

WEEK 1
LESSON GUIDE



BIG IDEA

I believe God gives me purpose.

BIBLE

John Prepares the Way:
Mark 1:1–8

ABOUT THIS WEEK

When you first go camping in the wilderness, you'll need someone to help prepare your supplies, guide you, and keep you on the right path. This week, we'll look at how John the Baptist's purpose was to get people ready for Jesus. God sent John the Baptist with a special purpose, and John's story helps us to say, "**I believe God gives me purpose.**"

WELCOME TIME

ACTIVITY | Pillowcase Race

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this version of a sack relay race, prepare two to three king-size pillowcases for sacks. Use cones or tape to mark off the start and finish lines. Create two to three teams, and give each one a sack. Team members take turns getting into the sack and racing from start to finish and back again. Then, they pass the sack to the next member of the team. The first team to complete the relay wins. If the "relay race" theme is confusing for younger kids, just let each kid have a turn hopping in the pillowcase a short distance toward the finish line.*
 - ✂ **TODDLER HACK:** *Toddlers may not be able to manage a sack race. Instead, make a masking tape road around the room and show toddlers how to push cars along the line. Talk with them about how people would travel out to hear what John would say about Jesus.*
- Hi, campers! Hopping around in these pillowcases reminds me of something very important we need when we go camping.
- **Can anyone guess what it is?** A sleeping bag!
- Why do we need a sleeping bag, you might ask. Ah, you are asking about its purpose!
 - **Do you know what "purpose" means?** It's the special reason something is created.
 - The purpose of a sleeping bag is to keep you warm when you're sleeping outside or inside a tent. It's like a big, warm blanket that zips around you.
- Today, we're going to learn about how God gave purpose to a man named John and how God gives us all purpose.

ACTIVITY | Turn Around

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this game, have the kids listen to music and dance, facing away from you. The kids should turn around quickly when the music stops and face the leader.*
- In this game, you had to turn around a lot! You were facing one way, but you had to turn in the opposite direction.

- Today, we'll hear a story about a man named John the Baptist. John's purpose was to prepare the way for Jesus by helping people turn away from their old way of life apart from God. He helped people turn toward God.

STORY TIME

SCRIPTURE | Mark 1:1–8 (John Prepares the Way)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Teach this Scripture passage by reading from a preschool-friendly Bible translation, Bible storybook, or using the talking points provided below! Set up a campfire circle with an [inflatable campfire](#). The storyteller should dress like they've been camping.
- Hey, campers! My favorite part of camping is telling stories around the campfire. Come join me around the fire to hear an amazing story about a man named John the Baptist.
- Long ago, a man named John spent a lot of time in the wild. John was not like other people. He wore clothes made of camel hair and ate honey and locusts.
- **Do you know what a locust is?** It's a bug, kind of like a grasshopper.
- God gave John a special purpose. He was getting people ready for the savior, Jesus. John told everyone that Jesus was coming soon and they needed to be ready, too.
- **Let's pretend we are John and call out this message together: "Get ready! The savior is coming!"**
- People from all around came to see John, and he talked to them about how to live the way God wants us to. John would baptize people in the river. By going into the water and coming back out, people were getting their hearts ready for Jesus.
- **Let's imagine we are going in the river. Bend down low ... then jump up!**
- Lots of people thought John was the savior because he had many followers. But he told them he wasn't. They needed to wait for the real savior, Jesus. He was more powerful and had all the answers.
- Many people listened to John and chose to follow God, too. They were getting ready to receive Jesus when the time came ... all because John followed the special purpose God gave him!

BIG IDEA | I believe God gives me purpose.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Hide each of the words of the Big Idea taped to a random camping-related item in a backpack, such as a water bottle, flashlight, or camp snack. Invite one kid at a time to pull out an item revealing the word. Then, have a leader put the words in order. Have kids repeat back the Big Idea using the hand motions listed below.
- Wow, John had such a special purpose! It reminds me of how my camping supplies each have a special purpose. Let's see what I have in my camping backpack.
- Wait a minute! Let's put these words in order and form today's Big Idea.
 - **I** (point to self)
 - **believe** (fist pump in the air)
 - **God** (point to the sky)
 - **gives** (hands out in front of you like you are giving someone something)
 - **me** (point to self)
 - **purpose** (place both hands beside your eyes with palms facing each other, then extend hands forward)

VIDEO | Camp Believe It, Episode 1

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week's episode of [Cali's World](#).

ACTIVITY | We're Going On A Bear Hunt

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** This is a version of "[We're Going On A Bear Hunt](#)." Continue the nature hike story as long as you'd like. You can add more ideas, such as:
 - We have to eat a locust snack. (Everyone says, "crunch, crunch, crunch.")
 - We have to follow John. (Everyone skips around the room.)
 - We have to prepare the way. (Everyone swipes their hands in front of them horizontally like they are moving branches.)
- Let's go on a nature hike. I'll be your trail guide today! I will tell us what to do so we can walk on the trail, so listen to me and follow what I do!
 - We're going on a nature hike, we're going to explore the wilderness, but first we have to **jump over a log!** (Everyone jumps.)
 - We're going on a nature hike, we're going to explore the wilderness, but first we have to **jump over a log!** (Everyone jumps.) And **crawl under this tree branch!** (Crawl on the floor for a moment.)
 - We're going on a nature hike, we're going to explore the wilderness, but first we have to **jump over a log!** (Everyone jumps.) And **crawl under this tree branch!** (Crawl on the floor for a moment.) And **hop on these river rocks!** (Hop on one foot.)
 - We're going on a nature hike, we're going to explore the wilderness, but first we have to **jump over a log!** (Everyone jumps.) And **crawl under this tree branch!** (Crawl on the floor for a moment.) And **hop on these river rocks!** (Hop on one foot.) And **run away from this bear!** (Run in place or scatter.)
- Wow, that was fun! Great job! And remember our friend John the Baptist from our Bible story today? He was like a trail guide, too. He helped clear the way and point people to Jesus. That was his purpose from God!
- But that's not all. **I believe God gives me purpose**, and God gives you purpose, too!

PRAYER

- Dear God, I know you love me. Thank you for giving me purpose. Amen.

SHARING TIME

SNACK | S'mores Cups

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Invite preschoolers to build their own s'more cup with pre-measured ingredients, such as mini marshmallows, chocolate chips, and graham cracker pieces. If you haven't done so already, consider posting a sign at your classroom entrance listing the food items being used and be sure every parent and caregiver is aware to help account for allergies and food aversions.
 - ✂ **TODDLER HACK:** Offer graham cracker cereal and chocolate pudding, as the chocolate chips and marshmallows may pose a choking hazard for toddlers.
- John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus, and today, you're going to prepare your snack. **Have you ever had a s'more?**

ACTIVITY | Circle Time

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Pass around objects like a toy grasshopper, a "jar of honey" (a plastic yellow jar), and "camel hair" (craft fabric or yarn) as you review these questions together.
 - ✂ **TODDLER HACK:** As toddlers explore new toys and figure things out, they may unintentionally hurt others around them. Be sure to keep an eye on toddlers when they play side by side to help them share and also be gentle. Having at least two adults in the room will help ensure that all the toddlers are supervised.

- **Who was the man from our Bible story today?** *John the Baptist.*
- **Can you name two things the Bible says he ate?** *Locusts and honey.*
- **What were John's clothes made out of?** *Camel hair.*
- **Who was John preparing the way for?** *Jesus.*
- **God gave John the Baptist purpose. Does God give you purpose?** *Yes!*
- Let's say our Big Idea together: **I believe God gives me purpose.**

ACTIVITY | John The Baptist 3D

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Print the provided John the Baptist [printable](#) on cardstock for each kid. Provide supplies like pieces of yarn, felt, tissue paper, construction paper, and cotton that kids can glue onto the worksheet to add texture! See worked example [here](#).*
- John the Baptist had a purpose from God. God gives you purpose, too. Let's make a picture of John the Baptist to remind us that God gives us purpose.
- **I believe God gives me purpose.**

MEMORY VERSE | John 6:69 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Help kids learn this month's memory verse by setting the words (including the Scripture reference) to the tune of "Rain, Rain, Go Away." You can also have kids repeat the verse after you in small chunks, say them using silly voices, or create simple hand motions for keywords.*
- **"We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God."**

PLAY TIME

ACTIVITY | Coloring Page

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Print and distribute [the coloring page](#) along with crayons or markers. You can review today's Bible story, Big Idea, and memory verse as the kids color.*

ACTIVITY | Bug Bin

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Create a sensory bin using fake grasshoppers and other bugs, moon sand, shallow buckets, shovels, and smooth rocks.*
 - ✂ **TODDLER HACK:** *Omit the moon sand and rocks for the toddler bins. You may also want to use larger bug toys like [these](#).*

ACTIVITY | Indoor Camping

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Provide kids with sheets, blankets, flashlights, and other materials to create tents to set up a make-believe campground.*