

PRETEEN MINISTRY

4TH & 5TH GRADE



MARCH 22, 2026

PREPARING FOR THE MESSIAH

ISAIAH 40; MALACHI 3; LUKE 1; JOHN 1

CHRIST CONNECTION

God spoke through His prophets in the Old Testament, like Isaiah and Malachi, and shared His plan to send Jesus into the world to save people from sin. When the time had come, God called John to be a witness for Jesus. Anyone who trusts in Jesus will be saved.

LEADER DEVO

As we turn the page in the Bible from the Old Testament to the New Testament, we remember that the Bible tells one grand story, and at the center of that story is Jesus. From Genesis to Malachi, the Old Testament weaves a story of God's love and compassion for His people and of their inability to be faithful to Him. The Old Testament leads to the moment when God sent His Son to fulfill His plan to save people from their sin.

The first verse of John echoes the first verse of Genesis, reminding us of the cohesiveness of the Old Testament and the New Testament. This echo also reveals that Jesus is not merely a prophet or a teacher—He is God Himself, who became human. The Word of God, who spoke creation into existence, humbled Himself, taking the form of man, and dwelt among sinners so that those who believed in Him would become children of God (John 1:11-14).

In another Gospel account, Luke 1 introduces us to another person vital to God's plan. An angel appeared to a priest named Zechariah. Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, like many couples in the Old Testament, had not been able to have children. The angel told Zechariah not only would they have a child, but their child would have the power of Elijah and would be the forerunner to God's Messiah. John's birth and ministry was the fulfillment of Isaiah and Malachi's prophecies, where God promised to send a messenger to prepare the way for the Messiah. John's ministry can be viewed as a bridge between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Reflect on the foreshadowing of Christ seen all throughout the Old Testament and help kids see how it revealed what was to come in the New Testament. The sacrifices of the law point toward the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus. To David, God promised an everlasting kingdom—a promise that finds its fulfillment in Christ's everlasting reign. Jesus is the Prophet, Priest, and King that Israel longed for throughout their history. The Savior God promised in the Garden of Eden—the One who would crush the serpent's head—had finally come. Jesus would defeat evil and sin and make the way for people to be saved. But this victory would come at a great cost—His own life.

ARRIVAL

When kids arrive, they can play in the game room, Large Group room, or the balcony area. They can go between the areas as they want until Large Group starts. Leaders should be spread out in these areas to watch kids. Use this time to interact with kids and build relationships with them. Ask them about their week, big events coming up, or follow up on a prayer request from the week before.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

THIS MONTH'S MEMORY VERSE

...but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

John 20:31



NEXT BIBLE BUCKS DAY

APR 26

There are many techniques and tools to help kids (and you!) memorize Scripture.

THIS MONTH'S TOOL: DIY VERSE PUZZLE

Grab at least eight “puzzle pieces” (these can be Legos, blocks, index cards, etc.). On each of the puzzle pieces, write a part of the verse so that when all the pieces are put together in the correct order, you can see the entire verse.

Use this to practice memorizing the verse by putting it together, racing yourself, trying to fill in the gaps from memory, etc.

LESSON

God spoke through a prophet named Isaiah and a prophet named Malachi to tell people that He would send a messenger to prepare the way for the promised Messiah.

A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

- Isaiah 40:3-5

"Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.

- Malachi 3:1

After 400 years of silence, an angel appeared to a priest named Zechariah in the sanctuary of the Lord, and he was afraid! But the angel said, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because God has heard your prayer. Your wife Elizabeth will have a son, and you will name him John. He will have the spirit and power of Elijah. He will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and make the people ready for the Lord." This was spoken to fulfill what Isaiah and Malachi said would happen!

Soon after, Elizabeth became pregnant and gave birth to a son. Zechariah praised God, saying, "Blessed is the Lord because he has provided salvation for his people. You, my son, will be called a prophet of the Most High, and you will go before the Lord and prepare his ways."

When John grew up, God sent him to be a witness for Jesus in the wilderness of Judea so people might believe in Jesus. John said, "I am a voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord—just as Isaiah the prophet said."

CHRIST CONNECTION

God spoke through His prophets in the Old Testament, like Isaiah and Malachi, and shared His plan to send Jesus into the world to save people from sin. When the time had come, God called John to be a witness for Jesus. Anyone who trusts in Jesus will be saved.

SMALL GROUPS

OUR GOAL

To create opportunities that invite preteens to discover for themselves what it means to own and live out their faith.

DISCUSSION / APPLICATION

- 1) Read Isaiah 40:3-5, Malachi 3:1, 4:5. What are these verses talking about?
God sending a messenger to prepare the people for the Messiah (Jesus).
- 2) Who does the angel tell Zechariah is going to be this messenger?
- 3) What was John mean to do as Jesus' messenger? What does it mean to "prepare the way for the Lord"?
John prepared the way for Jesus, meaning before Jesus' earthly ministry began, he taught and reminded people about God's laws and promises. He prepared their hearts so that when Jesus came and taught them about the Kingdom of God they would believe Him and know He is the Messiah that God promised to send!
- 4) How can you be a messenger for God this week and share the good news about Jesus? Is there a specific person you know who needs to hear the gospel?

PICK UP

After small group, kids can play in the game room, Large Group room, or the balcony area. They can go between the areas as they want until they are picked up. Leaders should be spread out in these areas to watch kids.

Use this time to interact with kids and follow up on any questions or discussions from small group time.

As parents arrive upstairs, direct them to the game room, Large Group room, or balcony to pick their kids up. Make sure to match their security code with their kid's name tag and remove the name tag before they leave!

CLEAN UP

- Put away any supplies used during small group.
- Turn off TVs and lights in the small group rooms.
- Turn off both air hockey tables and put away extra pucks or paddles.
- Gather any balls or other items left out in the game room and put them away in the correct bins.
- Put away any games, books, or supplies in the balcony area.
- Check for any items left behind by kids and put them in the lost and found.

THANK YOU FOR SERVING!