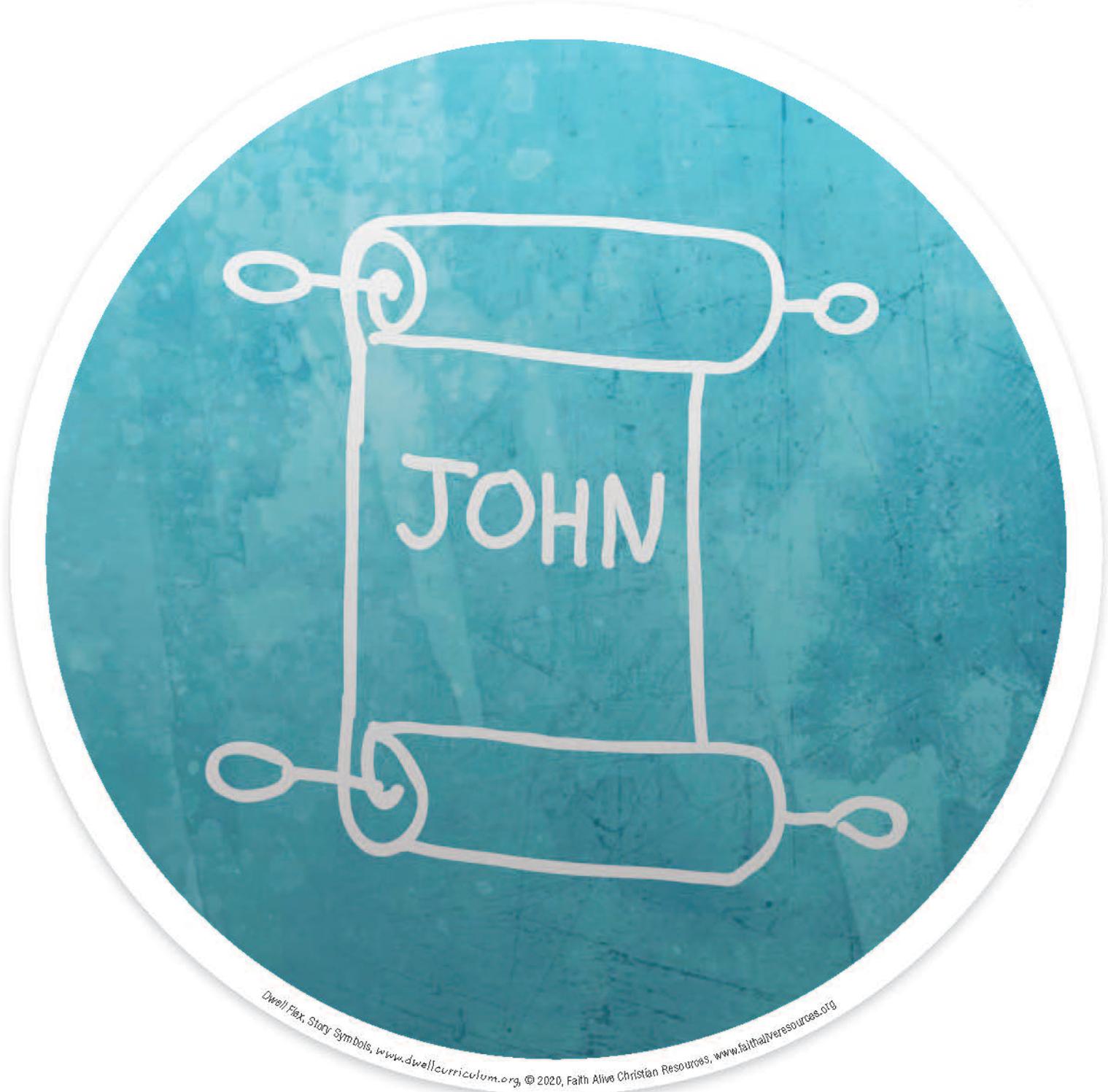


1. The Birth of John the Baptist





Flex (Multi-Age) › Jesus' Early Life › Session 1

1

The Birth of John the Baptist

View [this session's](#) Focus, Faith Nurture Goals, Leader Devotional, and story symbol (click on the story symbol to download or print). Or for the full set of DWELL Flex story symbols use the link in the sidebar.

Take a few moments to greet the children and let them know how glad you are to see them.

I love exploring God's story with you. Let's get ready to do that together.

Breathe

Use this time to focus your attention on God.

Do this with me: calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out. *(Demonstrate a few deep "in and out breaths" with eyes closed.)*

Tell and Wonder

Let's enter God's story together. Here's the story symbol for the part of God's story that we'll be spending time in today. I wonder what clues it gives us about the story we're about to hear? *(Show the story symbol. Accept any answers without giving away whether or not the kids have guessed correctly.)*

Listen closely as we read the story together to see which story our symbol represents.

Read "The Birth of John the Baptist" aloud (below), pausing throughout to allow children to answer the wondering questions. NOTE: It's always a good idea to read through the story beforehand so you'll be able to tell it well.

You can also read the story from a children's Bible or a simplified translation of Scripture like the New International Reader's Version (NIRV). Remember to pause throughout to allow time to wonder.

Pray

End your time with prayer. Make it a popcorn prayer by pausing in the middle so kids can jump in and thank God for some of the good things they've received or experienced. Your prayer might go something like this:

Loving God, you sure surprised Zechariah and Elizabeth with your wonderful gift of a baby! We know you surprise us with good things too, and we'd like to say thank you for those. Thank you, God! *(Pause for kids to add their own thanks.)* **We love you, Lord. Amen.**

See [5 Ways to Pray with Kids](#) for other ways to pray.

Respond

Select and do one or more of the response activities from God's Big Story card #80 or check out [5 Ways to Retell a Bible Story with Kids](#) for some fun ways to retell this story. Include older kids in the retelling by having them read the story aloud while the younger children act it out.*

**God's Big Story cards can be ordered from FaithAliveResources.org.*

Easy Extra

Create your own storybook of the Birth of John the Baptist. Have children draw pictures of each of the scenes from the story to make either one collaborative book or individual books. Write simple captions on the bottom of each drawing (older kids can help with this step).

Story: The Birth of John the Baptist [Luke 1:5-25, 57-60, 80](#)

Once there was an old man named Zechariah. Zechariah and his wife, an old woman named Elizabeth, had loved and served God all their lives. They were happy to be part of God's family. One thing made them very sad though—they had no children. For many years they had prayed for a child, and for many years they had waited for God to send them a baby. But that had not happened.

I wonder how Zechariah and Elizabeth felt as they waited and waited for God to answer their prayers. *(Pause for responses.)*

Zechariah was a priest in God's temple. On the day today's story begins, he was very excited and maybe a little bit nervous, because he'd been chosen to be the very special helper at the temple. While everyone else waited outside, Zechariah got to go into the Most Holy Place in God's temple and pray to God all the prayers of God's people.

What do you think Zechariah might have prayed about that day? *(Pause for responses.)*

While Zechariah was praying in the quiet of the Most Holy Place, God surprised him. Suddenly, an angel appeared right near where he was standing! Zechariah was terrified.

The angel said, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah. God has heard your prayers. You and Elizabeth are going to have a baby—a baby boy. And you must name him John. He'll bring joy to you and to many other people. Your son will be great in God's eyes, and he will help God's people get ready for the Savior to come."

Even though Zechariah had dared to ask God for a baby, he didn't dare to believe that God's promise would actually come true now! Zechariah said to the angel, "How can that be true? Elizabeth and I are very old."

The angel answered, “I was sent from God to bring you this surprising news. Because you don’t believe me, you won’t be able to talk until the day the baby is born. Every word I said will come true in time—God’s time!”

It was just as the angel said—when Zechariah finally went outside the temple, he couldn’t say a word. The people who had been wondering what was taking him so long in the temple now wondered why he wasn’t speaking!

Zechariah was full of surprising news about the special baby who would be born to help God’s people get ready for the Savior. From the way he was moving his hands, the people could see that he was trying to tell them something, but they couldn’t figure out what it was.

Can you imagine how Elizabeth reacted when Zechariah came home and told her—without talking—that God was going to surprise them with a baby? *(Pause to give kids time to wonder about this.)*

Everything happened just as God had promised. Even though they were very old, Zechariah and Elizabeth had a baby boy. Friends and relatives came from far and wide to celebrate. They all figured the baby would be called Zechariah, just like his dad. Everyone was surprised when Elizabeth told them, “No. He is to be called John.”

“John?” they said. “No one in your family is named John! What is Zechariah going to say about that?”

Zechariah heard them talking and he motioned for something to write on. They gave it to him and he wrote, “His name is John.” Immediately Zechariah’s voice came back. And the first thing he did was praise God!

The baby John grew up and pleased God, just as the angel had said he would. God surprised Zechariah with the gift of John, and John got people ready for another big gift from God—the Savior, Jesus.

Guess what? God loves you and will surprise you with many good things in your life too!

Looking for More Activities for This Story?

Click below to access the full age-specific *Dwell* session for this story:

- [2nd-3rd Grade: The Birth of John the Baptist](#)
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