

The teacher introduces John the Baptist. John comes in with a serious, focused look, sits down on the floor and raises his hand to wave to the children. He is carrying his bag of food with him.

Teacher: Hello everyone. We have a very special guest today, John the Baptist!

John: Hello children! Yes, that is right, my name is John.

Reporter 1: Hi, John. Are you the same disciple of Jesus named John, who would later write the Gospel book of John?

John: No, I am Jesus' cousin, often called John the Baptist or John the Baptizer. God put me here to prepare the way for the Lord; to point everyone to Jesus! I tell people the truth, and that they should repent of their sins—which means to turn away from sin and turn toward God! After someone repents, I baptize them in water! That is why I got the name "Baptist."

Reporter 2: John, I have a question about the Kingdom of God that you preach about. Is this a physical place that we can travel to and see with our eyes?

John: I can answer that! The kingdom of God is not a physical place, it is a spiritual kingdom. I am preparing the way for Jesus, who will bring the kingdom of heaven to Earth! He will live out God's will perfectly! The kingdom of heaven lives in the hearts of all who will believe in Jesus and do God's will!

Reporter 3: John, you look like a man who lives outdoors! Why do you dress the way you do?

John: That is a good question. Many people wonder the same thing. Jesus said: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A man dressed in soft clothes? Look, those who wear soft clothes are in kings' palaces." Jesus understood that these clothes are symbols of what God put me on Earth to do! I am a voice crying out in the wilderness!

Reporter 4: When did you know that this was your calling from God—to prepare the way for Jesus?

John: My parents knew before I was even born! God's angel Gabriel told my mother and father, Elizabeth and Zechariah, that this is who I would be—I would prepare the way for the One who is greater than I, who existed from the beginning of the world! Gabriel even told my father that my name was to be John!

Reporter 5: John, I hear that you don't back down from speaking the truth, even to King Herod! He is very powerful! Aren't you afraid of what might happen to you?

John: No, I can't worry about that! I am preparing the way for the Messiah! I must continue to call people to repent! I call sin a sin! Some of the religious leaders think just because they are descendants of Abraham, they are righteous—in other words, they are without sin in God's eyes. I told them that God can raise more children for Abraham from stones if He wanted to! He wants people to turn away from their sins, turn toward Him, and live truthfully!

Reporter 6: Jesus is becoming well known. Are you worried that Jesus will become more popular than you? Aren't you afraid that your followers will leave you?

John: Afraid? No! That's been the goal from the beginning. When that happens, I know I have done my job! Jesus is coming; He is more powerful than I am. I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the straps of His sandals! I baptize with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. He must increase and I must decrease. Sounds like a plan, doesn't it?

Teacher: Yes John, it sounds like a very good plan—the best! Well John, thank you for taking the time to answer all of our questions!

John: My pleasure. It's time for lunch! *(Takes some food out of the bag and eats it.)* Mmmm, these locusts are good. I just caught them this morning. Want some? *(Holds bag out to the teacher.)*

Teacher: *(Pushes bag away and looks squeamish.)* Uh, no, no thank you. I think I will pass, but thank you.

John: Come on, how about all of you reporters and people in the audience out there. Would you like to try one before I leave?

Teacher: John, thanks again for the amazing work you do preparing the way for Jesus!

John: It is what I was placed on Earth to do! I will never turn down a chance to say, REPENT, REPENT of your sins and be baptized! Turn away from your sins and turn toward God, because the kingdom of heaven is near! Don't look at me, look to Jesus—He is the One who can save you!