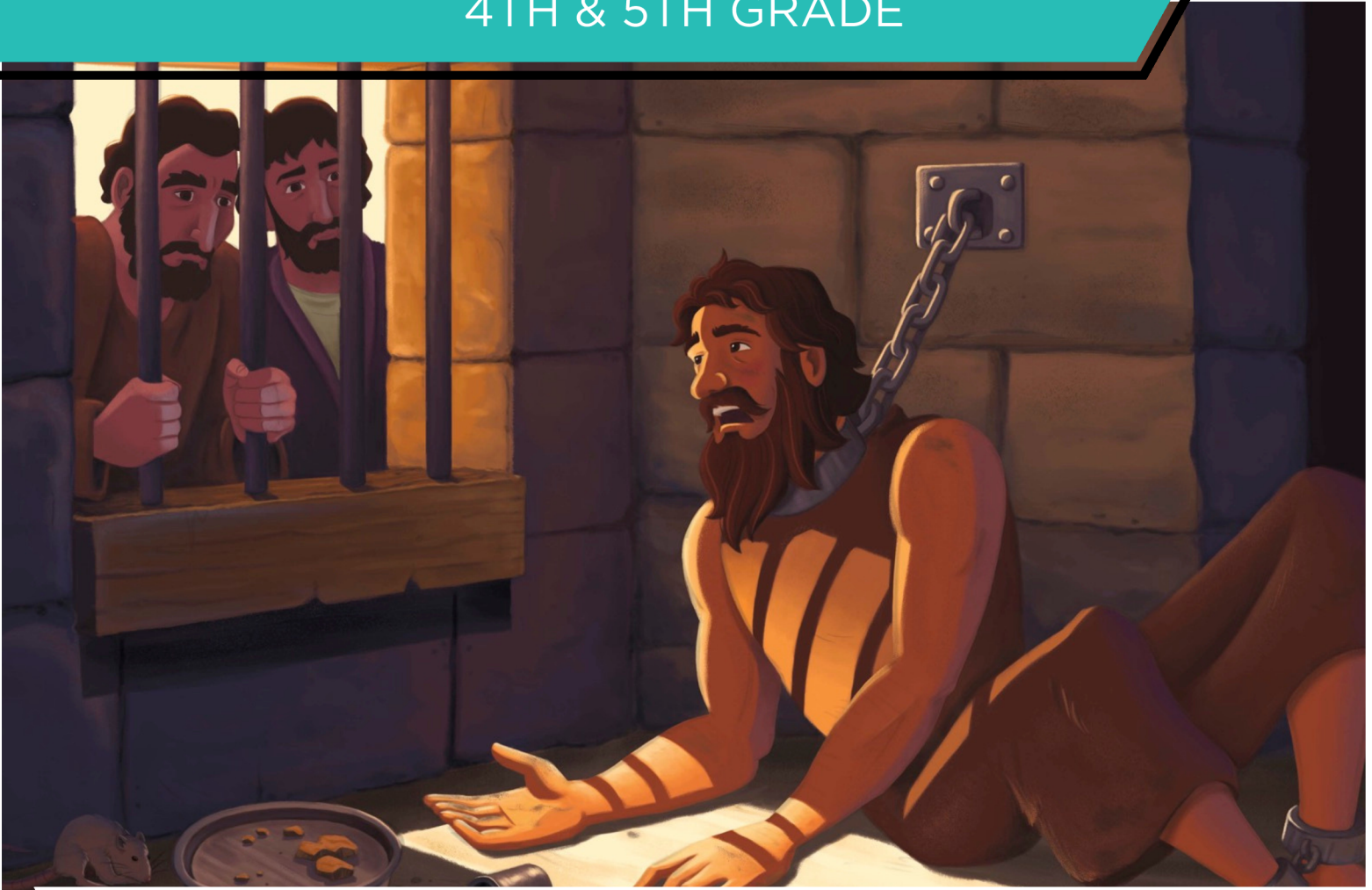


PRETEEN MINISTRY

4TH & 5TH GRADE



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.

LEADER DEVO

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.

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

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



**BIBLE
BUCKS**

NEXT BIBLE BUCKS DAY

AUG 30

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

THIS MONTH'S TOOL: VERSE ABBREVIATIONS

On an index card, write out the first letter of each word in the verse you want to memorize. For example, Jeremiah 29:12-13 will look like:

T Y W C U M A C A P T M A I W H Y Y W S M A F M W Y S M W A Y H

LESSON

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.

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) Before he was in prison, John told people Jesus was the Messiah. Why do you think he asked Jesus if he truly was the Messiah or if the Messiah was someone else?

Talk about how we all experience times of doubt and questioning. In hard times, we can easily doubt what we know, but the truth about Jesus will never change no matter how much we question it. Jesus is the Messiah, and through Him we can have salvation and forgiveness of sin.

2) Have you ever doubted or questioned something about God, Jesus, the Spirit, the Bible, etc.? What did that experience look like/how did you navigate your questions?

3) It's not a sin to ask God questions. He's more than capable of handling any question we have! In fact, when we ask questions and truly seek the truth, it makes our faith stronger. Do you have any questions that you are seeking to know the truth?

Give kids a chance to ask questions! If you know the answer, then great. If you don't, that's okay! Acknowledge that you don't have all the answers (nobody does) and use it as an opportunity to search for the answer together!

Got Questions is a great resource for answering thousands of questions about God, the Bible, etc. with Scripture-based answers. Scan the QR code to get to their website and utilize this tool when needed!



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!