

January 28 – February 3: Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 3

Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord



How was John the Baptist unique? (Matthew 3)

John's preaching and baptizing in the wilderness became a great spectacle. Curious people came from miles around, even from Galilee, to watch and listen to him. As we have discussed in previous lessons, the Jews practiced ritual immersions upon conversion and before high holy days for purification purposes, so John's baptisms were both strange and familiar.

The Law of Moses is built around repentance, with an emphasis on restitution to the victims of our wrongdoings. The Jews understood that their sins were transferred to the animals they sacrificed as part of their repentance. On the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) in the fall, blood atonement was emphasized.

But there is nothing in scripture that says John taught his followers to go offer sacrifice in the temple. John himself was a Levite and could have been working in the temple. He seemed to be offering another way to repent, sending people to seek the Savior and make themselves worthy of the Gift of the Holy Ghost. No wonder both the Pharisees and Sadducees were angered by John's ministry and sent spies to watch him. He was upsetting the whole order of things.

Locusts and wild honey (Matthew 3:4; Mark 1:6):

People seem keen to point out that John was eating from locust trees and not eating grasshoppers. This might be comforting to us, but it's not the truth. These kinds of insects are kosher to eat according to the Law of Moses, and John ate them.

Children of Abraham are chosen (Matthew 3: 9):

The Jews considered themselves the Chosen People, and though they were oppressed and scattered, felt they were favored among all of the earth's peoples. John chided them and said their heritage meant nothing if they were unrighteous, and that all could be numbered among the Children of God, if they were righteous.

Whose fan is in his hand (Matthew 3: 12):

Jesus had come for the very purpose of being polarizing and controversial, in order to separate the righteous from the wicked. When there is opposition, it forces choices upon us, and we show our true colors. The "fan" is the sifter that sifts the grain from the chaff; the chaff is then burned and the grain saved.

The dove and the voice from heaven (Matthew 3: 16-17; Mark 1: 9-11; Luke 3: 21-22):

A biblical proof that the Godhead consists of 3 separate beings and not a trinity.

Christ's 40 days in the wilderness (Mark 1:13):

We can't know if Christ's wilderness sojourn was 40 days, because the Jews used the number 40 as a catch-all to mean "a really long time." But it must have been an eventful time and it would be amazing to have an account of it. Not only was Christ directly confronted and tempted by Satan, but he was among the animals (and may have communicated with them) and was ministered to by angels. Surely, He learned a great deal through direct revelation during this experience that prepared Him for His mission. Surely, He was in the Judean wilderness, which is desert, although there are oases, and He could have been succored if He was unable to bear fasting for the entire time.

John was put into prison (Mark 1:14):

John was put into prison by Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great. He was Tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. John was sentenced to death and then beheaded after John rebuked him for divorcing his wife, Phasaelis, and unlawfully taking Herodias, the wife of his brother Herod Philip I. Jesus and John had a deep bond with one another, but we don't see them together much in the scriptures. Some scholars think Christ was a disciple of John the Baptist. That would have been backwards, but Christ could have sojourned with John before He was baptized or spent time with him when they were children. There is just no record of these things.

Jesus taught as one having authority and not as the Scribes (Mark 1: 22):

The Jewish people may have visualized Jesus as a scribe when they heard Him preach and teach from the scriptures. The Scribes appeared during the Babylonian captivity as the Jews lost their ability to speak Hebrew and began to speak Aramaic, the language of Assyria and Babylon. Later, the Jews had needed to learn Greek. The Scribes wrote up legal documents, but they also read Hebrew and

understood the scriptures. They taught them to the Jews. They could be of any opinion, so the Jews were used to a variety of ideas coming from the Scribes. But Jesus knew. He taught with authority even those things that would have been mysteries to the scholarly Scribes.



Jesus could no more enter the city (Mark 1: 45):

As Jesus preached in Galilee and healed people and drove out evil spirits, His fame began to spread. In verse 44, he commanded a healed leper NOT to say anything, but to show himself unto the priest. When a person had leprosy according to the Law of Moses, it was the priest who decided whether the person had to be isolated. In the book of Leviticus there are rules both for identifying leprosy and cleansing from it (Leviticus 14). So, in order to be able to go back into contact with other people, the recovered leper needed to present himself to the priest, who would examine him.

Christ's fame was noised abroad, and soon the crowds were so great, He couldn't enter into the cities (mostly Capernaum), but had to teach in the wilderness, where He still attracted great crowds.

Annas and Caiaphas were high priests (Luke 3: 2):

The family of Annas in Jerusalem were Sadducees and extremely wealthy. At the time, you could purchase the position of high priest from the Romans. Annas was the high priest, as were several of his sons in turn, and then Caiaphas, his son-in-law.

Come Follow Me

NEW TESTAMENT 2019

BAPTISM OBJECT LESSON

Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 3

All three of this week's chapters tell about the baptism of Jesus Christ. We have all been commanded to be baptized just like Jesus (John 3:5). Here are some ideas for discussing and learning about the ordinance of baptism:

- Read and discuss the fourth Article of Faith: "We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost."
- Watch videos from the LDS Media Library about the baptism of Christ. ["The Baptism of Jesus"](#) is a good option. Younger kids may understand the story better by watching the ["Jesus Is Baptized"](#) video from the New Testament Stories collection.
- Talk about the covenants made when you get baptized. We promise to take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ, keep His commandments, and serve Him to the end (Mosiah 18:8-10 and D&C 20:37). In return, God gives us blessings like the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost, the remission of sins, being spiritually reborn, and eternal life (2 Nephi 31:19-20). (More information can be found in the LDS Gospel Topics [section on baptism](#).) Consider making a simple chart outlining these promises.
- Talk about how we renew this covenant each week when we take the sacrament (D&C 20:77-79).
- Read ["Logan's Baptism,"](#) a story from the Friend about the steps we need to take to get back to heaven.

Finally, here is a fun visual activity to do after discussing the importance of baptism and repentance:

Materials: glass of water, food coloring, spoon, and a glass of bleach (make sure you have more bleach than water)

1. Pour water into a glass and explain that this represents us.
2. Add a drop of food coloring to the water (stir it in completely with a spoon) and explain that sometimes we make mistakes and sin, making us not feel very good on the inside.
3. Then pour the bleach into the water as you explain that baptism and repentance can make us clean again and feel better.
4. Wait a minute, and the water should become clear again.

*Consider allowing your children to participate by dropping in the food coloring, stirring it in, and pouring in the bleach if they are old enough.

Come Follow Me

NEW TESTAMENT 2019

ROLES OF THE HOLY GHOST COLORING ACTIVITY

Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 3

We learn from all three chapters that Christ was baptized and received the Holy Ghost, which was represented by a dove (Matthew 3:11–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22). We are also commanded to be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost through confirmation. Just like a blanket or quilt offers us both comfort and protection, the Holy Ghost can help us in many different ways.

To help your kids understand the various roles of the Holy Ghost, complete the following coloring activity (feel free to alter the activity based on the ages of your kids):

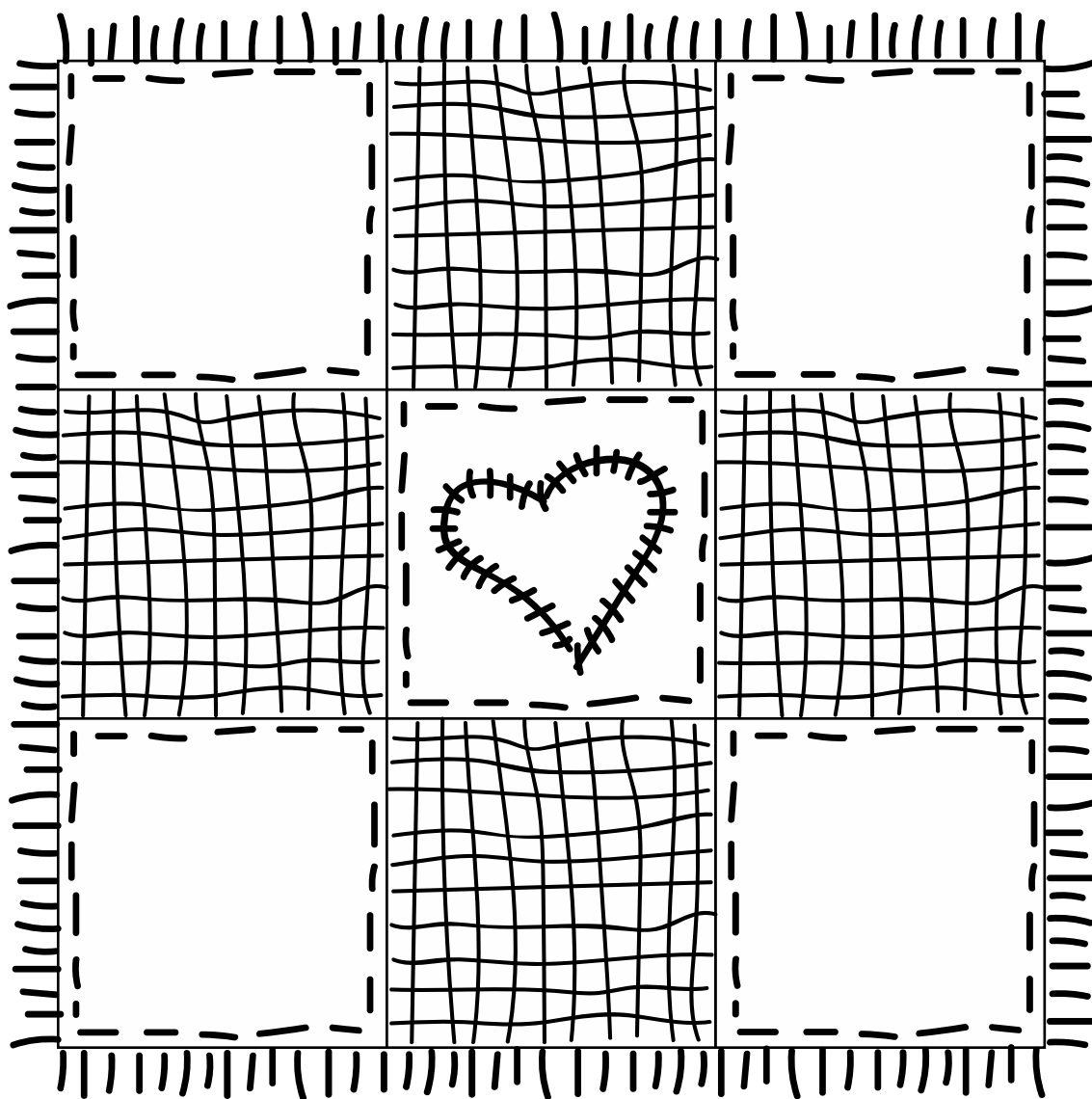
Materials: one printed patchwork quilt graphic for each kid, pencils/pens, and crayons/colored pencils

1. Print however many patchwork quilt graphics you need (found below).
2. If you would like, pick one or more of *The Friend* stories about the Holy Ghost by following the link in the resource list below. Depending on the ages and attention spans of your kids, you could also read the general conference talk listed below about the Holy Ghost.
3. Talk about the different ways the Holy Ghost can help us (comforts, protects, warns, testifies, teaches, inspires, guides, helps us remember things, helps us understand, helps us make good decisions, helps us communicate with others, helps us see what's true).
4. In each quilt square, write one way the Holy Ghost can help us.
5. When the quilt is filled, let the kids have fun coloring the squares.

Resources to supplement discussion:

- [“How Does the Holy Ghost Help You?”](#) by Elder Gary E. Stevenson
- [“The Gift of the Holy Ghost”](#) by Margaret Lifferth (read the beginning section)
- [LDS Gospel Topics “Holy Ghost”](#) section
- List of [stories about the Holy Ghost](#) from *The Friend* magazine

How does the Holy Ghost help me?



Come Follow Me

NEW TESTAMENT 2019

PROTECTION OF THE HOLY GHOST OBJECT LESSON

Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 3

Credit for this idea goes to Aleah Ingram at LDS Daily.

In this week's study, we learn that Jesus was baptized and received the Holy Ghost, which came down in the form of a dove (Matthew 3:11–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22). One of the things the Holy Ghost does is “protect us from physical and spiritual danger” (LDS Gospel Topics: [Holy Ghost](#)). If you would like, read the short story “[Safety and the Spirit](#)” from the Friend. You could also share stories with your children about when you have felt protected by the Holy Ghost. Finally, here is a fun object lesson that represents the protection of the Holy Ghost:

Materials: bowl of water, pepper, dish soap, and paper towels

1. Fill up a bowl with water and explain that this represents the world.
2. Sprinkle some pepper onto the water's surface and explain that it represents sin and temptation.
3. Dip your finger into the water and pull it out; pepper should stick to your finger. Without guidance and help, the dark things of the world can stick to us.
4. Wipe or rinse the pepper off of your finger and coat it in dish soap this time.
5. Dip your coated finger back into the water bowl with pepper and watch as the pepper springs away to the edges of the bowl. Explain that when we have the Holy Ghost (dish soap), we can be protected from the dark things of the world.

Note: This will only work one time, so refill the bowl with fresh water and pepper if you would like to try again.