



# Matthew/John

## John Pointed to Jesus

**Lesson Objective:** John prepared the way for Jesus.

**Activity:** *Where Are You From?*

Supplies: a world map, small stickers

Display the map. Invite kids to mark where they have visited or would like to visit, with the small stickers. Let them share about the places they have marked. Who picked the farthest place? Who picked the closest to where you currently live? Did anyone pick another country?

**Connect To activity to the lesson:**

Today's Bible story is about Jesus and John. John explained to his followers who Jesus is and where He came from.

**WORSHIP (15 min.)** Choose 2-3 songs to worship together as a family.

**Prayers:** How can I pray for you?

**Introduction:**

Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, the prophets had spoken of a forerunner—someone who would get people ready for Jesus. (Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1) At just the right time, “John came baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Mark 1:4). These baptisms were an outward sign of cleansing for people who had repented of their sins. In today's lesson, we will explore the fulfillment of these words.

**Video: (4 min.) - “John Pointed to Jesus”** *(Video Transcript)*

Jesus and His disciples went out into the countryside. People came to see them, and Jesus taught the people. Many people were baptized. Nearby, John the Baptist was baptizing people too. Some of the people who followed John got into an argument. They went to John. “Teacher,” they said, “remember the man you talked about, the One who was with you on the other side of the Jordan River? His disciples are baptizing people, and people are starting to follow Him.” John's followers were talking about Jesus. John answered them, “You heard me say that I am not the Messiah. I am the messenger who goes before Him to announce that He is coming.” This was true. John had said, “Someone greater than me is coming. I am not worthy to remove His sandals. I baptize you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” John tried to explain by talking about a wedding. When two people get married, the man who marries the bride is the groom. His friend stands with him at the wedding, and he is happy to be there and hear the groom's voice. John also knew that a wedding is the groom's special day; the groom's friend should not make it about himself. This was how John felt—like a groom's friend—because he was happy that Jesus, the Messiah, had come. John said, “Jesus must increase, but I must decrease.” Then John explained why Jesus was more important than himself. John was from the earth, and he could only talk about things on earth. Jesus—the One who comes from heaven—talked about things in heaven because He had seen them! Still, no one believed what Jesus said. Whoever believes Jesus knows that God tells the truth. God sent Jesus to earth, and Jesus speaks God's words. The Father loves the Son and has given Him power over everything. Whoever believes in the Son will have eternal life, but whoever refuses to believe in the Son will not have eternal life. He will never be able to get away from God's judgment.

*Christ Connection: John the Baptist told people to get ready for Jesus, the promised Messiah. Now that Jesus was on earth, John's mission was complete. Jesus was greater than John, and John joyfully stepped aside as Jesus began His earthly ministry.*

## Read –Matthew 3, John 1, 3

### Debrief: Questions to ask

**How is Jesus greater than John?** *(John said Jesus is more powerful. John baptized people with water to show that they were sorry for their sin, but Jesus would baptize people with the Holy Spirit. Jesus would change people’s hearts!)*

**Why did John say Jesus must increase and he (John) must decrease?** *(With Jesus on earth, John’s mission was complete. Jesus was the One whom people had been waiting for—the promised Messiah who would save people from their sins! Jesus was greater than John, and John joyfully stepped aside as Jesus began His earthly ministry.)*

**Who deserves fame and glory in our own lives—us or God? Why? Discuss ways we can make Jesus famous instead of trying to make a great name for ourselves.** *(Even when you work hard to accomplish something great, you can give God glory because He made you and gives you special talents and abilities.)*

### Apply the Story

John’s followers were concerned when they saw that Jesus’ disciples were baptizing people, too. They came to John, who pointed out several things about himself and about Jesus. Consider John’s comparisons:

- **Who were they?** John was clear: “I am not the Messiah” (John 3:28). Jesus is the bridegroom (John 3:29), and John was the groom’s friend.
- **Where did they come from?** John was from the earth, and he belonged to the earth. Jesus comes from above and is above all. (John 3:31)
- **What did they do?** John said, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” John was a witness to the Light. (John 1:7-8) He was a voice in the wilderness, and Jesus is the Word. (John 1:14, 23) John the Baptist told people to get ready for the Messiah. He baptized with water, but Jesus baptized with the Spirit. (John 1:33)
- **Why were they here?** John went before Jesus and rejoiced with Him. (John 3:28-29) Jesus came to give eternal life. (John 3:36) John described his joy as being complete. (John 3:29) The One for whom he had prepared the people was here. John’s mission was complete.

### GUIDE: Momentum Moment *Mission Complete!*

Write a task list of 5 to 10 tasks kids can complete. Make two copies.

*Sample tasks: Count how many steps it takes to walk from one side of the room to the other, tell your leader your favorite movie, sing the alphabet song, do 20 jumping jacks, high-five three other people, etc.*

Form two teams. Give each team a task list. On your whistle, have the teams complete the tasks. When a team finishes, its players should sit down and shout, “Mission complete!”

Discuss how great it feels when something you worked hard on is complete. John the Baptist told people to follow Jesus. Now that Jesus was there, John’s mission was complete. Jesus was greater than John, and John joyfully stepped aside as Jesus began His earthly ministry. Because Jesus is good, we can joyfully point others to Jesus. We don’t need fame or recognition for the things we accomplish; God gives us talents and abilities to point people to Him. We give glory to Jesus because He gave His life to rescue us.

**Close with a prayer:** Let each person take a moment to say a one sentence prayer.