

"Preparing for Jesus" Sunday School Lesson from Mark 1:1-8

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This free Bible lesson is based on Mark 1:1-8 where John the Baptist prepares the people for Jesus. It is designed for children's church or Sunday School. Please modify as best fits your ministry.

If your church follows the Revised Common Lectionary, this teaching plan would correspond to Year B – 2nd Sunday in Advent, Gospel Reading – Mark 1:1-8.

Opening Activity – Preparing for Jesus – Preparing for Christmas

Supplies – paper, drawing utensils

Give each child a piece of paper, and invite them to draw a picture of something their family has done to get ready for Christmas. (decorating the tree, wrapping gifts, setting up the nativity, etc.) Then share with the class to see how they are the same or different.

Lesson – Preparing for Jesus

I absolutely LOVE Christmas time! Do you? I thought you might!

Actually, when I think about it, I can't think of a single thing about Christmas that I don't LOVE.

I love watching Christmas movies. I love singing Christmas Carols. I love making gingerbread houses. I love wearing warm red and green PJs. I love decorating the tree. I love going to parties. I love hanging my stocking. I love seeing all of my family. I love wearing big hats and gloves. I love sitting by the fire. I love making a Christmas list. I love going shopping. I love wrapping presents. I love getting presents. I love opening presents. I'm sure I left something out, but I covered the important stuff right? Fun, presents, presents, presents, and presents. That's what Christmas is all about!

Ooh, but you know, I did leave out something. A big something. Actually the biggest something of all. I mean, what are we even celebrating?!

Christmas isn't about presents. It's about Jesus!

How could I have forgotten about Jesus! It's his birth that we are celebrating. It's even named after Him. CHRISTmas.

When I think about it that way, it makes we wonder if I missed an important part of preparing for Christmas. I mean, does Jesus care if the tree has twinkly lights on it? Or is there is a wreath on the door? Or gifts under the tree? These aren't bad things, but we can't let them take the place of the most important thing. Jesus' birthday!

Did you know that Jesus' birth was so big and important that there was actually a messenger born just before him to get everyone ready? John was a cousin of Jesus, and he spent his whole life telling people about Jesus and getting them ready to Him.

Instead of gingerbread and sugar cookies, John ate locusts and honey.

Instead of singing Jingle Bells, John recited scriptures.

Instead of wearing a fluffy scarf, John wore a ragged animal skin.

And instead of offering gifts of toys, John offered the gift of preparing for Jesus.

John helped them prepare for Jesus in their heart. He told them how Jesus came to save them. He told them how to repent, and become brand new and clean in Jesus. And He even baptized them in the river, showing them washed of the old and beginning brand new.

As it gets closer to Christmas, it gets easier and easier to forget what Christmas is really about. But we just have to remember that it is Jesus we are celebrating, and we can get ready to celebrate by preparing our hearts for.

Activity A – Preparing for Jesus – Bible Verse Challenge

Supplies – Bibles

Verse – Mark 1:7-8

Pass out Bibles to students. Bibles should be closed and sitting on the table face up in front of each child. When you say go, have the kids look up this week's Bible verse. As each child finds the verse, have them stick one finger on the verse and quietly raise their other hand. The first one to find the verse gets to read it to the rest of the class.

Help younger kids and new kids find the verse by following these steps.

1. Look in the Table of Contents for the book you are looking for. Make an effort to show them if it is found in the Old Testament or New Testament to help them in the future. Then open the Bible to the page number listed in the Table of Contents.
2. Show them the large numbers in the text, known as the chapters. Flip through pages until you find the large chapter number you are looking for.
3. Then scan through the text with them pointing out the smaller verse numbers until the correct number is found.

Activity B – Preparing for Jesus – A Gift for Jesus

Supplies – construction paper, scissors, glue, markers, ribbon, embellishments

1. Give each child a half sheet of red or pink paper, and a full sheet of another color of their choice.
2. Fold the full sheet in half (short ends together).
3. Use the half sheet of pink or red paper to cut out a heart and glue it on the inside.
4. Write on the heart "my gift to Jesus is my heart".
5. Glue a length of ribbon around the middle of the outside of the folded paper, leaving the loose ends above the opening and tie in a bow.
6. Draw or attach a gift tag. "To: Jesus From: *name*"
7. Decorate.

Closing Prayer – Preparing for Jesus

Ask for a volunteer to pray for the class before leaving, and encourage them to ask God to remind them that Jesus is why we celebrate.

“Good News! Prepare the Way”

Craft Ideas on Mark 1:1-8 about the John the Baptist Pointing to Jesus



These crafts focus on John the Baptist and his role as the one who made way for the Messiah. John had an important message to share with God’s people, and he boldly proclaimed the coming of Christ. As we discuss this with children and remind them that they, too, can tell others about Jesus, these crafts celebrate John and his job. A noisemaker honors the joy of getting attention and making announcements. A map reminds us that we can point the way to Christ, just as John did. And just for fun, “bugs on a plate” are a reminder of John the Baptist’s unique dietary habits!

Verses or Captions to Consider... (Main Text: Mark 1:1-8)

As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,

*“Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way,*

³ the voice of one crying in the wilderness:

*‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,’”*

-Mark 1:1-3

“And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.” -Mark 1:7

I may not eat bugs and honey...but I can still point to Jesus like John the Baptist!

Message Map...Point the Way to Christ!

Prepare the way for Jesus!

Good News...Jesus is coming!



Craft one: “Announcement Noisemaker”

You will need:

- Paper towel or toilet paper tube
- Markers, stickers, or other decorating materials
- Glue and/or Tape
- Scissors
- Bells
- Pipe cleaners or string



Procedure:

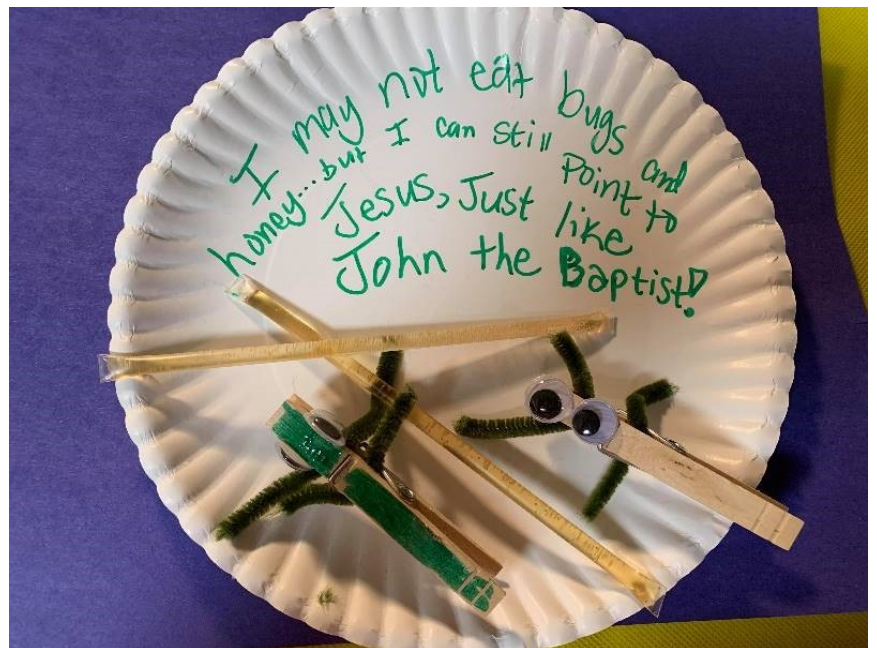
1. Decorate the tube with stickers, markers, and captions.
2. Attach streamers, ribbons, and jingle bells for flair and noise effect.
3. Secure additional decorations with tape or glue as desired. You can shake the “announcer” or use it as a megaphone by speaking into it. Have fun!



Craft Two: “Bugs on a Plate”

You will need:

- Clothespins
- Paper (construction)
- Paper Plates
- Markers or crayons
- Glue and/or tape
- Honey (optional)
- Scissors
- Pipe cleaners
- Google eyes



Procedure:

1. Decorate your clothespins as “bugs”, adding pipe cleaner legs and google eyes, if desired.
2. Decorate the paper and/or paper plate with captions, verses, and additional pictures.
3. Attach the “locusts” and honey (if using) to the plate. Secure with tape or glue if you wish to hang the plate as a decoration. Alternatively, use the plate as a holding area, and use the locusts for fun gags with friends!



Craft Three: "Point the Way Map"

You will need:

- Paper or Styrofoam cup
- Paper (construction)
- Scissors
- Glue or tape
- Decorative supplies (stickers, glitter, etc.)
- Crayons or markers



Procedure:

1. Design a place for the map to represent: it could be a treasure hunt of sorts, or a picture of a familiar place like a house or town.
2. Decorate the map with pictures and extra decorations.
3. If desired, make the map look old and authentic by tearing tiny slits and crumpling the paper.
4. Decorate the cup and use it to hold the map safely.





This lesson was prepared by [Kristin Schmidt](#), who serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO.

She has shared her teaching gifts through *Ministry-To-Children* since 2014 and now serves as our lead curriculum writer.

Kristin has a professional background in elementary and pre-school education. A graduate of Biola University, she holds a Master of Education and will receive the Master of Theology degree from Concordia University, Irvine, California, in May 2020. Kristin grew up in southern California and lived the past 10 years in Georgia. She is a long-distance runner and voracious reader.

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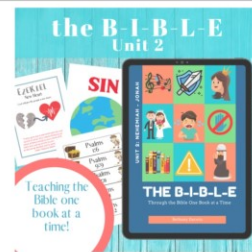
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