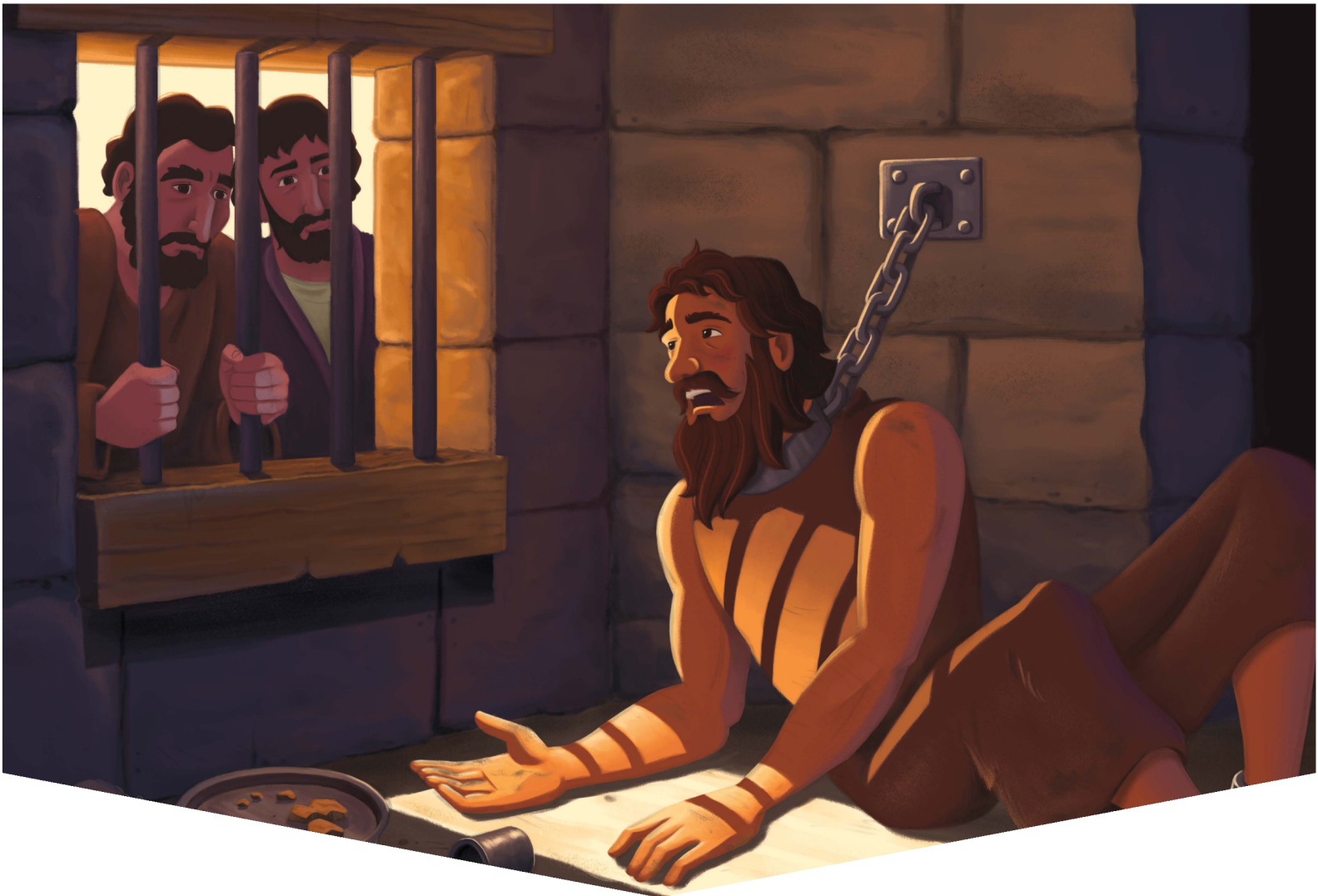




AUGUST 2, 2026

JOHN THE BAPTIST IN PRISON

MATTHEW 11, 14; MARK 6; LUKE 3, 7

CHRIST CONNECTION

When faced with suffering, John was reminded that Jesus is the Messiah who had come to bring the good news of salvation. Followers of Jesus will face troubles, but they have hope: Everyone who trusts in Jesus for salvation will live in His kingdom forever.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION

What is prayer? Prayer is talking with God to praise Him, ask Him for help, and confess our sins.

MEMORY VERSE

Jeremiah 29:12-13



LEADER BIBLE STUDY

John the Baptist was a faithful messenger of the gospel. Though he was persecuted by a wicked leader, he was commended by Jesus for his faith. Scripture's accounts of John's imprisonment and beheading illustrate his devotion to Jesus, even as John suffered for advocating for the truth.

John was arrested for publicly rebuking Herod's affair with a young woman who was both his niece and his brother's wife. Herod wanted to kill John but was mindful of the crowd's support of him as a prophet. Herod didn't fear God but was swayed by the opinions of people.

Though John the Baptist centered his ministry on proclaiming Jesus as Messiah, John needed to be reminded that Jesus is truly the one God promised to send. Confined to a prison cell, John relayed his questions in his time of need to Jesus' disciples and sent them to get an answer from the Lord. "Are you the one who is to come," John asked Jesus, "or should we expect someone else?"

Jesus offered words of assurance to John and his followers by quoting Isaiah 35:5-6 and pointing to His miracles and proclamation of the gospel. Jesus' purpose in coming to earth wasn't to be a political hero for the Jews against the Romans, but to restore the relationship between God and humans. Jesus asked the crowd why they followed John in the first place and declared that John was indeed a prophet.

John the Baptist's message was even greater than that of the Old Testament prophets who preceded him. While the prophets of old declared the Messiah was coming, John declared that He was there among them—Jesus, their Emmanuel! Yet even though John had such an esteemed role in heralding the long-awaited Messiah, Jesus declared that the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John was. How blessed are partakers of the new covenant of Christ's blood!

Just as John needed to be reminded of Jesus' role as the Messiah, we, too, must be reminded of the good news of the gospel. John the Baptist trusted Jesus' words of life and knew the threat of death was nothing compared to His promise of eternal life. May the kids in your class who hear this story experience the power of the gospel in their own lives, trusting in Jesus as Messiah and Lord.

WELCOME



Connect with kids as they arrive.

OPENING ACTIVITIES

Greet each kid as they arrive. Use this time to build relationships and help new kids connect to your group. Before heading to large group, you can play a game, chat with kids, or practice the memory verse!

MEMORY VERSE

Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.

Jeremiah 29:12-13, ESV

MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY

Each month, we'll have a new memory verse that goes with the lessons we're learning from the Bible. Choose one of the provided activities in your room's memory verse folder to review the verse with kids.

Note: Our next Bible Bucks Day will be on August 30!



LARGE GROUP LESSON



Review what we're learning in large group.

JOHN THE BAPTIST IN PRISON

John the Baptist had been telling King Herod the truth about God's commands and how Herod had disobeyed them. Herod didn't like John's message, so Herod had John arrested and put in prison. Herodias, Herod's wife, also didn't like John's message. She held a grudge against John and wanted to put him to death.

While John was in prison, he sent a message to Jesus. He said, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else to be the Messiah?"

Jesus replied to the messengers, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with leprosy are healed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the poor are told the good news. Blessed is the one who isn't offended by Me."

Then Jesus turned to the crowds and said, "When you went out to see John in the wilderness, what did you go to see? A man dressed in soft clothes like kings wear? No! You went to see a prophet. Yes, and John is more than a prophet. He is the one the prophet Malachi spoke of when he said:

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you;
he will prepare your way before you.'

"Truly, there is no human greater than John the Baptist. But the person who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater even than he is."

Later, King Herod had a birthday party. When Herod's niece danced for the king and his guests, Herod was pleased and promised to give her anything she wanted. The girl went to her mother, Herodias, for advice, and her mother told her to ask for Herod to kill John. So, Herod ordered for John to be killed.

When John's disciples heard this, they took John's body and placed it in a tomb.

CHRIST CONNECTION: When faced with suffering, John was reminded that Jesus is the Messiah who had come to bring the good news of salvation. Followers of Jesus will face troubles, but they have hope: Everyone who trusts in Jesus for salvation will live in His kingdom forever.

ACTIVITIES



Do crafts and games with kids after large group.

ACTIVITY: SET THE PRISONERS FREE

Before the activity, place sticky notes reading “Go to Jail” and “Set the Prisoners Free” on different sections of the provided board game spinner; set up a “jail” by taping a square on the floor in one area of the room.

Gather your group around the spinner and have them take turns spinning. If it lands on “Go to Jail”, have them go to the “jail” area. If it lands on “Set the Prisoners Free”, ask them one of the provided review questions.

If they answer correctly, all the prisoners in “jail” go free. If they get it wrong, they go to “jail”. Make sure every kid gets a chance to spin. Continue playing for as long as time allows!

CONNECT THE DOTS



John was imprisoned for sharing the truth of God's Word. During this hard time, John had questions for Jesus. Jesus encouraged John by reminding him that Jesus had come as the Messiah. Anyone who trusts in Jesus will live in His kingdom forever.

BIBLE SKILLS: TIMELINE PUZZLE

Spend some time explaining the Bible timeline to kids (use the additional resources provided to do so) and review the order of the different timeline eras.

After reviewing the timeline, challenge kids to put the eras in the correct order using the smaller timeline cards.

CLOSING ACTIVITIES



Continue to engage kids before parent pick-up.

BIBLE STORY REVIEW

Ask the following questions and lead your small group to discuss.

1. What can we learn from John about trusting God when it's hard?
2. How does God handle our doubts and questions?
3. How can knowing Jesus is the Messiah give us hope during hardship?
4. Why do you think John the Baptist questioned who Jesus was, even when John had been sent to prepare the way for the Messiah?
5. What should we do when we doubt?

HAVE EXTRA TIME?

If you have extra time or your group needs to get out some energy, play one of the games/activities in your extra time bin in the cabinet or the "extra time" folder on the TV.

If there's a new game or activity you want to have available for your group in the future, let Taylor know!

BEFORE YOU GO...

Second service leaders, please clean up by doing the following:

1. Put all extra supplies and binders back in the curriculum bins.
2. Clean all trash off the tables.
3. Put all crayons, markers, etc. back in the appropriate containers and cubbies.
4. Erase the whiteboards and put markers/erasers back in the holder.
5. Turn off the TVs as you leave.

THANK YOU FOR SERVING WITH US!