



## LESSON 52

3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Principle:** We must repent of sin. God was pleased with Jesus. Jesus came to save.

**Bible Character(s):** Jesus and John the Baptist

**Scripture Reference:** Luke 3: 1-18, Matthew 3: 1-17



**PERSONAL PREPARATION:** Before this weekend, read Luke 3 and Matthew 3. Focus on John's words in Matthew 3:7-10. John's preaching prepares the way for Jesus. How do you prepare your heart for Christ? Is there an unforgiving spirit, bitterness, or other sin in your heart that prevents your growth? As you prepare to teach your campers about repentance and baptism, think about the difference between trying to change your actions as opposed to allowing Christ to change your heart and having your actions flow from a renewed heart. We want our campers to focus on their need for Christ because of their sin, not just trying to change their behavior. We will also discuss baptism and how Jesus began His ministry by being baptized. Baptism is an outward act symbolizing a changed heart. God calls us to follow Jesus by repenting and being baptized. Have you ever followed Jesus by being baptized as a believer? Spend some time in prayer and ask God to reveal how He can change your heart so that you live in a way that brings glory to God in every area of your life.

### PLUG IN TIME - 5-10 minutes as the kids begin to arrive

Arrive early to check the supplies in the bin and review the lesson. Write today's principle on the whiteboard. Remember to greet all campers upon arrival; meet their parents; welcome and introduce all visitors. Create a welcoming cabin for all campers!

### Timeline Review:

Supplies:

Timeline events – (1 set per bin)

Review the past couple of weeks by having the campers put the timeline events of Jesus' life on your wall in chronological order (John the Baptist was born; Jesus was born; Simeon and Anna recognized Jesus and gave praise; the wise men recognized and worshiped Jesus; Jesus stayed in the temple to listen to the teachers and ask questions; John the Baptist preached repentance; John baptized Jesus). Please remove and clip the events back together (with "Timeline Events" on top) at the end of your

service so the next class can place them in the correct order.



## **BIG GROUP TIME - 35-40 minutes**

As you line up, remind campers we are going to have fun as an entire Camp Grace group! We are going to live out GRACE by **Glorifying God** through worship, **Respecting All Leaders**, and **Accepting Responsibility** to listen with attentive ears, minds, and hearts - fully **Celebrating Christ** with passion! We should **Encourage Others** to do the same, by not distracting them from their worship of God.

**\*Take your cabin flag to Big Group.**

### **The Bridge to Small Group**

Today we will look at the condition of our hearts and the importance of repentance. As we talk about repentance, we will show that changing our actions does not change our sinful nature. Fruit comes from a changed heart.

## **Small Group Time - 25-30 minutes**

### **Getting Started**

If your cabin did well in Big Group, acknowledge it. If not, take a couple of minutes to talk about how they can do better next time.

**What did you learn in Big Group? Why did the staff member keep eating the cookies?** (To show that even though he/she said sorry, his/her actions did not change.) **What did the staff members learn about what it means to repent?** (It means to recognize what Jesus did, feel truly sorry for your sin and ask forgiveness, turn from sin back to God, actions change from a changed heart.)

**Last week, we studied about Jesus when He was a young boy. How did Jesus experience growing up just like each of us?** (Because He was fully human.) **How did Jesus live His life as He grew up?** (He had a desire to be in God's presence, to study about God, and to share God with others.) **Why did Jesus need to study about God?** (So that He could gain wisdom and understanding in who God is and who He was as God's Son.) **We also need to grow in wisdom and understanding of who God is and who we are as His child.**

**Today we are going to read about John the Baptist. Who remembers John the Baptist?** (He is a man who lived in the wilderness, wore camel skin, ate locusts and honey, preached in the desert, Jesus' cousin.) **What was John the Baptist's purpose?** (He prepared the way for Jesus.)

**Let's begin reading the Bible in Luke 3 [NLT].**

### **Luke 3:1-2a**

*1 It was now the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, the Roman emperor. Pontius Pilate was governor over Judea; Herod Antipas was ruler over Galilee; his brother Philip was ruler over Iturea and Traconitis; Lysanias was ruler over Abilene. 2 Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests.*

**All of these people who are named were the religious leaders and rulers during the time of John the Baptist and Jesus. Let's continue reading the Bible.**

### *Luke 3:2b-4*

*At this time a message from God came to John son of Zechariah, who was living in the wilderness.*

### *Matthew 3:4*

*4 John's clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey.*

John was very different from the religious leaders mentioned in Luke 3. He had been living in the wilderness, where God prepared him to share His message with the people and prepare them for Jesus. John was more like the people he preached to, more ordinary, than the religious leaders. John was not the most powerful man of that time. Annas and Caiaphas had more power than John, but God chose to use John as His messenger.

Let's keep reading the Bible in Luke 3 to see what John did with the message from God.

### *Luke 3:3-6*

*3 Then John went from place to place on both sides of the Jordan River, preaching that people should be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven. 4 Isaiah had spoken of John when he said,*

*"He is a voice shouting in the wilderness,*

*'Prepare the way for the LORD's coming!*

*Clear the road for him!*

*5 The valleys will be filled,*

*and the mountains and hills made level.*

*The curves will be straightened,*

*and the rough places made smooth.*

*6 And then all people will see*

*the salvation sent from God."*

During this time, when kings would travel, the people would physically smooth out the roads to prepare for the king's arrival. They would make the road smooth so that the king could travel on it easily.

John the Baptist told the people that the true King was coming. They needed to prepare their hearts for the true King, just as they prepared roads for the king of a nation, so that they were ready to believe and trust in Jesus.

## **Preparing the Way**



The purpose is to explore the ways we prepare our hearts for Jesus.

### **Supplies:**

"Preparing for a King" worksheet (1 per camper)

Have the campers circle the things they would use to clean a house before the arrival of a king or queen. Then have them put a box around the things on the worksheet that would help them prepare their heart for the true King, Jesus.

1 John 1:9 tells us “But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.”

## Tie It Together



Most of us do not have kings and queens visit our homes, but we do have friends or relatives visit our house. We prepare our houses for guests by cleaning and making sure we have everything they would need while staying with us. We also need to prepare our hearts for Jesus. We don't need vacuums or feather dusters for that. We need to pray, read our Bible, confess our sin and repent. These help prepare our heart to follow Jesus.

Let's look at the definition of confession and repentance. (Show the definition sign.) **CONFESSION** is telling God how you have sinned. **REPENTANCE** is to turn away from your sin and ask Jesus to change your heart. Can you see the difference between these two things? Confession is telling God how you have sinned. Repentance goes a step further. When you repent of your sin, you turn away from your sin and ask Jesus to change your heart. A changed heart leads to changed actions.

As we continue reading about John the Baptist, we will see that he continued to preach and teach that people need to repent and be baptized. Let's continue to read the Bible in Matthew 3 to see how John preached about repentance.

### Matthew 3:7-10

*7 But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to watch him baptize, he denounced them. "You brood of snakes!" he exclaimed. "Who warned you to flee God's coming wrath? 8 Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. 9 Don't just say to each other, 'We're safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.' That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones. 10 Even now the ax of God's judgment is poised, ready to sever the roots of the trees. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire.*

The Pharisees and Sadducees were the religious leaders of this time. Do you think they were surprised to hear John the Baptist call them a “brood of snakes?” (Allow responses.) These leaders followed all the laws. They looked down on other people who did not follow the laws. They were not used to someone calling them names; they were used to people thinking they were perfect. If they followed all the laws, why was John calling them a “brood of snakes?” (Allow responses.)

John says, “Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God.” Even though the Pharisees and Sadducees were following the law, they were doing this to make themselves look good, not because they confessed and repented of their sin. They lived selfishly. When we truly confess and repent of our sins our heart changes and the way we live our life is affected by this heart change. Our actions come from a desire to serve God instead of a desire to serve ourselves.

## Tree Farm



The purpose is to see that the fruit on the tree is directly related to the heart

### Supplies:

Tree pictures (1 per bin)

Look at the pictures and ask the campers which picture represents the Pharisees and Sadducees, and which heart represents someone who has repented.

## Tie It Together



John warned the Israelites that God would cut down the trees that did not bear fruit. This means that if we do not repent and turn from our sin, we will face God's judgment. We all have sinful, dirty hearts. God wants our hearts to be changed so that our lives can bear fruit that bring glory to Him. We cannot do enough good things to make up for our sin. There is absolutely nothing we can do by ourselves to be right with God. We have to repent and believe that Jesus is the only way our sins can be forgiven and our heart made clean. What sin is in your life that makes your heart dirty? How can you make your heart clean? (Allow responses.)

Let's see how the Israelites responded to John's message in the Bible in Luke 3.

### *Luke 3:10-14*

*10 The crowds asked, "What should we do?"*

*11 John replied, "If you have two shirts, give one to the poor. If you have food, share it with those who are hungry."*

*12 Even corrupt tax collectors came to be baptized and asked, "Teacher, what should we do?"*

*13 He replied, "Collect no more taxes than the government requires."*

*14 "What should we do?" asked some soldiers.*

*John replied, "Don't extort money or make false accusations. And be content with your pay."*

How do we live to please God? (Allow responses.) We confess our sin (selfish, unkind, disobedient, unforgiving, prideful, dishonest, etc). We repent by asking the Holy Spirit to change our heart so that our lives show God and others how much we love Him.

God's Word shows us how a heart changed by the Holy Spirit produces fruit (our actions):

### *Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)*

*22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control.*

## Inside. Out? Outside. In?



The purpose is to show that the condition of the heart determines your actions.

### Supplies:

Job cards (1 set per bin)

Have each camper choose one item from the group of pictures to hold. Each item represents a job. Have each camper state what job he/she would have based on the item he/she chose. Depending on the size of the class, you may need to have campers take turns choosing to give everyone a chance. (Please clip the cards back together at the end of the activity.)

### Tie It Together



You all look like you would be able to do the job you chose. Are you really a fireman because you are wearing a fire helmet? (Allow responses.) The outward things do not change who you really are. Just because you hold a baseball bat does not mean you are playing in the World Series this weekend. When you are kind to your brother and sister, does that action change your heart? No, only faith in Jesus can make your heart new. Once your heart is changed, your life looks different. Your actions *show* that your heart has been changed. You cannot change your heart by changing your actions. How does your heart need to be changed for your actions to bring glory to God?

After they repented of their sin, the people were baptized. The act of baptism did not change them. Baptism was an outward symbol that they repented of their sin. It's the same for us. When we believe in God and repent of our sin, we can be baptized so others know that we believe and trust in God. Have any of you been baptized? Why did you get baptized? (Teachers, if you have been baptized, please feel free to briefly describe when and why you got baptized.)

After this, Jesus came to the Jordan River. Let's read the Bible in Matthew 3 to find out more.

### Matthew 3:13-17

*13 Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. 14 But John tried to talk him out of it. "I am the one who needs to be baptized by you," he said, "so why are you coming to me?"*

*15 But Jesus said, "It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires." So John agreed to baptize him.*

*16 After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy."*

For thirty years, Jesus lived as you and I do, but without sin. Jesus' baptism is the start of His ministry teaching and miracles. This was a pretty amazing start to Jesus' ministry. Here is verse 17 again: "And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.'" How did Jesus bring

God great joy? How can you bring God great joy? (Allow responses.)

## Prayer Time

Spend a few minutes in prayer to close small group time. Thank God for His Son Jesus coming to live on earth to save us from our sin. Ask God to help us ask forgiveness and repent of our sin so we can live a life that brings Him glory.



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