

# SABBATH SCHOOL

## Preteen Sabbath Instruction Program — Teacher's Outline

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Level 5 • Unit 7 • Week 1

### BAPTISM

**OBJECTIVE:**

To cover the ministry of John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus Christ.

**ATTENTION GETTER:**

Have the student draw and color the Jordan River and label the surrounding areas.

**BIBLE LESSON:**

Say: Imagine what it would be like to have a time machine and travel into the past. Let's do just that. Let's see, what might our time machine look like?

Do: Solicit suggestions from the students. Coax them along by asking questions like: Is it big? What color could it be? Maybe it has lots of gadgets?

Say: Now that we have established what our time machine looks like, let's set its dials for the year A.D. 28, the place will be Judea. The time machine whirs and suddenly we find ourselves in the land of Judea on the banks of the Jordan River. Here we find a rugged individual wearing a camel's hair coat and a leather belt standing in the middle of the river. Many people are wading in the water toward him. Once they reach him, he plunges them backward into the water.

Explain: This man is John the Baptist, and he is baptizing, which means to immerse completely in water. John the Baptist is the cousin of Jesus Christ.

Say: Soon Jesus is going to appear on the scene as an adult and begin His public ministry, but before that can happen God had said through the prophet Isaiah over 600 years earlier that first a messenger would come and prepare the way for Christ. John the Baptist was that messenger.

Say: John the Baptist prepared the way for Christ by preaching a message of repentance.

Repentance is a big word that means to tell God you are sorry and to change the way you are living. It means to stop living our own way and start living the way God tells us to live in the Bible. The people who were repenting were the people God was preparing for Christ.

The people who repented when they heard John's message were baptized. Do you know why? Because going into the water pictured a burial. By being baptized they showed that they were putting to death the way they used to live and were starting to live an entirely new life. This is explained in Romans 6.

Ask: What is another reason to be baptized according to Acts 2:38?

Say: And we are some of the people "afar off" referred to in Acts 2:39. [Read it.] We are to be baptized for the remission or, in other words, for the forgiveness of our sins. When we repent, we can ask God to apply the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to pay for our sins. (Jesus paid for them by dying for us on the stake.) We are then baptized to show that we want Jesus' sacrifice applied to us.

We now focus our attention back to John. Many people are coming from Jerusalem to be baptized. They are from many backgrounds. Some of the ones that came to him were the religious leaders at the time, known as Pharisees. Other groups that came were soldiers and some tax collectors.

Ask: What did John tell the religious leaders and all who came to Him in Luke 3:7-8?

Say: John perceived that the Pharisees had wrong motives. He called them vipers and asked who had warned them to be baptized to avoid God's anger. Then he told everyone to prove that they wanted to change (repent) by beginning to do good deeds for others. For example, if they had an extra coat or some extra food they should share it with those in need (Luke 3:7-11).

Ask: How did John tell the soldiers to show their repentance?

Say: They were told to not threaten violence to obtain money from any man and to be content with their pay (verse 14).

Ask: How about the tax collectors?

Say: They were told not to cheat the people out of their money (verses 12-13).

Explain: When we decide to turn to living the way God wants us to, we will want to help others and share with them whenever we can.

Say: Besides baptizing, John also preached the message that God gave to him to the crowd gathered around him. He told them that he was preparing the way for one who was mightier than he was. In fact, John told them that he was not even worthy to stoop down and unloosen the strap on Jesus' sandals (verse 16).

Ask: What two items did John the Baptist say that Jesus would baptize with (verse 16)?

Say: First, the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 12:13 it says that by one Spirit we are baptized into the Church. So, just as we are put into the water by baptism, in the same way Jesus Christ, by the power of God's Spirit, puts us into His Church.

Actually, the time will come when all flesh will have the opportunity to have the Holy Spirit poured out upon them (Joel 2:28-29 and Acts 2:17-18). Then they too will be baptized by the Holy Spirit.

Second, fire. In the future Jesus will immerse, or completely bury with fire, those who rebel against Him and refuse to follow Him. Such people, living without God, are filled with such hate and bitterness that they would never be happy, so God in His mercy will put them out of their misery by destroying them quickly with a super-hot fire that will immediately burn them up.

Some days later, Jesus Christ did come on the scene and begin His ministry. But before He began it, He came to John to be baptized (Matthew 3:13).

Ask: Why did John the Baptist initially refuse to baptize Jesus (verse 14)?

Say: John felt that since he was merely Christ's messenger and servant, that Jesus should be baptizing him not the other way around. But Jesus explained that it was important for Him to set the right example of righteousness for His future followers, so He was baptized even as we also should be baptized.

Ask: What landed on Jesus head when He came out of the water after being baptized?

Say: Normally one cannot see the Holy Spirit. But just to show everyone there that God was with Jesus and very pleased with Him, the Holy Spirit became visible to human eyes in the form of a dove and then a voice rang out of heaven saying "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

So Jesus set the example for you young people, to show you that as soon as you're old enough, you can be baptized showing that you accept Jesus Christ's sacrifice of His life for your sins. Then you are forgiven and put into the Church of God by the Holy Spirit.

### **LESSON APPLICATION:**

Photocopy the questions on the next page to give students.

Answers: A and B refer to John the Baptist.

Answer to bonus: Jesus Christ.

## John the Baptist Scriptures

Directions: Which of the following scriptures apply to John the Baptist and which do not?

- A. Isaiah 40:3 "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the LORD...."
- B. Malachi 4:5 "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet...."
- C. Malachi 3:2 "...For He is like a refiner's fire...."
- D. Isaiah 11:1 "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse...."

Bonus: Name who the other verses refer to.

### **MUSIC:**

Teacher's choice from the United Church of God hymnal.

### **MEMORY VERSE:**

Romans 6:4 "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

# *family activity*

**THE POINT:**

To cover the ministry of John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus Christ.

**FAMILY TOGETHER TIME:**

Have your parent(s) discuss with you how they came to be baptized or how they came to know about the Church of God. What were some of the ways God worked in their lives to make Himself known to them?

Also discuss with your parents some of the ways God has helped you out at school, home or other places.

**MEMORY VERSE:**

Romans 6:4 "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."