LESSON 9:  JOHN THE BAPTIST

AIM: To show how John the Baptist was a fearless follower of God, living and speaking the truth at all times.

MEMORY VERSE: Instead, we will lovingly follow the truth at all times – speaking truly, dealing truly, living truly. (Ephesians 4:15)

GAME: WHISPERS
Write out several appropriate sentences on cards. Seat or stand the children in a line. Give a card to the first person in the line and ask them to pass the message on in a whisper. Each child whispers the message to the next person. The last person must say the sentence aloud and compare it with the original card. Use this game as an illustration of how the truth can get changed from person to person.

STORY: Luke 1, 3, Mark 6
Jesus had a cousin named John. Before Jesus or John was born, an angel appeared to John’s father, Zechariah, and told him he would have a son and his name was to be John (meaning gracious gift of God). (It may be interesting to note the similarity with the angel’s announcement to Mary.) John’s mother and father were delighted when their baby son was born because they were quite old and childless and had given up any hope of ever becoming parents.

God had given special instructions for John’s life. He was not to drink strong drink or wine because God had chosen him for a special job. John was to get the people ready for the coming of God’s own Son, Jesus. When John was old enough, he left home and lived in the desert. It was a simple but harsh life. He wore clothes made from camel’s hair and he ate locusts and wild honey. God was preparing him for his special job.

When the time was right, John moved around the countryside telling the people to repent of their sins. (The children may need to know that repent means to be truly sorry for sin and to change their way of living by turning and going in the opposite direction.)

People would travel from the towns and cities to hear John preach. When they decided to repent from their wicked living, John would baptise them in water. This is why he was called John the Baptist. Plunging people beneath the water was a sign to everyone that they were changing their way of living and going God’s way.

Although John gained lots of friends and people who followed him (disciples) to learn more about God, he also gained some enemies because he
One of those people was the leader of the country, King Herod. He had married his brother’s wife and John kept saying publicly that it was wrong. Herod became upset with John and had him arrested and sent to prison.

The king’s wife was extremely angry because of the things John had been saying and wanted John killed. So she waited her chance and when the king had a birthday party, the queen’s daughter danced for the king and his friends. He was so pleased with her dancing that he foolishly offered her any gift she wanted. The girl went away and asked her mother’s advice. The wicked queen took this as an opportunity to take revenge on John and told her daughter to ask for John’s head to be cut off and brought to her on a platter (large plate).

So the girl returned to King Herod and stated her wish. He was very sorry as he did not want to kill John, but he was too embarrassed to go back on his word especially in front of all his party guests.

John was a brave man who lived for God all his life. He wasn’t afraid of speaking the truth or living a hard life. God gave John the courage to face such an awful death even though he didn’t deserve it. Likewise, God will give us the courage to do what is right also. Jesus said about John after his death: ‘Truly, of all men ever born, none shines more brightly than John’ (Matthew 11:11).

(It is important that this session ends on a positive note, as we don’t want the children to fear that if they tell the truth they may be beheaded! Emphasise the fact that God is with us in strength and power to help us to live righteously.)

**DISCUSSION POINTS:**
- Discuss with the children why it is sometimes difficult to tell the truth.
- Discuss why they think people sometimes dislike us when we are truthful.
- And why God requires us to be truthful in all that we say and do.

**CLOSING ACTIVITIES:**
1. Colour in the picture of John baptizing a man.
2. Puzzles
3. Worksheets
John the Baptist

prepare    Zacharias
Jesus      desert
lamb       Elisabeth
Herod      Jordan
angel      baptized

Read Luke 1 and Matthew 3. Write the correct word in the blank. Then find the right spot in the puzzle for each word.

1. John the Baptist's mother was ____________. Luke 1:13
2. John's father, ____________, was a priest. Luke 1:5
3. An ___________ appeared to Zacharias and told him that they were going to have a son. Luke 1:11
4. John was to be a prophet to ___________ the way for the Lord. Matt. 3:3
5. John baptized his cousin, ___________. Matt. 3:13
6. John grew up in the ___________. Matt. 3:1
7. John ___________ with water. Matt. 3:11
9. When John saw Jesus he said, “Behold the ___________ of God who takes away the sin of the world.” John 1:29
10. King ___________ had John beheaded. Mark 6:27
John the Baptist was a brave man who lived for God all his life. He came to the people to prepare the way for Jesus Christ. What was John’s message?

________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________
________________________________________

Write Ephesians 4:15 here:

________________________________
________________________________
________________________________
________________________________
________________________________
________________________________
________________________________
________________________________
________________________________
John the Baptist

God’s Special Messenger

John the Baptist was a messenger who told the people that Jesus was coming. Find out two of John’s messages.

Take the letters in each column and put them in the same order in the squares above the column. A black square marks the end of a word.
John lived by, and spoke, the truth at all times. Not everyone liked John’s message but John was not afraid because he feared God more than man.

John lived a hard life in the desert eating locusts and wild honey. He wore clothes made of camel’s hair. He lived his whole life in order to God to prepare him for a special task.

John’s message was to repent of your sins and be baptized so that you will be ready for the coming King.
JOHN PREPARES The Way

I AM NOT THE CHRIST
JOHN 1:23–25, KJV

ACROSS
1. "HE SAID, I AM THE ________ ."
2. "OF ONE CRYING IN THE ________________ ."
4. "AS SAID THE PROPHET ________ ."

DOWN
1. "AND THEY WHICH WERE SENT WERE OF THE ________________ ."
2. "AND THEY ASKED HIM, AND SAID UNTO HIM, WHY ________________ THOU THEN ."
3. "IF THOU BE NOT THAT ________ ."
4. "NOR ELIAS, NEITHER THAT ________ ?"