**June 6th, 2021: Pre-k thru 2nd Grade sunday school
SPECIAL PEOPLE OF THE BIBLE (NT) lesson 1: John the baptist**

***Children will learn how John the Baptist was very special to God because he prepared the people for Jesus.***

**AS KIDS ARRIVE: JOHN THE BAPTIST COLORING PAGE (Materials: printed coloring page, crayons or markers)**

***Bible coloring page illustrating John baptizing Jesus in the Jordan River.***

**WORSHIP TIME & BIBLE VERSE**

**"He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth" Luke 1:14 NIV**
Explain to the children that John was a special person and the people were happy when he was born, just like the children in your class are special, and you are happy they were born.

**BIBLE STORY:** Gather the children around you in preparation for story time. After the introduction, read the story about John the Baptist right from the Bible. If possible, use a Children's Bible so it will be easier for the kids to understand.

**Introduction:** Everyone has a special talent, something you are good at doing. We all have something important to do for God. He has given us all special gifts to do His Will. Today's story is about John the Baptist. His special gift was to tell people that Jesus was coming. He worked so hard telling the people about Jesus, that he didn't care what he had to eat. So he ate whatever he could find. He ate locusts and honey.

**Read Matthew 3:1-6 (John the Baptist)**

**Discussion Questions:**
1. What did John the Baptist eat for food? *(Locusts and honey.)*
2. What did John the Baptist come to do? *(Tell people that Jesus was coming.)*
3. Did many people go out to see John? *(Yes.)*
4. If you were living back then, how far would you walk to see John the Baptist?
5. What did the people do when they saw John the Baptist? *(They confessed their sins.)*
6. Why was John the Baptist special to God? *(He worked hard telling people about Jesus.)*

**FUN TIME: GO TO THE JORDAN RIVER (Materials: masking tape or blue crape paper; optional: a few towels)**

***A singing, jumping, lively journey to the Jordan River to find John the Baptist.***

**WHAT YOU WILL DO:** Take masking tape or crape paper and make two parallel lines about twelve feet long and two feet apart. The space between the lines will represent the Jordan River. Have all the children stand on one side of the river. You will all sing, "Let's Go to the Jordan River" shown below, and then all jump across (without running) to the other side of the river. Anyone who cannot jump clearly across is considered in the river. Tell them, "You found the river, come out and dry off." Then give them a towel to pretend to dry off and have them return to their seat. Next, move one line about a foot further away from the other line. Sing and jump again. Repeat this making the river wider and wider until all the children cannot jump across.

**Song:**

Let's go to the Jordan River,
Let's go to the Jordan River,
Let's go to the Jordan River,
To look for John the Baptist.

Jump!

**WHAT YOU WILL SAY:** Many people came to the Jordan River to look for John the Baptist, but when they heard what he had to say, they did not try to jump away. Instead, they confessed their sins and were baptized right there in the Jordan River. This is how John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus.

One day a very special person came to the river to see John. Can anyone guess who that was? Right, it was Jesus. When John saw Jesus, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" Then he baptized Jesus in the Jordan River. As soon as Jesus came back up from under the water, a dove came down from the sky and landed on Him. Then God said, "This is my Son, whom I love, with Him I am well pleased." *Matthew 3:17*

 **ALTERNATE FUN TIME: EAT A LOCUST SNACK ACTIVITY (Materials: round or oblong crackers, stick pretzels, chocolate chips or M&Ms, peanut butter) *An ugly but tasty snack activity to remember John the Baptist.***

\* Make sure no one is allergic to peanuts. If so you can substitute cake icing.

**WHAT YOU WILL DO:** Help the kids spread peanut butter on one cracker. Then have them add pretzel sticks so they stick out the sides resembling legs. Then place another cracker on top. Use more peanut butter and chocolate chips to make eyes. Then enjoy. If time permits, each child can make several locusts to eat and take home. Save for snack time.

**WHAT YOU WILL SAY:** John the Baptist was really a hard worker. His job was to tell the people that Jesus was coming soon and they should stop doing bad things. He was so caught up in his job, that he ate whatever he could find in the wilderness. He couldn't go to the store and buy food, or spend time fishing. So he ate bugs. Locusts to be exact. And wild honey. The honey part sounds pretty good right? But bugs? Let's see if we can make a snack that looks like a locust, but will be tasty to eat.

**PRAYER/SNACK:** For today's snack the children can eat some of the locust cookies they created. If you did not do the snack activity, you can serve raisins and apple juice to compare to bugs and honey. As you eat, ask the kids to share some of the food they would not want to eat and why.

**CLOSING ACTIVITY:** Have one child pretend to be John the Baptist. Have the other children come up to him or her one by one as John the Baptist tells them, "Jesus is the Lord, and He loves you!" After everyone has been told, have another child be John the Baptist for a while to share the good news.

**What We Learned:** Today, your child learned about Jesus’ cousin, John the Baptist. John the Baptist was a very special man with a very important job. His job was to tell many people about a special person who was coming, and what they needed to do to get ready for his arrival. John was talking about Jesus. Also, your child learned that God gives everyone special jobs in life and special gifts and talents to do these jobs. He gave John the gift of speaking about Jesus. (Scripture used: Matthew 3:1-6)

**Words to Remember:** (Bible versions used are selected to help young children learn and understand the meaning of scripture.) "He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth." Luke 1:14 NIV Practice this verse several times with your child during the week. This will not only help your child to remember the verse, but also it will help to reinforce what he or she learned during class.

**Suggested Parent/Child Activity:** Talk to your child about the special birth of Jesus, and how for very many years people heard about a man who would come to save them. God chose John the Baptist to continue sharing that message, and he did it well. He convinced many people of God’s love and helped them see that God has a plan for all of us, but the biggest plan is that we all know how much Jesus loves us. When we know this about Jesus, we can be like John, and share this Good News with others.

**Daily Prayer:** Dear Lord, thank You for sending Your Son Jesus to come to this earth to save us from our sins. Thank You for John the Baptist's brave life as he was sharing Jesus’ love with all of us. Help us be brave like John and tell others about God and His special Son Jesus. Amen.