

January 21 – 27: John 1



All things were created through "the Word" (John 1:1-3):

The [Joseph Smith translation](#) tells us that the Word was the gospel and Christ was the bearer of the Word. Latter-day Saints know that God the Father, through Christ, has created worlds without number. ([See Moses 1.](#)) The Lord told Moses that these numberless worlds were created by the "Word of My Power." In Moses 2:2 God is describing the creation of the earth and uses the phrase familiar to us from Genesis: "And I, God, **said**: Let there be light; and there was light." God spoke, and the universe moved from chaos to order, infused with light that emanates from God through Christ. First, an interesting discussion might be the power of words and the power of God's word. Why might Christ or the gospel be called The Word?

Jesus is light (John 1:4):

We know from our modern scriptures that the light of Christ is in all things and through all things and powers the universe and everything in it. A discussion of light and the light of Christ could incorporate the following scriptures: [D&C 10:70](#); [D&C 11:13](#); [D&C 14:9](#); [D&C 84:46](#); [D&C 88](#); [D&C 93:9](#).

Crowds came to hear John the Baptist preach:

Many times John refers to or speaks to the Pharisees who have come to watch him preach. They are there not to be baptized but to gather information on what John is doing. John demonstrated more knowledge and power than had been manifested in Judea, but he preached and baptized outside tradition and lines of responsibility. He became quite a spectacle and generated a lot of

curiosity. People came from miles around to see him, including four of Christ's original followers. In John 1 the Pharisees are trying to identify John as someone outside the realm of day-to-day Jewish practice.

Could John have been a storied character from scripture and history?

The Pharisees wondered if John could be Elijah. Elijah was taken up to heaven without tasting death and most Jews expected him to return as promised in Malachi. Tradition held that Elijah's return would precede the coming of the Messiah. In fact, Messiah would come so quickly after Elijah's return that it would be like Messiah had hold of Elijah's cloak. Messianic fervor was sweeping Israel. Could John be Elijah or some other prophet prophesied to come to prepare the way?

Was baptism practiced by the Jews?

The Jews did and do practice ritual immersion, called *mikveh*. Ritual immersion can be in a font, but "living water" is required. The water must be passing through, not standing. Jews participate in ritual immersion upon conversion to Judaism, but also for purification for high holy days and after periods of uncleanness. So John's practice of baptizing in the Jordan river would have been an oddity but related to a practice that was understood.

[caption id="attachment_222731" align="aligncenter" width="640"]



A mikveh in Qumran[/caption]

Were John and Jesus strangers to each other? (John 1:26):

There is nothing in the Bible that specifically mentions John and Jesus encountering each other physically until Jesus' baptism. They were cousins, but Jesus grew up in Nazareth in the north and John in Judea and the wilderness. Could not the family of Joseph and Mary visit and even stay with Zacharias and Elizabeth when they came to Jerusalem for high holy days? This is a mystery. Even if they were kept apart by deaths of their parents (Zacharias and Elizabeth were aged and Joseph appears to have died by the time Christ was crucified) or because of dangerous enemies, they were kindred spirits who loved each other dearly.

Peter, Andrew, Phillip, and Nathaniel were all converted by John's preaching:

John's preaching was the result of direct revelation from God. His baptizing in the wilderness was odd and jarring. It made people wake up and feel that something earthshaking was transpiring in Israel. People had the scriptures before them, and promises had been made by the prophets. Those who knew those prophecies sought the truth through the Spirit and were led to conversion to the gospel of Christ.

Come Follow Me

NEW TESTAMENT 2019

BUILDING YOUR TESTIMONY ACTIVITIES

January 21–27: John 1

John tells powerful truths about the Savior at the beginning of the chapter (John 1:1-18). He also documents John the Baptist's testimony of Christ in John 1:36 and Nathanael's in John 1:49. In this chapter, we can learn about the importance of strengthening and sharing our own testimonies. Here are three simple activities related to building testimonies:

Filling the Jar: Place a small, empty glass jar in the middle of the table. Then put a bowl of little objects next to the jar (these could be candies, bigger beads, pom pom balls, etc). Go around the table and take turns suggesting different ways to build testimonies. Each time someone gives an idea, they get to place one object in the jar. Keep going until the jar is filled. Talk about how we can always continue to “fill up” our testimonies (same as the jar) by doing those things.

Building a Sure Foundation: Print and cut out the house graphic found below. Also, cut out a few strips of paper for each member of your family (you could cut these out in the shape of rocks if you have more time). Sing the song “The Wise Man and the Foolish Man” and talk about the wise man and why his house wasn't washed away. Give everyone a few strips of paper and have them write down one way to build your testimony on each strip. Then place all of the paper strips below the house graphic, giving it a “sure foundation.”

Growing Beans: This activity can be found on Third Hour's “Come Follow Me” resource page under January 6th: We Are Responsible for Our Own Learning. It involves discussing two parables and planting your own bean seeds in a good environment like you would a testimony. If your family already did this activity, check the beans for growth and progress. Talk about how our testimonies are always growing and changing.

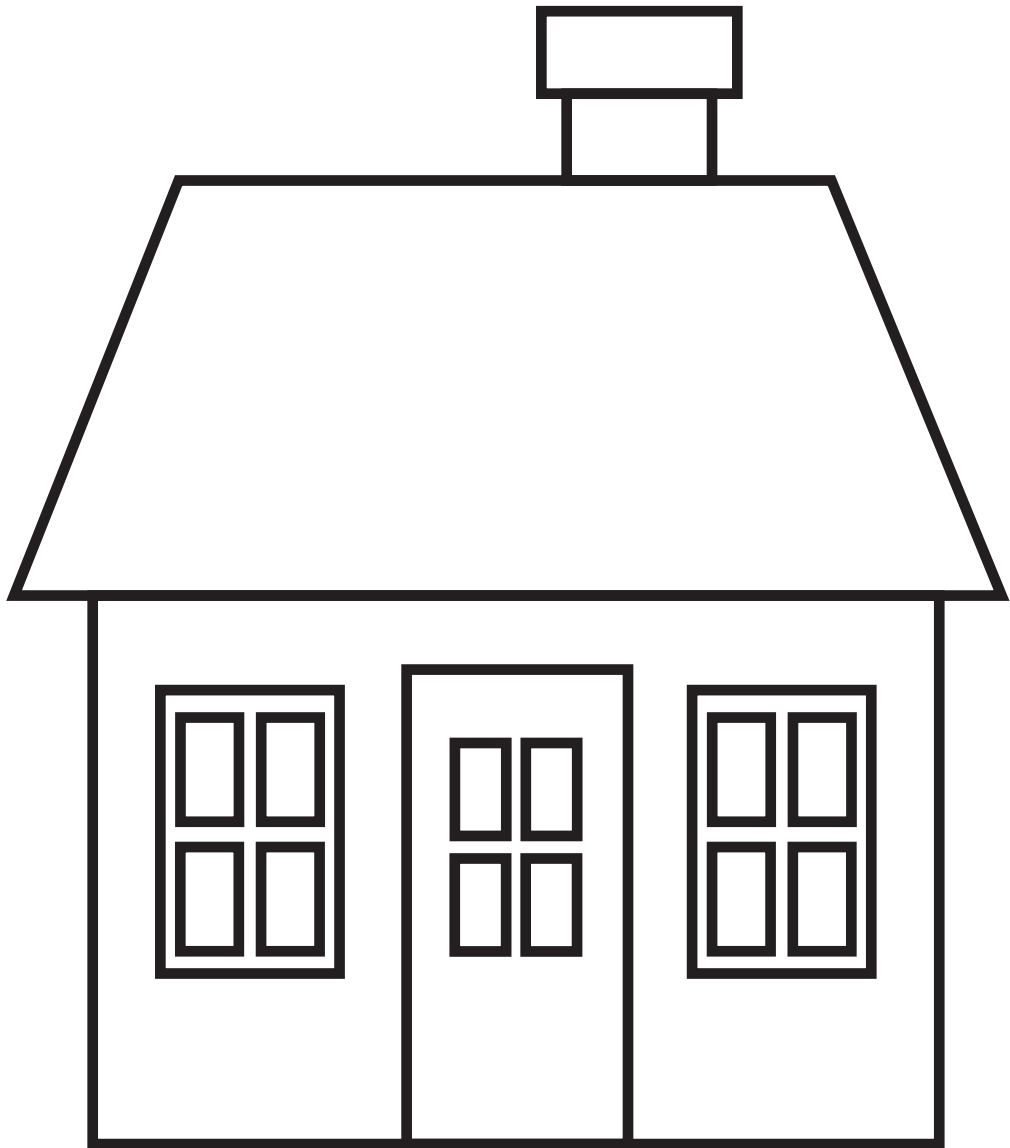
Here are some potential discussion questions:

What do we learn from John about Jesus? (It may be helpful to read the Joseph Smith Translation version of John 1:1-18.)

What happens after John the Baptist tells others about the Savior?

How did Nathanael come to know Jesus was the Savior?

What do we learn about sharing our testimonies in this chapter?



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PACKING FOR A TRIP ACTIVITY

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Credit for this idea goes to Ruthann Weeks on Sugardoodle.

The beginning of John 1 talks of Christ before his life on earth. This is a great opportunity to discuss our pre-mortal lives, Christ in pre-mortality, and why we were sent down to earth. Here is a fun object lesson that shows what tools we were given by Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ to use when we came down to earth.

Materials: backpack, gloves, hand sanitizer, blanket, flashlight, and a key

Gather all of the items mentioned above and place them inside the backpack. Explain to your kids that when you pack for a trip, you need to have a plan and take things that will help you along the way. This was also true when Heavenly Father designed the Plan of Salvation. He outlined what we needed to do to come home and gave us some tools to help along the way. Since Jesus was chosen to be the Savior, we can choose whether or not to use these tools. Have someone pull an item out of the backpack one at a time and look up the attached scripture:

- flashlight = guidance of Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ (Matthew 7:7)
- gloves = body (D&C 130:22)
- hand sanitizer = baptism (Alma 7:14)
- blanket = Holy Ghost (John 14:26)
- key = going to the temple (D&C 124:39)

*You may pick other scripture verses if you would like.

Here are some potential questions to discuss:

- Why was Jesus chosen to be the Savior?
- What do we learn from John 1:1-5 about the Savior's work?
- How do these tools help us return home?

Helpful resources on this topic:

Scriptures: John 1:1-5 (find helpful clarifications in Joseph Smith Translation, John 1:1-5)

Gospel Topics: [“Council in Heaven”](#) and [“Jesus Christ Chosen as Savior”](#)

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SHARING THE GOSPEL ACTIVITY

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John the Baptist sharing his testimony of the Savior in John 1:36 resulted in multiple people finding and following Jesus. This is a powerful example of the importance of bearing your own testimony to others. Here is a simple visual activity to accompany the story of John the Baptist telling others of Christ.

Materials: scriptures, five candles (along with matches or a lighter) or five flashlights (*other luminous objects will work as well)

- Start reading John 1:35-46 as a family with only one candle lit or flashlight on at the beginning (this represents John the Baptist).
- As you read, light another candle or turn on another flashlight when another named person hears of and decides to find Jesus (Andrew, Simon, Philip, and Nathanael).

Here are some possible questions to discuss when you finish reading:

What happened when John the Baptist testified of Christ?

What can we learn from these verses about how we should share the gospel?

Does anyone have a personal experience of sharing the gospel and seeing the effect?

What are some ways we can share the gospel with others?