



High School Teacher

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Jesus Our Lord— Building a Strong Relationship with Christ

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1 Preparation for Christ

Scripture: Matthew 3:1–12

Aim: By the end of the lesson the student will understand and discuss the ministry of John the Baptist.

NOTE: This is not a traditional help for the teacher; instead, it is a day-by-day guide to aid the teacher in lesson preparation. Use of this guide will assure that the teacher is prepared and adequate lesson material is available for the class time allotted.

The help for the teacher will be integrated with the student lesson material. The preparation time suggested is ten to fifteen minutes each day for five days. Each section of the lesson material is covered in one of the preparation days. This will allow the teacher, whether a professional or a novice, to be prepared to present each lesson with minimum effort.

The key to success is the regular and consistent use of the material. It is vital that the teacher devote a small amount of time each day to lesson preparation.



Daily Plan

Introducing the Lesson

1. Read the Scripture passage for this week's lesson. Read the **Text Commentary** section of the teacher's help. Make a note of any parts you don't understand or of passages that might provoke questions from the class.

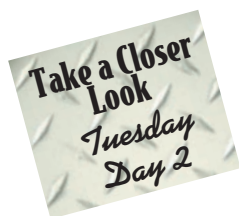
2. Read the “Start Here” section of the student quarterly. Consider the following questions to use in the introduction of your lesson.

- A. When did the public ministry of Jesus begin?
- B. When John the Baptist began preaching, how many years had Israel been without a prophet?

3. Look up any articles you can find on the life and ministry of John the Baptist. Visit your church library or ask your pastor for help.

4. Write at least two good declarative sentences you can use to begin your lesson.

5. Pray and ask the Lord to guide you in your further preparation.



Explaining the Scriptures

1. Read again the Bible passages used for the text of the lesson. Refer to the notes you made on Day 1 concerning any part of the text that is difficult to understand.

2. Read the “Take a Closer Look” section of the student quarterly. Consider the following questions for use in presentation of the lesson material.

- A. Which Old Testament prophet had foretold the work of John the Baptist?
- B. Generally, what was this prophecy and how did John fulfill it?
- C. How had God prepared the whole world for the coming of Jesus?
- D. Why does God often have a difficult time getting the attention of our hearts?
- E. What is significant about John’s being a preacher and not a politician?
- F. Was John preaching reformation? How are reformation and repentance different?
- G. Why did John refuse to baptize the Sadducees and Pharisees?
- H. Why was John called John the Baptist? What is baptism?
 - I. How did the region of Judea react to John’s preaching?
 - J. What was the ultimate fruition of John’s ministry?

3. Use any reference materials you have available to answer any questions you may have discovered from your reading of the text verses.
4. Pray about what you have learned and about your further preparation for this lesson.



Applying the Material to the Lives of the Students

1. Once more read the Bible passages used as the text of the lesson.
2. Read the “Perspectives” section of the student quarterly. Consider the following questions for class discussion.
 - A. How are the things you do for the Lord different from things others do?
 - B. Is the service of one person more important to God than the service of others?
 - C. How should believers measure success or failure in the work of God?
 - D. What did Jesus say about John the Baptist?
3. Write down a specific lesson you have learned from your study that you want to be certain to share with your class.
4. Pray about what you have learned and about your further preparation to teach.



Making Positive Changes in the Lives of My Students

1. Read again the Bible passages used as the lesson text.
2. Read the “Building Blocks” section of the student quarterly. Choose some of the following questions to challenge your class members to make changes in their lives based on their understanding of the Bible.
 - A. How do we make it difficult for God to work in our lives?

- B. What is the key to making a straight path for the Lord into our hearts?
- C. What outward ceremony is an evidence of an inner change?
- D. What should we do after we are baptized?

3. At this point be sure to have answers to all the questions suggested here and in the lesson material. If you have any other matters that you want to discuss with your class, note them now so you can research them before class time.

4. Pray about the lesson material asking God to lead you in your further preparation.



Taking the Lesson Material into Our Future

1. Read once more the Bible passages used as the lesson text. Remember the best way to learn the Bible is to study the Bible.
2. Read the “Springboard” section of the student quarterly.
3. Are there students in your class who have personal spiritual decisions to make? Don’t be confrontational, but present an opportunity for open and frank discussion of spiritual problems.
4. Present the plan of salvation. Those who are lost need to hear it, and those who are saved need to be reminded of it.
5. Present God’s plan of service. Show how John had a window of opportunity to do his work. Show your class that our time on earth is limited. We must serve the Lord while we have the opportunity to do so.
6. Make your own brief outline about how you intend to use your class time.
7. Gather any materials you will need for the class and organize them as you intend to use them.
8. Read the Scriptures for next week’s lesson.
9. Pray again. Ask God to guide you and prepare your heart to teach His Word.

Text Commentary

The text verses revolve around three key elements in the ministry of John the Baptist. These were not the only things John did. We find him speaking out on immorality in the king's palace and generally doing the work of a prophet. These verses center on his preparation for the coming ministry of Jesus. John said of himself in John 3:30, "He must increase, but I must decrease." John recognized that his ministry was to prepare the way for Jesus and to introduce Jesus to the world. The other things that he did were important, but this was his primary duty. We must realize there are good things that we can do in our lives, but we must choose the best, and the best is to fulfill the purpose for which God has put us on earth. This purpose is succinctly stated in Ephesians 2:10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Whatever else we do, we must walk in the path God has set before us.

John did this by preaching the message God had given to him. Scholars suggest that John spent many years living with the Essenes, a group of Jews who valued the Scriptures and the practices of the Old Testament. Their community lived in the Judean desert, and John began his ministry from this region.

John's message was simple. He preached repentance from sins and the coming kingdom of Heaven. The terms *kingdom of Heaven* and *kingdom of God* mean the same thing in the New Testament. Both refer to a realm and area where the will of God is done. A part of the Model Prayer that Jesus gave in Matthew 6:10 is, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." In the kingdom of Heaven the will of God is done immediately and without question. To be a part of the kingdom of Heaven, an individual must first repent of his sins and place his personal faith in Jesus. John was not announcing a new plan of salvation; however, he was announcing a new way in which God would deal with men. The ministry of John the Baptist was the beginning of the New Testament, or New Covenant, that would govern what we call the church age. The Old Testament would be fulfilled in the life, ministry and death of Christ. The Law would be fulfilled. Paul said in Colossians 2:14, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." It was the message of the kingdom that was new, and men came to John for the opportunity to be a part of this new work that God was beginning.

Generally, John was well received. Many from Judea and the other provinces of Israel went out to hear him, and many did repent of their sins and submit to baptism, but the crowd also brought out the insincere

Pharisees and Sadducees. These leaders were not serious about repentance; in fact, they did not think that they needed to repent, and John refused to baptize them. He recognized them for the unregenerate creatures that they were. They thought that, because they were the children of Abraham, they possessed some virtue that made repentance unnecessary. As John forcefully pointed out, this was not so. God is no respecter of persons. These men were not saved because of the religion of their parents. Neither were others condemned because of their ancestral standing. Each individual had to repent and turn in faith to Jesus. Then and only then was baptism a consideration.

Even in this denunciation, John acknowledged Jesus and the power Jesus would exercise when His public ministry began. Whatever any skeptic may think about Christianity, the world has literally never been the same since Jesus came into it.

The third part of the text verses concerns the baptism of Jesus. This was the moment when John announced to the world who Jesus was and what Jesus would do. John 1:29 declares, “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” When Jesus came, He asked John for baptism. John did not want to baptize Jesus; instead, he wanted Jesus to baptize him. Jesus refused because for baptism to paint the proper picture, Jesus had to be baptized by John. John baptized Jesus. Jesus’ baptism presented the proper picture and motive for baptism to all those who have been saved.

Jesus came up from the waters of baptism (Matt. 3:16). Baptism is immersion in water. Nothing else is baptism as the New Testament uses the word. You can be sprinkled or someone can pour water over you, but those are not baptism. The word *baptize* means “to dip or to immerse.” When the baptism of Jesus was completed, God showed His approval by sending the Holy Spirit to anoint Jesus in the sight of all who were present. Thus, God gave approval from Heaven on the message that John had preached and on the ministry that John had completed. Jesus had been introduced. The path had been made straight, and now the spotlight would shift from John the Baptist to Jesus.

No one who saw this scene could deny what had happened. There was a voice from Heaven that declared, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17).

Answer Key

Answers given in this section apply to questions in the *High School Journal*.

Start Here

1. Nearly five hundred years
2. Jesus was approximately thirty years old.
3. John the Baptist

Take a Closer Look

Matthew 3:1-4, “In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. And the same John had his raiment of camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.”

Perspectives

1. Something—God
2. Planted—watered
3. The perspective of the world
4. All of the saved—serve Him in the ways He has chosen for us

Building Blocks

Various answers. These can be discussed in class.

Springboard

1. No
2. Various answers
3. Various answers
4. Various answers

