

Happy New Year! Small Groups!

date : January 13, 2021

Silence

take some time to sit in silence together - Say the words together as a group slowly - listen to each one as you say it! You can have the Guide say a line and the Group repeat it.

"Be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know that I am

Be still and know

Be still

Be"



Opening Ritual and Prayer -

Begin by lighting the candle and inviting every to say, "We begin in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.



Use the Prayer
to the side!

Share Blessings & Bruises
with your Small Group!

Guides, pick one or all questions to answer...

1. Share with your Small Group your favorite and least favorite part of Christmas.
2. What was a gift you received that you love?
3. How are you doing personally? Thumbs up, thumbs down, or thumbs to the side?



PRACTICE: "Tell me more!!!"



GameTime



Quarantine Would You Rather

- Would you rather run out of TP or have your internet go out?
- Would you rather run out of bread or run out of milk?
- Would you rather be quarantined with hot weather or cold weather?
- Your car just ran out of gas, and you now magically live next to a exotic farm. Would you rather your only mode of transportation be a zebra or a giraffe?
- A tragic event falls upon your utensil drawer. Would you rather only be able to use a fork (no spoon) or only be able to use a spoon (no fork)?
- You bought a big box of mixed chip bags. Some of the bags are your favorite kind of chips, some of the bags are your least favorite. Would you rather eat your favorites first and save the others for later, or eat the others first and save your favorite for later?
- Would you rather have one shirt or one pair of pants?
- Would you rather have no music or no TV?
- Would you rather be quarantined with your own family or a friends family
- If you could only have 1 appliance in your kitchen, would you pick your stove or your dishwasher
- Would you rather live without your "heat" or without your air conditioning?

BACKGROUND

John the Baptist Apart from Jesus Christ, John the Baptist is probably the most theologically significant figure in the Gospels. As was the case with Jesus, his birth was meticulously recorded ([Luke 1:5-25](#)). His entrance into the world was marked by angelic proclamation and divine intervention ([Luke 1:57-80](#)).

According to the New Testament, John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth were relatives. Some scholars maintain that John lived his formative years in obscurity in the desert ([Luke 1:80](#)), and belonged to the Essenes, a semi-ascetic (characterized by or suggesting the practice of severe self-discipline and abstention from all forms of indulgence, typically for religious reasons) Judaic sect who expected a messiah and who practiced ritual baptism.

During the Jordan wilderness period of John the Baptist's ministry, John was openly proclaiming that he was just a messenger and that the coming Messiah was greater than he ([John 1:23-28](#)). Then when Jesus came down to the Jordan River to be baptized, John immediately proclaimed that Jesus was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He also recognized Jesus as the Son of God ([John 1:29-34](#)).

John was the voice crying in the wilderness preparing the way for the coming Messiah ([Isa 40:3](#); [Matt 3:3](#); [Mark 1:2-3](#); [Luke 3:3-6](#)). His life's purpose was to point to the Messiah! John's mother was Elizabeth a cousin to Mary—Jesus' mother. It was John in the womb who *recognized* Jesus in the womb and "*jumped with joy*" when Mary came to Elizabeth after the angels visit.

As an ascetic living in the wilderness, John was clothed in camel hair and subsisted on locusts and wild honey ([Matt 3:4](#); [Mark 1:6](#)). The central theme of his ministry was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" ([Matt 3:2](#)). He was called *The Baptist* because his practice was to baptize those who responded to the message he proclaimed and sincerely repented of their sins

John was no "crowd pleaser", he was a Prophet of God! He willingly confronted the hypocrisy of the religious establishment ([Matt 3:7](#); [Luke 3:7](#)). He did not hesitate to expose the immorality of Herod and chose to die a martyr's death rather than compromise his convictions ([Matt 14:3-12](#); [Mark 6:17-29](#)).

Reading Directions: Matthew 3:1-17

Small Group closes eyes and listens while Guide reads the bible verses. **On the back page!**

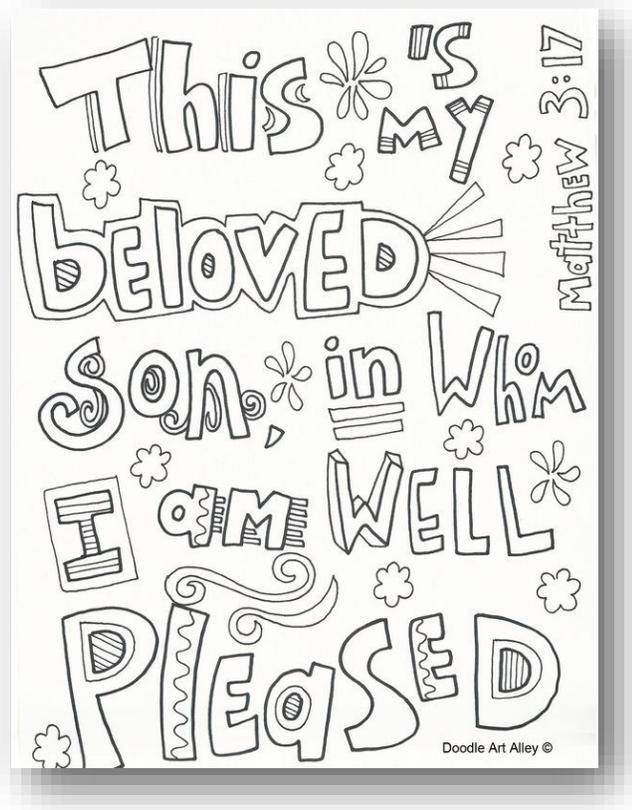
1. Bible verse is read a second time by a Small Group youth
2. Small Group circles or highlights what “sparkles” or stands out to them.
3. Share what you circled or highlighted!!! And share why you liked it or why it caught your attention.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you know what a prophet is? What a prophet does?
2. What was John the Baptist’s job? Why do you think John was able to catch and keep people’s attention?
3. Who are the people that catch your attention? Why?
4. Are the people who have your attention prophets? If they were, what would be their message?
5. Can you think of any contemporary prophets?
6. In Pastor Dave’s sermon last week, he talked about Sojourner Truth as a “contemporary” prophet (not biblical) do you know who she was? What her message was? **Maybe everyone can look it up this week and report back next week!!**
7. What about Jesus caught John’s attention?
8. Why did Jesus want John to baptize him?
9. Why do you think John didn’t want to?
10. What happens when Jesus is baptized? (what does God do?)
11. John the Baptist is later beheaded...why are prophets usually not very popular?
12. Why do I want you to know about John the Baptist?

MOVIE CLIPS...either as a group or on your own, watch some interesting baptism clips! I think you’ll be surprised!

PRAYER...



KEY VERSE: "this is my Son the Beloved..." Matthew 3:17

Matthew 3:1-17

³ In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ² "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." ³ This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.'"

⁴ Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷ But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruit worthy of repentance. ⁹ Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ "I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."