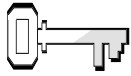


Look, He's Speechless!



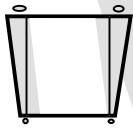
References

Luke 1:5-23, 57-80;
*The Desire of
Ages*, pp. 97-100



Memory Verse

"Praise be to the
Lord . . . because he
has come and has
redeemed his people"
(Luke 1:68, NIV).

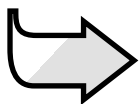


Objectives

The children will:
Know that telling
others about God's
goodness is worshiping Him.

Feel eager to praise God
publicly for His goodness.

Respond by praising God
for something specific
during the coming week.



The Message

I worship God when I
tell others about His
goodness and love.

Monthly Theme

Worshiping is sharing our love for Jesus.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

An angel comes to Zechariah while he serves as a priest in the temple and tells him that he and his wife, Elizabeth, will have a son who will prepare the way for Jesus. Because he doubts, Zechariah becomes mute. When the baby is born, God restores Zechariah's ability to speak when he insists on naming the baby John as the angel directed. Zechariah publicly sings a song of praise to God for the miracle of his son's birth.

This is a lesson about worship.

Sharing the wonderful things God does for us with others is an act of worship. God enjoys our public words of joy and praise for His many blessings.

Teacher Enrichment

"Zechariah, a Jewish priest, was told before anyone else that God was setting in motion his own visit to earth. . . . The news of the coming Savior was eclipsed by doubts about his own ability to father the child the angel promised him. . . . As a result, God prevented Zechariah from speaking until the promise became reality" (*Life Application Study Bible*, Notes and Bible Helps on Luke 1:18-20, 67-79 [NIV], [Wheaton, Ill., Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2005], p. 1178).

Room Decorations

Create a life-sized, paper nativity scene on the wall. (You might project Bible Study Guide illustrations onto the wall and trace them; also see Readiness A, Lesson 12.) Bulletin board ideas: JESUS, WE WORSHIP YOU caption with silhouettes of praying children, each with one of your children's names. JESUS, YOU ARE THE KING OF OUR HEARTS caption with large crown surrounded by hearts with your children's names, preceded by the words "Prince" or "Princess."

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>Speechless!</i> B. <i>Mute Praise</i> C. <i>God's Graffiti</i>	energetic male guest praise music (optional), paper, pencils, markers, crayons large paper wall banner, pencils, markers, crayons
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> container decorated with musical notes and the words "Praise Him!" none
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	"temple" corner (candlestick, curtain, etc.), male guest in priestly robe, slips of paper with written verses copy of the memory verse for each child, angel stick or shape (see p. 106) Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Praise God!</i>	none
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>"Good News" Paper</i>	newspaper, crayons, markers, colored paper in various shapes and sizes

***Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Encourage them to share any experiences from last week's lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.

1

Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- energetic male guest

A. Speechless!

Invite an energetic male guest to, without words, enthusiastically greet the children at the door. He can point to them or walk them to their seats, shaking hands, etc.

Debriefing

Ask: **How did you feel when (name of greeter) did not speak to you when you came in?** (It felt strange.) **Did you ask him any questions?** (yes, no) **Why do you think he didn't speak to you?** (not sure) **Our Bible story today is about a man who had some very special news, but who couldn't speak for a while. Let's find and read Luke 1:68, our memory verse.** Find and read aloud together. **This is what the man said when he finally could talk. And that reminds me of today's message:**



I WORSHIP GOD WHEN I TELL OTHERS ABOUT HIS GOODNESS AND LOVE.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- praise music (optional)
- paper
- pencils, markers, crayons

B. Mute Praise

Because the lesson will be about Zechariah's mute condition, give the children a chance to praise God in silence. You might play some praise music during this time. Say: **It's praise time, everyone! We are going to try something different this morning. We are going to praise God the way a man in today's lesson did—without talking or singing! What ways of silently praising God can you think of?** (smiling, praying, bowing before God, writing poems/songs, sending notes of encouragement, etc.) Give each child a sheet of paper and invite them to write a note or draw a picture that praises God.

Debriefing

Ask: **How did you praise God without using your voice?** Wait for responses. **A man in our Bible story for today couldn't talk for many months. He had to find other ways to worship God. Let's read our memory verse from Luke 1:68.** Read aloud. **This is what the man said when he finally could talk. Our message today is:**



I WORSHIP GOD WHEN I TELL OTHERS ABOUT HIS GOODNESS AND LOVE.

Say that with me.

C. God's Graffiti

Prepare in advance a large banner with the words of the memory verse written in large, festive letters. Allow the children to work on this banner for the next four Sabbaths during Readiness time. They can add color and design to the letters, words of praise to God, and/or pictures that relate to the Christmas story.

NOTE: This banner will be used again in Lesson 11.

You Need:

- large paper wall banner
- pencils, markers, crayons

Debriefing

Ask: **Did you enjoy writing your praise for God where all can see?** Wait for responses. **What pictures or words of praise did you add to the banner today?** Wait for responses. **This is one more way to praise God and tell others about His goodness and love. Let's read our memory verse, Luke 1:68.** Read aloud. **Remember today's message:**

I WORSHIP GOD WHEN I TELL OTHERS ABOUT HIS GOODNESS AND LOVE.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study and review the memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

- "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 1)
- "Clap Your Hands" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 4)
- "Psalm 66" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 11)
- "Go, Tell It on the Mountain" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 83)



Mission

Use a story from *Children's Mission*.



Offering

Say: **We worship and praise God when we tell others about His goodness and love. Giving our money is another way to praise Him.**

You Need:

- container decorated with musical notes and the words "Praise Him!"



Prayer

Take prayer requests first. Then do a "popcorn prayer" inviting the children to name things for which they want to praise God. They can say their word or phrase at any time, like popcorn popping. Close with a prayer about the special requests.

2

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- “temple” corner (candlestick, curtain, etc.)
- male guest
- priestly robe
- slips of paper with written verses

Experiencing the Story

In advance, divide Zechariah’s song (see end of Experiencing the Story) into portions for the children in your class to read. Write the portions on slips of paper, number them in order, and distribute them to the children who will read at the appropriate time. (Small group: Each child reads more than one paper.)

Set up a “temple” corner in one corner of the room.

Read or tell the story.

[Male guest dressed as a priest addresses children.] Hello, boys and girls. My name is Zechariah. I am a priest. I live in the hill country of Judea with my good wife, Elizabeth. We love God very much. For a long time we wanted our own child, but no child came. We became very old, so we gave up hope.

When it is my turn, I go to the temple to serve. *[Zechariah steps into the “temple” corner.]* I was in the temple burning incense and praying for the people of Israel. A lot of people were outside praying at the same time. Suddenly an angel stood at the right side of the incense altar.

At first I was confused and frightened, but the angel said, “Zechariah, don’t be afraid. Your prayer has been heard by God. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give birth to a son. You will name him John. Many people will be happy because of his birth.”

I asked the angel, “How can I know that what you say is true? I am an old man, and my wife is old, too.”

The angel answered, “God sent me to talk to you and to tell you this good news. You will lose your speech because

you doubted what I told you. But these things will really happen.”

The angel disappeared, and I finally went out to face the praying people. They were worried about me. When I couldn’t speak to them, they knew that I had probably seen an angel. *[Zechariah walks away from the temple corner.]* I finished my work at the temple and went home to try to tell Elizabeth all that happened. I couldn’t talk, so it wasn’t easy.

When the baby was born, Elizabeth and I named him John just as the angel had told us to. But our neighbors wanted us to name him Zechariah. My wife said, “No. He will be called John.” Because I couldn’t talk, I wrote that on a tablet and held it up for them to see. Suddenly I could speak again. I praised God so much that all the neighbors in all the surrounding mountains talked about it!

Help me now to share the song of praise that I sang about our special child and the special work God had for him. *[Have the children line up and read aloud in order what is written on their pieces of paper.]*

1. “Let us thank the Lord, the God of Israel.
2. God has come to help his people and has given them freedom.
3. God has given us a powerful Savior from the family of God’s servant David.
4. God said that he would do this. He said it through his holy prophets who lived long ago.
5. God will save us from our enemies and from the power of all those who hate us.
6. God said he would give mercy to our fathers. And he remembered his holy promise.
7. God promised Abraham, our father, that he would free us from the power of our enemies, so that we could serve him without fear.
8. We will be righteous and holy before

God as long as we live.

9. Now you, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High God.

10. You will go first before the Lord to prepare the people for his coming.

11. You will make his people know that they will be saved. They will be saved by having their sins forgiven.

12. With the loving mercy of our God, a new day from heaven will shine upon us.

13. God will help those who live in darkness, in the fear of death.

14. He will guide us into the path that goes toward peace.”

(Zechariah’s song is taken from Luke 1:68–79 in the *International Children’s Bible*.)

Debriefing

Ask: **How do you feel when others tell you about God’s goodness to them?** (I love and trust God even more.) **How do you feel when you share God’s goodness with others?** (I feel more thankful, and closer to God.) **You are worshipping God when you tell others about Him. Remember our message:**



I WORSHIP GOD WHEN I TELL OTHERS ABOUT HIS GOODNESS AND LOVE.

Memory Verse

Give each child a copy of the memory verse. Tell them to read it to you one at a time. Then, using an angel stick or shape, touch each child on the mouth and ask them to read it *with their mouth completely closed*. Then have them read it with their teeth together, but moving their lips.

You Need:

- copy of the memory verse for each child
- angel stick or shape (see p. 106)

Again, touch each child on the mouth with the angel stick or shape, and have them read the memory verse aloud.

Ask: **How hard was it to read something without opening your mouth?** (I can read it, but no one can understand me.) **Was it easier using your lips but not opening your teeth?** (Yes, it was easier to be understood.)

The words of our memory verse are part of the song of praise that Zechariah sang to the Lord after John was born. Let’s try to say our verse the way Zechariah might have sounded after not speaking for nine months. (Lead the children in saying the verse together enthusiastically. Repeat until the children are familiar with the text.)

Bible Study

Say: **Zechariah’s song, that you read during today’s story, is found in Luke 1:67–79. Find this song in your own Bible.** Allow time. Then ask the children the debriefing questions. Have them read the answers from the Bible.

You Need:

- Bibles

Debriefing

Say: **Zechariah’s song is divided into two parts. Verses 67–75 are about praising whom? (God) For what does he praise God?**

Verses 76–79 are about the work of whom? (John) What does he say about John?

We may not write a song, but how can we praise God? (sing a song, tell someone how much God loves us, etc.)

Remember . . .



I WORSHIP GOD WHEN I TELL OTHERS ABOUT HIS GOODNESS AND LOVE.

3

Applying the Lesson

Praise God!

Say: **Zechariah used a special song of praise to worship the Lord. Those were among the first words he said after not being able to talk for many months. They must have been very special words to him.**

Let's say the words again, but this time let's do it like this:

"Praise be to the Lord, the God of (the name of your Sabbath School or church) because He has (think of something to praise God for and say it here)."

Debriefing

Ask: **Wasn't it easy to praise God with others? (yes) Zechariah wanted everyone to know how much he loved God, and you are doing the same.**

Sometimes people forget about God and even say bad things about Him. How do you think He feels? (Sad, hurt—for He has feelings too.) What can we do? Let's remember our message:

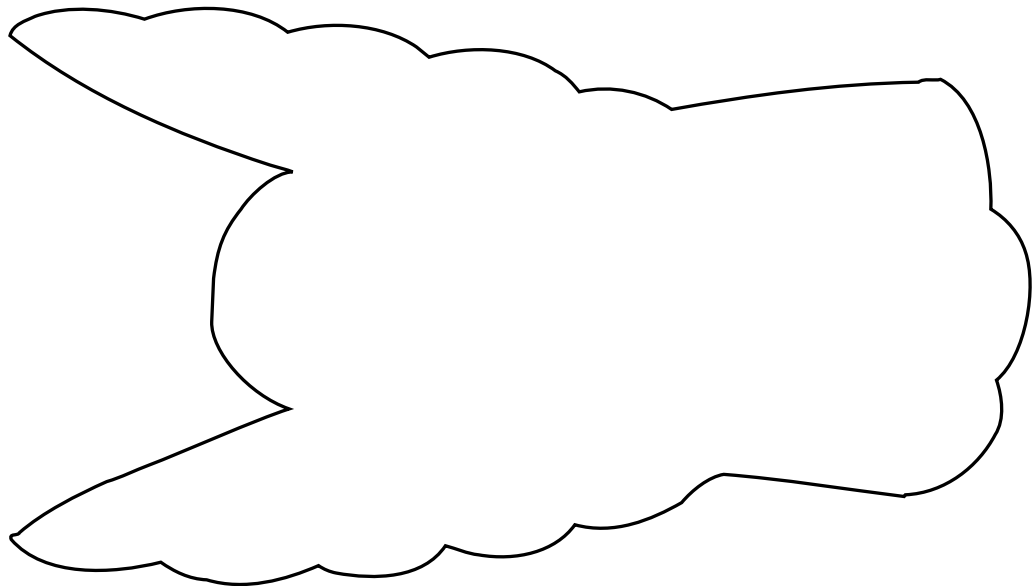


I WORSHIP GOD WHEN I TELL OTHERS ABOUT HIS GOODNESS AND LOVE.

Say that with me.

For Memory Verse activity on page 105.

To make an angel stick, copy and cut out the angel below and glue it to a tongue depressor or dowel.



4

Sharing the Lesson

“Good News” Paper

Say: **There are lots of ways to share God’s love with others. People who are not in our Sabbath School today have missed all the things we have done here, so let’s make a “Good News” paper to give to them. They did not hear the good news that we heard today. So we can make a paper to share our good news with them.**

Have the children write: “I love Jesus because _____” (fill in with words or pictures) on the colored paper shapes, and then glue them to the open newspaper.

Plan to display the paper in the foyer or on a bulletin board in the hallway of the church.

Debriefing

Making our “Good News” paper is another way to tell others about God’s goodness and love. Can you think of

other ways to live today’s message during the coming week? (Make a card for your neighbor that praises God and shows pictures of what He has done for you; visit a nursing home and sing praise songs; tell a friend who needs help that God can help them, and then pray with them; read psalms from your Bible to a sick person, etc.)

Let’s say our message again:



**I WORSHIP GOD WHEN I
TELL OTHERS ABOUT HIS
GOODNESS AND LOVE.**

Closing

Sing “God Is So Good” (*Sing for Joy*, No. 13), verses 1 and 2. Then add a new verse: “I’ll tell the world (3x) / He’s so good to me.”

Pray that each child will have the courage this week to worship God by telling others about His goodness and love.

You Need:

- newspaper
- crayons, markers
- colored paper in various shapes and sizes

STUDENT MATERIAL

Look, He's Speechless!

References

Luke 1:5–23, 57–80; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 97–100

Memory Verse

“Praise be to the Lord . . . because he has come and has redeemed his people” (Luke 1:68, NIV).

The Message

I worship God when I tell others about His goodness and love.

Have you ever seen your pastor try to preach without a voice? If he couldn't speak because of a cold, what would he probably do? Yes, he would ask someone else to preach. Our Bible story is about a temple priest who had a message from God. But he couldn't speak. He had lost his voice!

In the hill country of Judea lived a priest named Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth. They loved God very, very much. Their biggest wish was to have a child of their own. But they had never had any children. And now they were too old.

When it was his turn, Zechariah went to the temple to serve as priest for the day. He was in the temple burning incense and praying for the people of Israel. Many people were outside in the courtyard praying at the same time. Suddenly, an angel came and stood beside the incense altar!

At first Zechariah was confused and frightened. But the angel said, “Zechariah, don't be afraid. Your prayer has been heard by God. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give birth to a son. You will name him John. . . . He will help many people . . . return to the Lord.”

“How can I know that what you say is true? I am an old man, and my wife is old, too,” Zechariah questioned.

The angel answered, “God sent me to talk to you and to tell you this good news. . . . You will lose your speech because you did not believe what I told you. But these things will really happen.” Then the angel disappeared.

The people waiting in the courtyard worried about Zechariah. He had been inside

for a long time. Finally he went out to face the praying people. When he couldn't speak to them, they knew that He had had a vision from God.

Zechariah finished his work at the temple and went home. He tried to tell Elizabeth all that happened. But it wasn't easy, because he couldn't talk.

Several months later their baby was born. The neighbors rejoiced with them. Some thought the baby should be named Zechariah after his father. But Zechariah had a message for them. “His name is John,” Zechariah wrote so they could read it. Immediately, his voice returned and he praised God. The baby was named John just as the angel had said. And Zechariah praised God so much that all the neighbors talked about it!

This is the song of praise that Zechariah sang to tell his neighbors about this special child:

“Let us thank the Lord, the God of Israel.

God has come to help his people and has given them freedom.

God has given us a powerful Savior from the family of God's servant David.

God said that he would do this. He said it through his holy prophets who lived long ago.

God will save us from our enemies and from the power of all those who hate us.

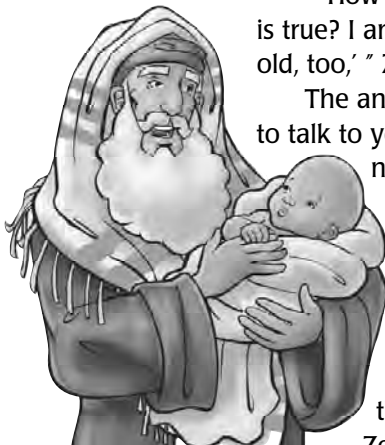
God said he would give mercy to our fathers. And he remembered his holy promise.

God promised Abraham, our father, that he would free us from the power of our enemies, so that we could serve him without fear.

We will be righteous and holy before God as long as we live.

Now you, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High God.

You will go first before the Lord to prepare the people for his coming.



You will make his people know that they will be saved. They will be saved by having their sins forgiven.

With the loving mercy of our God, a new day from heaven will shine upon us.

God will help those who live in darkness, in the fear of death.

He will guide us into the path that goes toward peace.’ ”

Zechariah shared his praise and his love for God with his neighbors. We, too, can tell others about God’s wonderful goodness and love. That is one way to worship Him.

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- Take a nature walk with your family. Listen for bird songs and enjoy their praise to God. Try to identify the birds you hear.
- Read your Bible lesson story together. Sing “Sing Praises to the Lord” (*Sing for Joy*, No. 2).
- Praise God for someone in your family. Tell Him what they mean to you. Tell them what you appreciate about them.
- Read and discuss Luke 1:68 with your family.

Sunday

- During family worship, read and discuss Luke 1:5–10. Ask a mother how old she was when her first child was born. About how old do you think Elizabeth was?
- Draw a large heart and write the memory verse on it. Around the edge of the heart write things for which you want to praise God. Say the memory verse together. Sing a praise song before prayer. Thank God for your family.

Monday

- Together with your family, read and discuss Luke 1:11–19. Who was Gabriel? (verse 19). Draw a picture of what you think Gabriel looked like. Read about two other people to whom Gabriel brought messages from God: Daniel 9:21, 22; Luke 1:26–28. Write their names. _____ and _____
- Does God still send messages to His people today? How do you know?
- Say your memory verse before prayer.

Tuesday

- Read Luke 1:20–25 for family worship. For two minutes don’t say anything out loud to your family. You may move your lips, use your hands, or write notes. But you must not make a

sound. What will your next words be when you speak again?

- Tell what you were thinking during the silent two minutes. Thank God for the gift of speech.
- Say your memory verse together before prayer.

Wednesday

- With your family read and discuss Luke 1:57–66. Apparently, Zechariah was also deaf. How do you know? (See verse 62.) Using hand signals, try to ask, “What is his name?” Write Zechariah’s answer (verse 63).
- When he could speak again, Zechariah’s first words were praises to God. Sing a praise song. Then say out loud two things for which you praise God. Thank God for the gift of hearing.
- Say your memory verse without help.

Thursday

- Read and discuss Luke 1:67–75 for family worship. Who helped Zechariah to praise God? (verse 67)
- Make some instruments from cups containing dry beans. Seal with plastic wrap. Also use spoons and pans, plastic bottles, etc. Make up a tune for your memory verse and sing it. Sing it again as you play your instruments. Thank God for music.

Friday

- Mime this week’s Bible story. Hold the baby “John” (a doll) as you and your family read Luke 1:76–80 out loud. What do these verses mean to you? What do you want to be when you grow up?
- Start (or continue) a “Blessing Book” for your family. Add pictures of what God has done for your family.
- Sing “Bless His Holy Name” (*Sing for Joy*, No. 9). Then thank God for His blessings.