

At the Jordan River



Big Idea: Jesus is my God who forgives me when I say I'm sorry.

● Memory Verse

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"
(Matthew 3:2).

Word of the Week

"Sorry" - To be sorry is to feel bad about doing something wrong, and to wish you hadn't done it. To say "I'm sorry" is to apologize for doing wrong. God asks us to be sorry for doing wrong and to ask Him for forgiveness.

This week's lesson

is based on **Luke 3:1-22;**
John 1:4-34; Matthew 3;
Mark 1:1-11; and *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 109-113.

Sunday

Baby John

Zacharias smiled with pure joy. God had done the impossible! He had given this old priest and his old wife, Elizabeth, a baby.

He asked one of his friends to quickly pass him something to write on. He hadn't been able to talk since the angel had visited him. The angel had promised this miracle baby. But Zacharias had doubted him. He had been silent ever since!

"His name is John," Zacharias wrote (Luke 1:63).

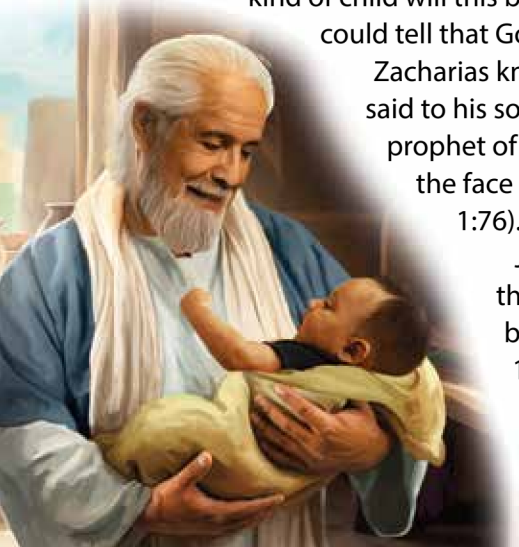
John. Baby John. Just as the angel had instructed. Suddenly Zacharias could speak again! It was another miracle!

Their neighbors were amazed. They told their friends about baby John. And they told the story of the miracle child to their friends. Soon all the people in the towns around them were talking about baby John. "What kind of child will this be?" they wondered (Luke 1:66). They could tell that God was with him.

Zacharias knew! The angel had told him. He said to his son, "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways" (Luke 1:76).

John would help everyone know that they could be saved. "They will be saved by having their sins forgiven" (Luke 1:77, ICB).

What happened to baby John?
Read **Luke 1:80**.



I Wonder

- » Would you like to have visited this miracle baby? What might you have said to this little family?
- » How would John "prepare" people to meet Jesus?
- » How can you prepare your heart for Jesus?

● Prayer Idea

Ask Jesus to forgive you and make your heart ready for Him.

● Do

Spend 10 minutes not speaking. You'll have to find creative ways to tell people what you need instead. What did you most want to do when the time was up?

Monday

The Preacher

The dusty road was packed with excited travelers. The priests in long robes and important Jewish teachers came first. Tax collectors hurried along behind them. Fishermen and farmers came next, laughing as they walked. And behind them, families crowded the road—from old grandfather to new baby brother. Everyone was on their way to see the new preacher.

The Bible talks about a voice calling out loudly in the desert, “Prepare the way of the Lord” (Isaiah 40:3). And that’s just where all the people were going—the desert!

John was now a special messenger for God. He was called John the Baptist.

The people all rushed to the desert to hear him speak. What a surprise they got! He didn’t look or act like anyone they had ever seen before.

What did John wear and eat? Read **Matthew 3:4**.

John was different from other preachers, and his message was too. God wanted it that way. It was time for a big change!

The people didn’t need to change their shoes. They didn’t need to change their head scarves. John said, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” (Matthew 3:2).

Jesus wants to make a big change in your heart too! Why not come to Him today and ask, “Create in me a clean heart, O God” (Psalm 51:10)?

I Wonder

- » What would you have said when you heard that John the Baptist was preaching at the river?
- » What would you have said when you heard his words from God?

Prayer Idea

Dear Jesus, please “create in me a clean heart, O God” (Psalm 51:10). Amen.

Do

Use your strong voice to share Jesus’ love with someone today. You might tell your friend, teacher, neighbor, or someone at the store: “Jesus loves you.”

Memory Verse





Tuesday

Be Sorry

John the Baptist's voice boomed loud and strong across the desert. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Matthew 3:2).

Everyone in the big crowd by the Jordan River listened quietly. People had traveled from all over the country to see and hear what John the Baptist had to say.

Repent? The kids in the crowd didn't know what that word meant. Their mothers told them quietly that it meant to be sorry. God wants us to be sorry for our sins and tell Him so.

The clever teachers and important Pharisees looked at their feet. Did they need to be sorry?

The rich rulers took a big, deep breath. Did they need to be sorry?

The mothers, fathers, builders, shopkeepers, and farmers all stopped and thought too. Did they need to be sorry?

Who does the Bible say have sinned and need God's forgiveness?

Read **Romans 3:23**.

Yes, we have all done wrong. But God's love and forgiveness are for everyone!

As John spoke, the Holy Spirit began to do something deep inside the people's hearts. They realized how sinful they had been. Right there, in the desert, they asked God to forgive them.

"Lord, you are kind and forgiving. You have great love for those who call to you" (Psalm 86:5, ICB).

I Wonder

- » What might you say to Jesus, right now?
- » What does the Bible tell you that Jesus will say back to you?

Prayer Idea

Say "I'm sorry" to Jesus. Tell Him how sad you feel for something you did wrong today and ask Him to forgive you.

Do

Help your family with the washing of clothes or dishes. Watch how messy things are when they go into the water. Our hearts are like that, messy with sin. When we are sorry and tell Jesus so, He forgives us and makes our hearts sparkly and clean.

Memory Verse

Wednesday

He's Coming!

The people by the Jordan River felt so happy. They were sorry for their sins, and God had forgiven them! John baptized them in the river to show everyone that God had cleansed their hearts and made them new.

But not everyone was happy. The important Jewish rulers in Jerusalem wanted to know what was going on out there in the desert. They sent priests to ask John the Baptist, "Who are you? . . . What do you say about yourself?" (John 1:22).

John told them firmly, "I am not the Christ." But John told them that the Savior would be coming soon! "I am not good enough to untie the strings of his sandals" (John 1:20, 27, ICB).

The Savior was coming soon! John's words quickly spread all through the land. His message spread to the poor people living in the hills, and the fishermen by distant seas.

It even made it to the ears of a humble carpenter in Nazareth. When Jesus heard what John the Baptist had been saying, He put down His tools right away. He gave His mother a big goodbye hug and left Nazareth.

Where was Jesus going? Read **Matthew 3:13**.

The people by the Jordan didn't know it yet, but Jesus was on His way. The carpenter from Nazareth would soon start a new job. It would be a job that God had planned for Jesus to do a long, long time ago. Jesus wasn't just a man from Nazareth; Jesus was God's Son. And Jesus was coming soon!

I Wonder

» What would Jesus' new job from God be?

● Prayer Idea

Thank Jesus, our Savior, that He is coming back soon!

● Do

Sing a song about Jesus coming back soon, such as "Soon and Very Soon."

● Mission Challenge

Create items (a craft or thank-you notes) for a joint care package or outreach project with the Primary Sabbath School. Bring them next Sabbath (to give at a suitable time).

● Memory Verse





Thursday

Jesus at the Jordan

People smiled and talked excitedly by the river. They had said they were sorry for their sins, and God had forgiven them. With clean hearts and happy faces they were baptized.

Arriving at the river, Jesus passed the happy crowds and went straight toward John the Baptist. As soon as John saw Jesus, he realized that Jesus was different from all the other people. Everything about Jesus was pure and good and holy.

Jesus asked John to baptize Him, just as he was baptizing the people. Jesus didn't need to be sorry and ask for forgiveness. His heart was already completely clean. But Jesus wanted to be our example. He wanted to teach us about God's forgiveness and power to make our hearts clean.

John realized that Jesus was the promised Savior, because after Jesus was baptized, something amazing happened. A very bright light poured down from heaven, from God, straight onto Jesus. This was God's chosen Son!

While the light shone, the Holy Spirit also came down and rested on Jesus. What did the Holy Spirit look like? Read **Matthew 3:16**.

Then God's voice spoke from the sky, saying, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11).

God is very pleased when we are sorry and ask for His forgiveness. He loves you and promises to wash you clean.

I Wonder

» If you were at Jesus' baptism and saw the bright light and the dove and you heard God's voice, what would you have done?

Prayer Idea

Thank Jesus for lighting up our world with His goodness and love.

Do

Have an adult help you look up some pictures of different doves online. Look for the All-White Barbary Dove (or Ring-Necked Doves). You can also look for an Emerald Dove, White-Faced Cuckoo-Dove, Rose-Crowned Fruit Dove, and Turtledove. How special that the Holy Spirit came as a beautiful dove.

Memory Verse



Friday

Nishan and the Mango

Nishan bit his lip and tried not to go red in the face. He felt all mixed up and messy on the inside.

Mother sighed deeply. "I just can't understand it," she said. "There was a big, ripe, juicy mango right here this morning. But now it's gone. Are you sure you don't know anything about it, Nishan?"

He shook his head and quickly looked at the ground. "Can I go out and play now?" he asked quickly. Mother nodded slowly. She looked sad.

Nishan kicked the dirt. He thought about the mango he had taken. It had looked so sweet and good. But now he felt terrible. He had lied to Mother. She had been going to use the mango to make a special treat for Auntie. Nishan thought of his funny, favorite aunt and began to cry.

"Nishan?" Mother said, coming up behind him. "Is there anything bothering you?"

"I'm sorry," Nishan sobbed. "I took the mango and lied about it."

Mother gave him a hug. "I'm sad you would do that, but I forgive you," she said. "Let's stop now and tell Jesus you're sorry too."

"God loves to forgive us," added Mother. "He says, 'I am the One who forgives all your sins. . . . I will not remember your sins'" (Isaiah 43:25, ICB). Isn't that good news?

Nishan nodded. He didn't want to feel all messy on the inside. He wanted Jesus to make him feel clean and new. He dried his eyes and prayed, "Dear Jesus, I'm sorry I did wrong. I hurt Mother and Auntie. Please forgive me. Amen." He opened his eyes and smiled.

Parent Faith Talk

Share a story from when you were young when you did the wrong thing and asked for God's forgiveness. Describe the peace that only God gives when we come to Him.

I Wonder

- » When we do something wrong, whom should we say we're sorry to?
- » Does God keep a list of your wrongs after you've said you're sorry? What does today's verse say He does with them?

Prayer Idea

Thank Jesus that He loves to forgive us and take away our sins forever.

Memory Verse

Family Activity

Memory Box

Think about God's forgiveness and baptism. Find something for the memory box that reminds you that God will clean away all your sins if you ask.

For You, Parents

"When the Christian takes his baptismal vow, divine help is pledged to him. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit stand ready to work in his behalf. God places at his command the resources of heaven, that he may be an overcomer. His own power is small; but God is omnipotent, and God is his helper" (Ellen G. White in *Review and Herald*, Feb. 18, 1904).

Sabbath

Rock Hunt

Challenge:

Go for a Sabbath afternoon walk and collect some rocks.

Look for:

- **Surprising shapes.** Can you find one that's shaped like something else, such as a heart?
- **Cool colors.** Look closely to find rocks that are slightly different colors or have different colors going through them.
- **Textured rocks.** Look for smooth, scratchy, bumpy, or jagged rocks.



Bring them home and wash them clean in a big tub of water. Put one or two favorites in your Sabbath memory box.

No matter how messy we may be with sin, Jesus can make us clean. His love and forgiveness can make us brand-new!

