Preschool–Grade 6

John the Baptist

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: John pointed people to Jesus: "Behold the Lamb of God!" We can point others to Jesus too.
Bible passage: Matthew 3:1–11, Luke 3:10–16 and John 1:19–37. Read them before class.
Memory verse: "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." *John 1:29 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible, a big paper arrow, 6 paper strips, a marker, tape, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the 6 paper strips (see part 4). Cut a big arrow out of paper. Hide your Bible somewhere in the room, and put bookmarks in it at Matthew 3 and John 1.

1. Opening game: Follow the Arrow (5 minutes)

Say: "I hid something special in this room. I will not tell you where. I will point the way." Hold up the paper arrow and point it. The kids take a few steps the way it points. Turn the arrow, and they follow again, until someone finds the Bible. Play again and let a child hide it and hold the arrow. Ask: *How did you find it? (We followed the arrow. It pointed the way.)* Say: "Today we will meet a man whose whole job was to point people to Jesus."

2. Bible story: John Points to Jesus (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Matthew 3, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was **John**" (John 1:6). People called him **John the Baptist** (Matthew 3:1), because he **baptized** people. John preached out in the **wilderness**, a dry, empty land with no towns (3:1). He wore clothes made of camel's hair, with a leather belt (3:4). And he ate locusts (a kind of grasshopper) and wild honey (3:4)!

John told the people, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). Say: "**Repent** means to be sorry for your sins and turn away from them. **At hand** means very near." Long before, God's prophet Esaias (Isaiah) wrote that someone would come and call out, "**Prepare ye the way of the Lord**, make his paths straight" (3:3). Say: "**Prepare** means get ready. John was getting the people ready, because the Lord was coming!"

Many people came out to John. They told God their sins, and John baptized them in Jordan (3:5–6). The people asked John, "What shall we do then?" John said that a person with two coats should give one to someone who has none, and a person with food should share it too (Luke 3:10–11).

Some people wondered if John was the **Christ**, the Savior God had promised (Luke 3:15). John said, "I am not the Christ" (John 1:20). John said Someone much greater was coming after him, and John was not even good enough to carry His shoes (Matthew 3:11)!

The story continues: One day John saw Jesus coming to him. John said, **read John 1:29 from your Bible:** "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Say: "**Behold** means look! Long ago, God's people brought a lamb to God when they had sinned (Leviticus 4:32). John was saying, 'Look! Jesus is the One who takes away sin!'"

The next day, John was standing with two of his **disciples**, people who learned from him. Jesus walked by. John looked at Jesus and said again, "Behold the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard John, and they **followed Jesus** (John 1:35–37). One of them was **Andrew** (1:40). John did not say, "Follow me." He pointed to Jesus!

Later John said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). Say: "That means Jesus must become more and more important, and John less and less." Point up and say together: "Look at Jesus!"

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. What did John wear? *(Clothes of camel's hair and a leather belt, Matthew 3:4)*
2. What did John eat? *(Locusts and wild honey, 3:4)*
3. What did John tell the people to do? *(Repent, turn away from their sins, 3:2)*
4. What did John say when he saw Jesus coming? *("Behold the Lamb of God," John 1:29)*
5. What did John's two disciples do when they heard him? *(They followed Jesus, 1:37)*

4. Memory verse: Six Strips game (5 minutes)

Tape the 6 paper strips up in order: *The next day John / seeth Jesus coming unto him, / and saith, Behold / the Lamb of God, / which taketh away / the sin of the world. John 1:29.* Explain the old words: **seeth** means sees, **saith** means says, **behold** means look, and **taketh away** means takes away. Read the verse together. Then take down one strip and read it again. Keep taking down one strip each time until the kids can say the whole verse by themselves.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "John said Jesus takes away the sin of the world. God loves you very much. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (Acts 2:4). John said Jesus would baptize with the Holy Ghost (Matthew 3:11)!"
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.
This week: point someone to Jesus, like John did. Tell one person something Jesus did, or invite a friend to church.

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **John the Baptist word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/john-the-baptist-word-search), crossword (vbshq.com/puzzles/john-the-baptist-crossword), maze (vbshq.com/puzzles/john-the-baptist-maze) or worksheet (vbshq.com/worksheets/john-the-baptist-worksheet), the coloring page or craft (vbshq.com/bible-stories/john-the-baptist), or **Crooked to Straight:** the kids stand in a wiggly, crooked line across the room. Ask a question from part 3, or "What does behold mean?" The child who answers steps into a straight line by the door, points at the door and says, "Behold the Lamb of God!" Keep going until the whole crooked line is straight. Say: "John said, 'make his paths straight' (Matthew 3:3)."

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7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away sin. Thank You that You love us so much. Help us point our friends and family to Jesus, like John did. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks why he was called John the Baptist: because he baptized people in Jordan (Matthew 3:1, 3:6). "Baptist" means the one who baptizes.
If a child asks if John really ate bugs: yes, the Bible says he ate locusts and wild honey (Matthew 3:4). God's law said locusts were all right to eat (Leviticus 11:22).
If a child asks why John called Jesus a lamb: God's people brought a lamb to God when they had sinned (Leviticus 4:32). Jesus is the Lamb of God, because He came to take away our sin (John 1:29).
If a child asks if our baptism is the same as John's: John's baptism got people ready for Jesus (Acts 19:4). After Jesus rose again, Peter preached baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38).

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