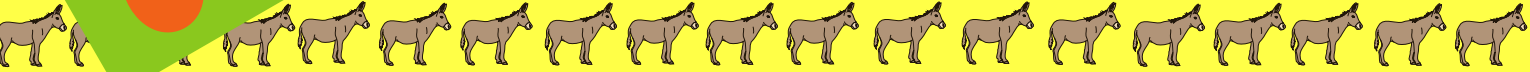


# His Name Is John

Matthew 3; Mark 1:1-12; Luke 1:5-25, 57-80; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 97-113



Jackie was excited! She had just received a message from her grandmother.

Jackie read the message again and again. "I'm coming to visit you next month. And I will have a surprise for you."

Such excitement! I must help Mother get things ready, Jackie thought.

Jackie ran to the kitchen. "Mother," she begged, "I want to help get ready for Grandma's visit. Please say I can help. Tell me what to do."

Another day, in another time, an angel delivered a message to an old man. A message that would help change the world.

Elizabeth and Zechariah had longed for a baby for many years. But when they grew old, they gave up hope.

Zechariah was one of many temple priests. They took turns serving for a week at a time in the temple at Jerusalem. Only once in his life was a priest likely to go into the Holy Place. It was an honor to burn incense on the golden altar there. Then he would pray for the forgiveness of sin for all the people. And he prayed earnestly for the

soon coming of the Messiah. Zechariah had looked forward to this day all his life. Now an old man, he was thrilled when his turn came.

Zechariah solemnly sprinkled the powdered incense on the glowing coals. A cloud of sweet-smelling smoke rose and filled the Holy Place.

Suddenly Zechariah sensed he was not alone. He opened his eyes, and there stood an angel at the right side of the altar! Zechariah trembled in fear!



# The Message

We prepare the way for Jesus when we serve others.

## Memory Verse

“You will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him”

(Luke 1:76, NIV).

“Don’t be afraid, Zechariah, God has heard your prayer,” the angel said. “Your wife Elizabeth will have a son. You will call him John. He will go before the Lord to prepare the way for Him.”

A baby boy at his old age? Zechariah doubted the angel’s words. So the angel gave him a sign. “Because you did not believe my words, you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens.” And then the angel vanished.

Zechariah opened his mouth to begin the prayer for the people, but nothing came out. He couldn’t say a word.

By now Zechariah had been in the Holy Place a long time. The people outside were beginning to wonder what had happened to him. When he finally came out, his face was strangely glowing. Quietly, Zechariah motioned to them that he had seen an angel.

Zechariah hurried home. He tried to tell Elizabeth what had happened, but he could not speak. He had to write and use hand signals. They would have a child, a boy to be named John. An angel had told him so!

Months later their baby was born. Elizabeth’s friends gathered around. “His name will be John,” Elizabeth announced.

“John? No one in your family is named John. Why not call him Zechariah?” the women urged.

Elizabeth turned to her husband. Zechariah shook his head. Quickly, he wrote so all could see, “His name is John.” Immediately the old priest’s voice returned. He spoke to the people and praised God for this blessing.

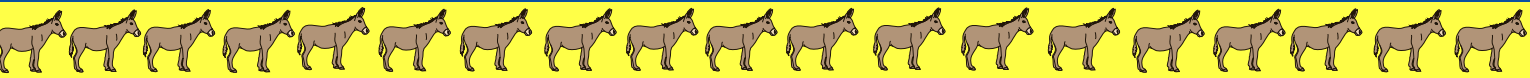
John grew up in the desert, where he



learned to serve. Often Zechariah told John about the angel at the altar. “God has a special work for you,” Zechariah said. “You will go before the Lord to prepare the way for Him.”

When John grew up, he invited people to repent of their sins and be baptized. He helped many people get ready to meet Jesus.

God has a special place in His plan for you too. We can prepare the way for Jesus by serving others and meeting their needs. Then they will be more willing to learn about Jesus.



## S A B B A T H

**DO** With your family, go for a nature walk and look for birds' nests, or look in a bird book. Talk about how birds prepare for their young. Find out how different birds make their nests.

**READ** Read your lesson together. Who would grow up and prepare the way for Jesus' coming?

**READ** Read Luke 1:76 together. Then ask God to help you prepare the way for someone to know Jesus.

## M O N D A Y

**SHARE** During worship, talk about how your family felt when they knew you would be born. Together, look at some of your baby pictures.

**READ** Read Luke 1:13 together. Talk about how Zechariah and Elizabeth must have felt when they learned that baby John would join their family.

**SING** Sing "In His Time" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 42).

**DO** Say your memory verse together. Thank God for your parents.

## T U E S D A Y

**READ** During family worship, read Luke 1:57-66. Ask your family to tell about the name they chose for you. Do you know what your name means? One meaning of John's name is "God's gracious gift." Thank God that He knows you by name.

**THINK** Luke 1:66 [NIV] says that "the Lord's hand was with him [John]." What do you think this means?

**SING** Make up a tune for your memory verse. Sing it with your family.

## S U N D A Y

**READ** Read Luke 1:5-25 aloud for family worship. For two minutes don't say anything out loud. You may move your lips, use hand signals, or write notes, but don't make a sound! Think of Zechariah. Was it a game for him? Thank God for the gift of speech.

**DO** Look in a mirror and say the memory verse out loud. Can you look at your mouth the whole time?

## W E D N E S D A Y

**READ** To begin worship, read Luke 3:2-6, 15, 16 together. What special work did John do when he grew up? Name three things. Why is he called John the Baptist? When will you be baptized?

**DO** Talk with your family about the lifework God might have for you. Draw a picture of yourself when you grow up.

**SING** Sing "Right Now" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 123) and pray together about your future.



# THURSDAY

# FRIDAY

**DO** Your memory verse is part of a song that Zechariah sang. Ask your family to help you say or sing the verse.

**PRAY** Ask God to show you how you can serve someone now. Pray for that person. Make a plan with your family and do it. Read Galatians 6:2 together.

Incense is a good-smelling perfume that was burned on a special altar in the temple. The smoke reminded the people of their prayers going to God.



**DO** Make believe that you are Zechariah or Elizabeth. You are keeping a diary of baby John's birth and childhood. In the diary write some of the main points of this week's lesson story. Illustrate with pictures. Write your memory verse on the cover. Use your diary to tell the story to your family during worship.

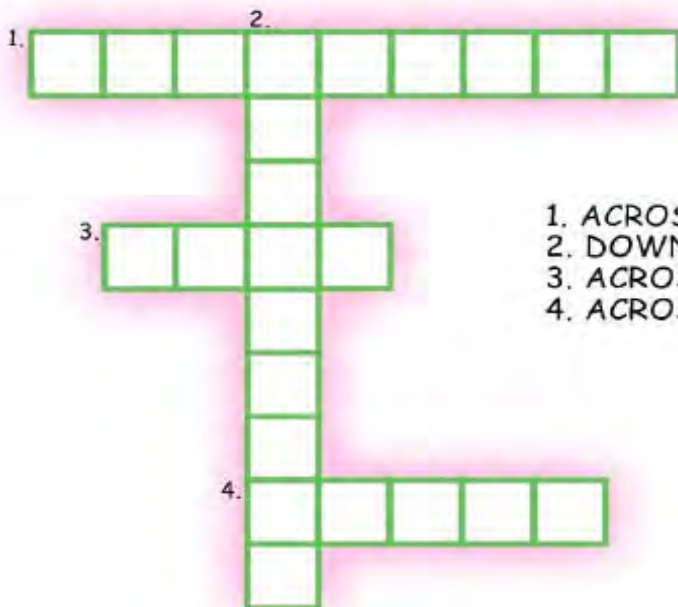
**READ** Read Jeremiah 1:7 together. Pray with your family about the people you will reach for Jesus.

**SING** Sing "We Are His Hands" (Sing for Joy, No. 129).

His Name  
Is John

## PUZZLE

Directions: Find the answers to the following in this week's lesson.



1. ACROSS - Name of woman.
2. DOWN - Name of priest and husband.
3. ACROSS - Name of baby.
4. ACROSS - Messenger of God.

# SERVICE



**Directions:** Jesus helped many people in different ways.  
Trace your hand in the center of each page. Color  
the pictures that show how you can help others.

