

**7th Grade New Testament (Gospels)****Lesson Plan:** John the Baptist**Learning Goals:** Students should be introduced to the character of John the Baptist and understand his role as the one who “prepared the way” for Jesus.**Question:** How do we “prepare the way for Jesus” in our lives?

Prayer.

Discuss question on board. (5 minutes)

**Zechariah’s Prophecy about John**

- Luke 1:76-79
- John will go before Jesus and prepare the way

Read Luke 3:1-20

**John the Baptist - the Man**

- Baptized at the Jordan River
- Dress - “clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist” (Mark 1:6)
- Diet - ate locusts (like a large grasshopper) and wild honey

**John the Baptist - the Prophet**

- John’s ministry came before Jesus’ ministry
- Connection to Elijah (2 Kings 1:8; Malachi 4:5)
- Fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy (Isaiah 40:3-5)
- Message was similar to the message of the prophets (Matthew 3:7-10); the message of an insider to other members of their own community
- Parallel to Moses - John was taking the people out into the wilderness and crossing over the Jordan once again before entering back as the true people of God

**John the Baptist - the Message**

- The kingdom is present, - John is initiating the messianic kingdom (it is beginning now and John is inviting people to get on board)
- How do you get on board? Repentance is absolutely necessary.
- Repentance (metanoia) - means a changing of mind and changing of directions (180° turn)  
repentance doesn’t mean just saying that we are sorry, it means moving our lives in a different direction altogether  
People were also “confessing their sins”
- John rejected the notion that one could enter the messianic kingdom simply because of one’s ancestry. Race was not sufficient. Only the repentant of Israel would enter the kingdom.
- John’s ministry was not an end in itself, his ministry pointed ahead of him - to one who would come after him (Mark 1:7-8)
- John 3:30 - I must decrease, he must increase

**Baptism**

- baptizo = “to dip”

- Outer washing to symbolize an inward change and an inward repentance; repentance had to come before baptism
- This was not a new thing for the Jews - they practiced baptism for those who were converting to Judaism
- The Jews also had ritual washing that was done when making sacrifices that would purify them and had some parallel with baptism

**Disciples of John**

- There were people who were following John
- Some of Jesus' first disciples came from the disciples of John

**Later Life**

- John will eventually be put in prison and beheaded
- Story in Matthew 14:1-12

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**Lesson Summary /Review:**

Students should review and highlight the following vocabulary terms and concepts from this lesson in their notes:

- John the Baptist