

TEACH the Story



SESSION TITLE: John Pointed to Jesus

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 3; John 1; 3

STORY POINT: John told people to follow Jesus.

KEY PASSAGE: John 3:30

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why did Jesus become human? Jesus became human to rescue sinners.

Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at John 3 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • The Bible is the most important book there is because the Bible is God's Word. The Bible is true and tells about Jesus. The Bible story today is in John chapters 1 and 3 and also in the Book of Matthew.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "Jesus' Baptism" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

SAY • John's followers saw that some people were following Jesus instead of following John. John reminded his followers that he was a messenger who was sent to tell the people that the Messiah was coming. John knew that Jesus is God's Son and the Messiah. Now Jesus was here, and John's job was finished. Jesus was greater than John. **John told people to follow Jesus.**

Practice the key passage

Place the key passage marker at John 3:30. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Move around the group, touch each child lightly on the shoulder to say the next word of the verse. Increase your speed as the children become more familiar with the verse.

SAY • Our key passage is in today's Bible story. John said these words about Jesus. John's job was to tell people to get ready for Jesus. Jesus was greater than John, and John was happy to step aside for Jesus to begin His work.

Sing the key passage song, "He Must Increase," and the theme song, "Take It to the Lord."

- Bible
- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- "He Must Increase (John 3:30)" song
- "Take It to the Lord" song

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Our big picture question asks, *Why did Jesus become human? Jesus became human to rescue sinners.* Jesus came to earth from heaven. **John told people to follow Jesus.** Jesus was the one who could rescue them. Jesus was the One who could forgive their sin. Whoever believes in Jesus will live forever with God in heaven.

- Big Picture Question Poster



Missions moment

Display the Thiemann family photo and read the caption to preschoolers.

SAY • **John told people to follow Jesus.** Missionaries like this family tell people to follow Jesus too!

Close in prayer for the Thiemann family and their work through Missionary Aviation Fellowship in Africa.

- "Thiemann Family" printable

Pray and transition to experience the story

EXPERIENCE the Story



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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why did Jesus become human? Jesus became human to rescue sinners.

LOW PREP

• classroom objects

Compare objects

Look around the room and choose two items of different sizes, weights, or lengths. For younger preschoolers, make sure the items are extremely different. Ask the children which is longer or taller or heavier. Be prepared to use body language to give clues. Think of objects the children would be familiar with (watermelon, loaf of bread, beach ball, basketball) and ask questions comparing them also.

SAY • Look at these two blocks. Which one is longer?

Look at the chair and the table. Which one would be heavier? Think about a watermelon and a loaf of bread. Which one would be the heaviest? [*Continue with several more examples.*] John the Baptist told people to get ready for Jesus. John knew that Jesus was greater than John, and John was happy to step aside for Jesus to begin His work. **John told people to follow Jesus.**

LOW PREP

• Bible

Play a guessing game

Describe a child. Encourage children guess who you are describing. With a bigger group, you may also guide all the children who fit a description to stand and sit down when the description no longer describes them. (For example, all the children with brown hair can stand. Then those who

are not wearing green shoes must sit down.) Continue to describe the child until only one child is standing. Open the Bible and read Isaiah 40:30. Comment that the verse is in the Old Testament and is a prophecy that described John.

SAY • You guessed whom I was describing! Do you think the people who heard John preach in the wilderness knew that the prophet Isaiah had described John many years before he was born? This verse tells us that John the Baptist had a special job to tell people to get ready for Jesus. **John told people to follow Jesus.**

Dress up for a wedding

Provide fancy dress-up clothes and artificial flowers for preschoolers to play out being in or going to a wedding. Consider contacting leaders before the session to ask them to bring wedding photos from home to show preschoolers. You may use a smart device to look up wedding pictures online. Look at the pictures together and name the people (groom, bride, parents, bridesmaids, groomsmen). Ask who is most important.

SAY • At a wedding everyone who is there wants to see the groom and the bride. It is their special day! They are the most important. John had been telling the people to get ready for Jesus. Jesus was here, and John's job was finished. Jesus was greater than John, and John was happy to step aside for Jesus to begin His work. **John told people to follow Jesus.** John knew that Jesus had come to rescue sinners.

- dress-up clothes
- artificial flowers
- wedding photos (optional)
- smart device (optional)

Work puzzles and look at books

Gather puzzles featuring Jesus and illustrated Bibles or Bible

- puzzles featuring Jesus
- illustrated children's Bibles
- Bible storybooks
- Giant Timeline (optional)
- Small Group Timeline (optional)

- assorted travel-size toiletry items (toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, shampoo, body wash, and so forth)
- quart-size ziplock bags
- index cards
- crayons and markers

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment found in Teach the Story.

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Travel kits for missions

Gather an assortment of donated travel-size toiletry items. Invite kids to assemble travel kits by putting one of each kind of item into a quart-sized ziplock bag. Ask kids to include a short encouraging note or draw a picture on an index card. Put one decorated index card in each bag. Arrange a time to give these bags to members of your church who are going on short-term missions trips, or donate them to a church in your area that is leading a short-term trip.

SAY • Sometimes, missionaries will go for just a short trip, maybe a week or so. One way we can support them is to make some kits to make traveling long distances a bit easier. You don't have to travel on a mission trip to live on mission!

OPTION 2: Alphabet praises

Direct the kids to sit in a circle. Select a kid to start the game by saying a trait of Jesus or a reason why He deserves all glory. This word must start with the letter *A*. The kid to her right will say another trait or reason, starting with the letter *B* this time. Play continues in this way until a trait has been named for every letter of the alphabet. Be prepared with some ideas of words for trickier letters, such as *Q* or *X*, and consider allowing some flexible rules, such as using words that start with *Ex-* instead of *X*.

SAY • Jesus is the greatest of all. We love and praise Him because He alone is the perfect Messiah who died to save us from sin. **John the Baptist told people to follow Jesus.** We can tell others to follow Jesus as well!

**LOW
PREP**

Reflection and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper to each child. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure to send the sheets home with kids alongside the activity page so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

· pencils and crayons
· paper
· Bible Story Coloring
Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.

SAY • *Why did Jesus become human? Jesus became human to obey His Father's plan and rescue sinners.* John's job was to point people to Jesus. John the Baptist told people to get ready for Jesus, the promised Messiah.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Why did John say Jesus must increase and he (John) must decrease? *Prompt kids to recall that with Jesus on earth, John's mission was complete. Jesus was the One whom people had been waiting for—the promised Messiah who would save people from their sins! Jesus was greater than John, and John joyfully stepped aside as Jesus began His earthly ministry.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Luke 14:11.)

2. Who deserves fame and glory in our own lives—us or God? Why? *Help kids recognize that even when you work hard to accomplish something great, you can give God glory because He made you and gives you special talents and abilities. Prompt them to discuss ways they can make Jesus famous instead of trying to make a great name for themselves.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Matt. 5:16.)

3. How can we point others to Jesus? *Invite kids to discuss how we can tell people directly about Jesus, and we can also show kindness and have peace in a way that shows we trust Jesus with our lives and our future.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Pet. 3:15.)

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Missions travel kits

Bring an assortment of travel supplies and invite kids to assemble travel kits. Seal the supplies in plastic

- small travel items (toothbrushes, toothpaste, mouthwash, deodorant)
- ziplock bags
- index cards or construction paper
- crayons

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment from Teach the Story.

LOW PREP

- paper
- marker

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

sandwich bags. Ask kids to include a short note or draw a picture and put one in each bag.

SAY • We will make travel kits for members in our church who are going on mission trips. This is one way we can support their trip even if we can't go ourselves.

Pray for people in your church or others you know who are going on mission trips. Give the bags to your church staff or missions committee to be distributed.

OPTION 2: Mission complete

List on a piece of paper 5 to 10 tasks kids can complete in the classroom. Make two copies of the task list. Sample tasks:

- *Count how many steps it takes to walk from one side of the room to the other.*
- *Tell your leader your favorite movie.*
- *Sing the alphabet song.*
- *Do 20 jumping jacks.*
- *Recite the key passage, John 3:30.*
- *Answer the big picture question: **Why did Jesus become human?***
- *High-five three other people.*

Form two teams. Provide each team with a prepared task list. Signal teams to begin. Kids should work with their teams to complete the tasks. When a team finishes, its players should sit down and shout, "Mission complete!"

SAY • Finishing something you worked hard at feels great.

John the Baptist told people to follow Jesus. Now that Jesus was there, John's mission was complete. Jesus was greater than John, and John joyfully stepped aside as Jesus began His earthly ministry.

Because we know that Jesus is good, we can find

joy in pointing others to Jesus. We don't need fame or recognition for the things we accomplish. God gives us talents and abilities to point people to Him. We give glory to Jesus because He gave His life to rescue us.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, acknowledging that Jesus tells the truth about God and His kingdom. Thank God for the gift of salvation, which we can receive when we turn away from our sin and turn to Jesus.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "John or Jesus?" on the activity page. Kids should fill in the blanks with the correct name—*John* or *Jesus*.

• pencils
• Journal Page
• "John or Jesus?" activity page,
1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.