

LESSON 2

ELIZABETH AND ZECHARIAH

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Prepares the Way for Jesus

SCRIPTURE: [Luke 1](#)

GOD'S BIG STORY: After centuries of waiting for the King God had promised, Zechariah and Elizabeth have a son who is filled with God's Spirit from a young age and prepares the hearts of God's people for Jesus.

Free Play

Clean Up

Declaration

Worship

Snack

Prayer and Blessing

God's Big Story

Activity: Follow the Path

INVITATION

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

During Advent and Christmas, I usually spend time thinking about what traditions will help my kids understand who Jesus is. Storybook Bibles. Family devotionals. Songs and carols. Wreaths and candles. What will point them to Jesus? If I'm honest, it all makes me a bit anxious. What if I mess it up or say the wrong thing? Sometimes teaching them about God's big story feels daunting.

Read [Luke 1:5–25](#). The story of Elizabeth and Zechariah—and the promised birth of John the Baptist—shows how God was preparing the way for Jesus. He was getting the world ready. Perhaps God's preparations feel as finished to you as the expected conclusion of the Nativity story, but God is still working. He is still preparing people to meet Jesus. He works through all kinds of things to kindle and nurture a person's faith. He might even work through a dad who sometimes says the wrong thing or a kids' ministry volunteer who feels in over her head.

God invites us to be part of His big story as we follow Jesus day by day, year by year. What does God have in store for you this week? How is He preparing you to know Jesus more? And how might He work in you and through you to nurture another person's faith? God prepares the way for Jesus, from ancient days until kingdom come. God is at work. He hasn't stopped.

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Zechariah was a descendant of Aaron and a priest of the division of Abijah. Each division served at the temple for about two weeks every year, so Zechariah probably had another occupation while not serving. Zechariah's wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron, the first high priest and brother of Moses.

WHAT?

The angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah in the temple to tell him his wife Elizabeth would bear a son, despite her old age. They were to name him John. John would be filled with the Holy Spirit and prepare God's people for the coming Lord.

WHERE?

The angel appeared to Zechariah in God's temple in Jerusalem. He appeared on the right side of the altar of incense, which was located in the part of the temple called the holy place. Zechariah and Elizabeth lived somewhere in the hill country of Judea.

WHEN?

This story takes place in the time of Herod, king of Judea, close to the end of his rule in 4 BC. Elizabeth became pregnant about six months before the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to tell her she would give birth to Jesus.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Through the birth of John the Baptist, God was preparing the way for Jesus, the everlasting King. John spent his days spiritually preparing people for the appearance of Jesus, who then proclaimed the kingdom of God and defeated the powers of darkness.

Free Play

SUPPLIES: baby doll, baby blanket, baby bottle

As kids arrive...

Greet the kids warmly and welcome them to church.

Welcome! Today we're going to hear a story about a special baby being born who would prepare the way for Jesus. The baby in today's story is named John. How do people prepare for a baby? What kinds of things do they need? Allow the kids to respond.

Show kids the baby doll. Wrap the baby in the baby blanket and pass the doll around to each of the kids to hold and pretend to feed with a bottle.

Let's pretend to take care of this baby just like John's parents took care of him in our story today!

Our Wonder Truth today is **GOD PREPARES THE WAY FOR JESUS.**

Encourage the kids to do the following motions while you repeat the Wonder Truth. Older toddlers can say the words with you as they do the motions.

GOD—*Point up.*

PREPARES THE WAY—*Motion with palm up as if showing a path.*

FOR JESUS—*Make a "rocking baby" motion with arms.*

Clean Up

At the end of free play...

Play the Clean Up video to encourage kids to help clean up toys to prepare for worship, snack, and story time.

After working together to clean up, gather kids on sit spots to say the declaration together.

Declaring God's Wonder

Hello friends! Welcome to church today. I am so glad to be here with all of you. Stand up and repeat after me:

Thank You, God, that You made me! (*Kids repeat words and motions.*)

Make prayer hands, then point up to God and to yourself.

And I am Your kid! *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

Put your hands on your hips.

Jesus loves me so much; *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

His love for me is big. *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

The Holy Spirit leads me, *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

Bring your arms down from the sky, making a path in front of you.

And I can follow You. *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

March like you're following the leader.

My life can tell Your story, *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

I'm a wonder; this is true. *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

Put your hands up, shaking your fingers, celebrating ("praise hands").

Worship

SUPPLIES: Worship music videos

Today we're learning that God prepares the way for Jesus. Let's sing and dance as we thank God for sending Jesus.

Play songs and encourage the kids to sing and dance with you.

Snack

SUPPLIES: small paper cups, cheerios, pitcher of water

Gather kids around snack tables and serve cheerios and water. After praying together, while kids are busy eating, begin the Bible story.

Prayer and Blessing

Let's talk to God. When I say, "Thank you," repeat after me.

God, thank You (encourage kids to say, "Thank You") **for sending John to prepare the way for Jesus. Thank You** (encourage kids to say, "Thank You" again) **for sending Jesus to save us. Thank You** (encourage kids to say, "Thank You") **for loving us. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: Just as Elizabeth and Zechariah waited for a son, just as the world waited for Jesus, may you see God working around you as you wait and prepare this Christmas.

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible, Stick [Puppets](#)

Before kids arrive, print the [Puppets Sheets](#) and cut out each puppet. If you want the puppets to be more durable, you can print them onto cardstock. Tape a craft stick to the back of each picture to create puppets.

Long ago, God's people waited for Him to save them. God promised to send a king who would rescue them and be in charge forever. Two of those people were Zechariah and Elizabeth. Show the

kids the Zechariah and Elizabeth puppets. Choose two kids to hold each of the puppets. **They were married for a long time, but they didn't have any children.**

Zechariah was a priest, which is a man who worked at God's temple. The temple was like a church. One day, Zechariah was chosen to go into the temple to worship God. While he was inside, an angel named Gabriel showed up! Show the angel puppet and choose a kid to hold the angel puppet. **The angel told him not to be afraid and that his wife, Elizabeth, was going to have a baby. This news was wonderful! But it got even better.**



Gabriel told Zechariah that the baby, John, would have the Holy Spirit, or the presence of God, before he was even born. John was going to get everyone ready for Jesus to come! Zechariah couldn't believe what the angel said! And the angel made it so Zechariah could not speak. Not even a word!

Elizabeth did have the baby boy. Everyone was so happy. They named him John. Show the John puppet and choose a kid to hold it. **Then Zechariah could speak again.**

The Holy Spirit helped Zechariah speak God's message. He told about his son, John, who was going to help people get ready for Jesus. John was going to tell them that their sins—the wrong things people do—can be forgiven. Zechariah told about a king who would be in charge forever and bring light to all people. God sent John to get people ready and help prepare the way for Jesus. God prepares the way for Jesus.

Activity: Follow the Path

SUPPLIES: disposable cups (at least 10)

Set several disposable cups out to create a path across the room.

I created a path for you to follow! Let's see if you can find your way across the room by following the path I prepared for you! In our story today, John prepared the way for people to know Jesus.

Encourage the kids to follow you as you walk along the path. You can move the cups to vary the path and create different routes in the room. Encourage the kids to follow you along the path each time.