kitchen stools beside you. Place a hat on each stool in this order: priest’s mitre (from the resource packet), tinsel halo, bandana. Hide a crown under a scarf on the fourth chair.

Today’s lesson title is “Preparing a Path for the Promise.” I see three elements alike in this title. What do you see similar? Three “P’s”: *Preparing, Path, and Promise!*

Look at *preparing*. Our Mighty God in heaven was coming to live on earth! Do you think He would have had a lot of preparation to do?

Preparing started with a man named Zacharias and his wife, Elizabeth. Zacharias was a Temple worker. Put priest’s mitre on a boy and ask him to sit beside you on the first stool.

On this day, it was Zacharias’s job to light incense while people prayed. Light the incense and allow a few moments for the scent to begin wafting into the air. The smell of the incense began to fill the room as Zacharias performed his priestly duty.

As Zacharias shuffled back and forth praying in the Temple, the angel Gabriel appeared in the room. Zacharias probably jumped in fright. He had never seen an angel before. Put tinsel halo on a boy and ask him to sit on second stool.

Gabriel told Zacharias not to be afraid and said that God had heard his prayer. Then Gabriel made an astonishing announcement, “Elizabeth will soon have a baby boy! Name the baby John.” What wonderful news!

This announcement was astonishing because Zacharias was old and Elizabeth was never able to have children. Zacharias could not believe it! He even questioned Gabriel, “Do you expect me to believe this?” Gabriel assured him that it was true, but because he did not believe, Zacharias would become mute until John was born!

What does “mute” mean? Give time for students’ response. Mute means “unable to talk.” Zacharias had to learn to communicate without his voice for nine months! How would you communicate if you could not talk? Entertain comments from students for a few moments. Do you suppose the first thing Zacharias did was learn to say “John” in sign language? Show graphic from the teacher’s resource packet displaying hand signs to spell J-O-H-N. Practice signing for a few moments.

God prepared Zacharias and Elizabeth for the birth of John, whom we can call *the path*. John grew up and became a mighty preacher. Tie a ban-

Kids in Missions Take a few minutes of the first Sunday of each month in the quarter to devote to missions. Use the ideas in the *Kids in Missions* paper included in the teacher’s resource packet to focus on prayer and giving.



Teacher Tip

If you still have the baker’s hat from last quarter, use it to make the priest’s mitre. Staple the crown front on the band. Tape the purple head-band pieces together and staple them on from front to back. See picture on mitre card in resource packet.

dana “commando” style around another boy’s head and ask him to sit on the third stool. **John was a different sort of preacher. He lived in the desert and wore rough clothing made of camel hair tied on with leather straps.**

He also had a strange diet: locusts and wild honey. Yuk! You say? Well, we probably would not like to eat like John did, but he was not concerned about fancy eating or clothing. He had a message to deliver and a path to clear.

His fiery preaching attracted thousands into the desert. Just like a musher has to go ahead and prepare for his journey, John went ahead and prepared the way for Jesus.

As John preached he always told the crowds, “There is One coming after me that is mightier than I.” John told people about the Holy Ghost that Jesus would give. When John preached, peoples’ hearts were convicted of sin. They turned from their ungodly ways. Their hearts were getting ready for the coming of *the promise*, who was Jesus, God Himself! Uncover crown on fourth chair to represent Christ.

Jesus, *the promise*, was coming to earth to save His people from their sins and John’s message was *the path* down which He walked! Just like the people John preached to in the desert, we must also repent, clean our hearts, and make room for Jesus.

Do the Word

Life Application

Before class make a copy of the Musher’s Journal cover on cardstock for each student. Distribute a cover to each student along with pencils. **Put your name on the cover. This journal will be yours for the quarter. You will use one page a week as we finish each lesson.** Distribute the journal sets to the students. Provide colored pencils and give students a few minutes to color the covers. Direct their attention to the week one page.

Imagine that Jesus is coming to be with you today, for the whole day. Here are some questions to ask yourself. Write your answers on the note paper. You do not have to share your journal with anyone else and do not pressure your classmate to show you his.

- What are some things that you would do in preparation for Jesus’ stay?
- What would you have to buy?
- Is there anything that you would need to dispose of?
- Would you invite anyone to spend the day with you?
- What would you talk about?
- What would you like to ask Jesus most?
- Where would you go?

Allow a few minutes for students to finish writing. **Jesus is coming again, only this time He is going to take us to be with Him at His house in heaven! We must prepare our hearts for His coming this time, too! Sometimes our lives are so busy and full of other things that we need to make room for Jesus. The Bible says that He is coming for people who have repented of their sins, been baptized in His name, are filled with the Holy Ghost, and are living lives pleasing to Him.**

If you want to make room for Jesus, bow your head with me and let us pray. Ask Him to forgive you of all your sins and make your heart clean. Tell Jesus, **I will make room for You!** Lead students in prayer. Be sensitive to the moving of the Spirit and do not rush through this opportunity for your primaries to open their hearts to Jesus.

Collect the journals and store them for next week.

Student Paper

Distribute the student papers and pencils. **Open your student paper to the activity page where you see the four hats that were used in today’s lesson. Under each hat write the name of the person in the Bible story to**

which it relates. Record as much information about each person as you can recall.

Snack

Serve Honey-Nut Cheerios® or other honey-related cereal in plastic cups with milk and plastic spoons. Remind students that John feasted on honey in the desert.

Provide an alternate snack for students with honey or dairy allergies.

Wrap Up

Ask students what one thing they could do in the coming week to **make room for Jesus**.

A Look at Next Week

Ask students to bring a small picture of themselves to class next week; or if you have access to a digital camera and printer, photograph the students before they leave the classroom and print the pictures this week.

Be sure to save visuals or crafts from each lesson. These items will be used in lesson 13 for review.

Optional Activities

Use these optional activities for fillers if needed or in place of one of the suggested activities in the lesson.

Option #1: Have a pantomime (no words used—like Zacharias). Ask students to use the four hats to act out the lesson.

Option #2: Today's story of mute Zacharias naturally lends itself to Charades or Pictionary. Prepare slips of paper with key words written on them such as angel, desert, baby, preacher. For Charades, students act out the word with only motions while others guess.

If you play Pictionary, use a chalkboard or white board and markers. Divide large classes into smaller groups.

Option #3: Play I'm Going on a Trip. This memory game uses elements from the theme and memory verse. Students sit in a circle. The first student says, "Matthew One went on a trip and took 21 dog booties." The next student repeats what the first student says and then adds, "and 21 (names another object)." Consecutive students add their items while saying the previous items as well. "Matthew One" and "21" is used to reinforce the memory verse reference.

Option #4: Remind students to study the Unit I memory passage which is written on their student paper. For variety use the ideas from the Special Memory Passage article provided in the resource packet to help students learn the verses.

The special memory passage work (II Corinthians 12:7-11) is an option for teachers who know their students are capable and willing to learn more Scripture than the unit Bible verses. By spending a few minutes each week reviewing the special memory passage together, your students will easily hide these Scriptures in their heart. Special memory passages in the future will include the Ten Commandments, Beatitudes, and other familiar subjects.

Review Questions

1. What job was Zacharias performing in the Temple?
2. Who was the angel that appeared to Zacharias in the Temple?
3. How many children did Zacharias and Elizabeth have?
4. What happened to Zacharias because he did not believe the angel's message?
5. Where did John live and preach?
6. How can we prepare for Jesus' coming?

Note that lesson 13 is a review lesson. Special games and activities are offered to help your students review the past twelve lessons of the quarter in a fun way. Even students who have not been present all twelve Sundays will have an opportunity to contribute as well as hear about the lessons they missed. Save visuals and craft items from each lesson as they will be used in the review activities. Encourage students to save their student papers so they can review the lessons at home and be ready to play some fun games, win some prizes, and share what they have learned this quarter. This review Sunday would be a good time to invite parents to come in and see what their children have learned.