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The Voice

Key References: Matthew 3:1-3, 5-12; *The Desire of Ages,* chap. 10, pp. 97-108; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 7, pp. 18-22, 97-99; Our Beliefs, nos. 15, 10, 22















powertext

"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Romans 6:4).

powerpoint

God's love leads us to depend on Jesus and to be baptized.

Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 18.

Have you ever been confused over what someone was trying to say? It sounded important. It sounded right, but you just needed to think about it for a while. Imagine a young man asking John the Baptist about his message.

A lone man, an outdoorsman, sat quietly on a large rock beside the Jordan River. The sun was setting. John knew many alone times with God. During the 30 years of his life he had spent a lot of his time this way. But since he had started preaching beside the Jordan River, most of his days were filled with people. People streamed to him from every Jewish town and village. They came for many reasons.

John could see someone coming now, walking along the shore toward him. It was probably someone who had not been able to talk with him earlier because of the crowds. A young man walked up and sat down on a rock near John. John turned and smiled. The two sat in silence for a while.

Finally the young man broke the silence. "Sir, what did you mean today when you told the people to 'repent,' and why are you baptizing them?"

John said a quick prayer, asking that God would give him wisdom to share His message with this young man.

"The Messiah is coming, and I've been sent to tell people how to be ready. Confession means that you admit that you need God. Repentance means you are sorry for the mistakes you've made by trying to do things in your own power, and you turn your life over to Him.

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Sunday

READ Read Matthew 28:19, 20 and this week's story, "The Voice."

WRITE Write the power text on a disposable cup or on a paper and tape it to a glass. Fill the cup or glass half full of water. Set it where you can see it all week.

LEARN Begin to learn the power text, Romans 6:4.

PRAY Ask God to make you thirsty for His Word this week.

Monday

READ Read Isaiah 55:6, 7 and Proverbs 28:13.

THINK Think of ways in which you could "seek the Lord while He may be found" and daily maintain your relationship with Jesus.

LOOK Look up the words *repent* and *confess* in a regular or a Bible dictionary. Write the definitions and ones of your own in your Bible study journal.

PRAY Pray a prayer confessing your need of Jesus, and your thankfulness for His love.

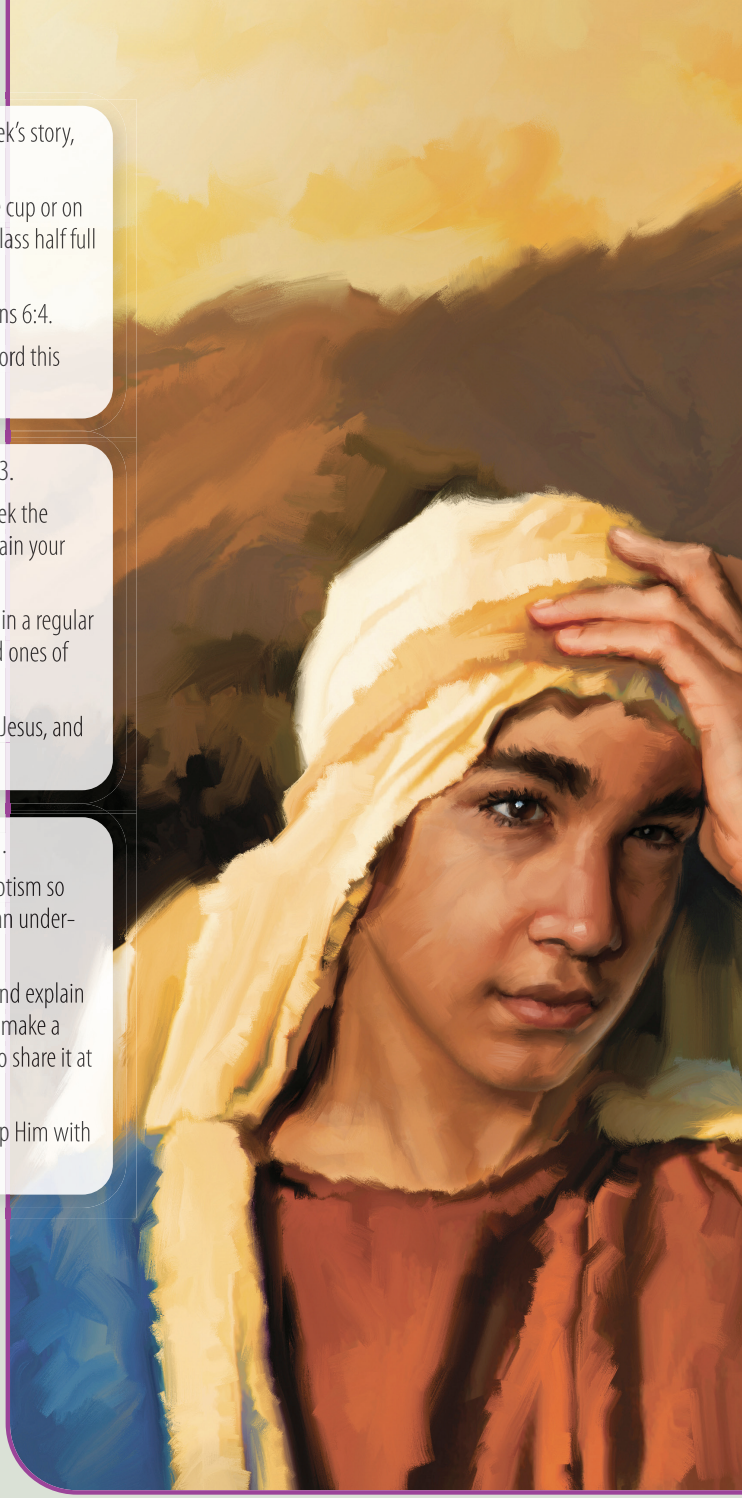
Tuesday

READ Read Colossians 2:12 and 1 Peter 3:21.

THINK Think of a creative way to explain baptism so that someone who knows nothing about it can understand it better.

CREATE Choose a creative way to illustrate and explain baptism to someone. For example, you could make a drawing, sculpture, poem, or dialogue. Plan to share it at Sabbath School.

PRAY Ask God to help you choose to worship Him with your whole life.





"Baptism is showing those around you that you have chosen to depend on God rather than yourself. Another way of looking at it is that you are choosing from now on to depend on God each day to help you live life His way."

Again it was silent there by the Jordan.

"But," began the young man, "you said something different to the Pharisees and Sadducees when they came out today. You made them angry. How could you say leaders such as these weren't ready to be baptized? Weren't you afraid?" The young man talked openly to John; he seemed to trust him.

"I speak only what God has told me to speak," John explained. "Do you remember the words from the prophet Isaiah about 'a voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God"'?" (Isaiah 40:3).

"Yes," the young man replied. "I have heard my father read it in the synagogue."

"I am that voice," John said simply. "When I call people to repentance and baptism, I am asking them to prepare

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Wednesday

READ Read Matthew 3:1-3, 5, 6.

WRITE Create a dialogue of a fisherman and a priest discussing John the Baptist's message. Try recording it using different voices for the two characters. Or practice it with a friend or family member. Plan to share it at Friday worship or in Sabbath School next week.

PRAY Ask God to help you tell someone about Him.

Thursday

READ Read Matthew 3:13-17.

DISCUSS Talk with an adult about what this New Testament baptism story has to teach you.

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write what you learned from your conversation.

PRAY Ask God to help you depend only on Him.

Friday

READ Read Acts 8:26-40.

COMPARE In your Bible study journal, write about what was the same and what was the difference between this story and the story of Jesus' baptism.

DISCUSS Have you been baptized? If not, do you want to be? Discuss your desire or any questions you have about baptism with a parent (or other adult). Talk to your pastor about it.

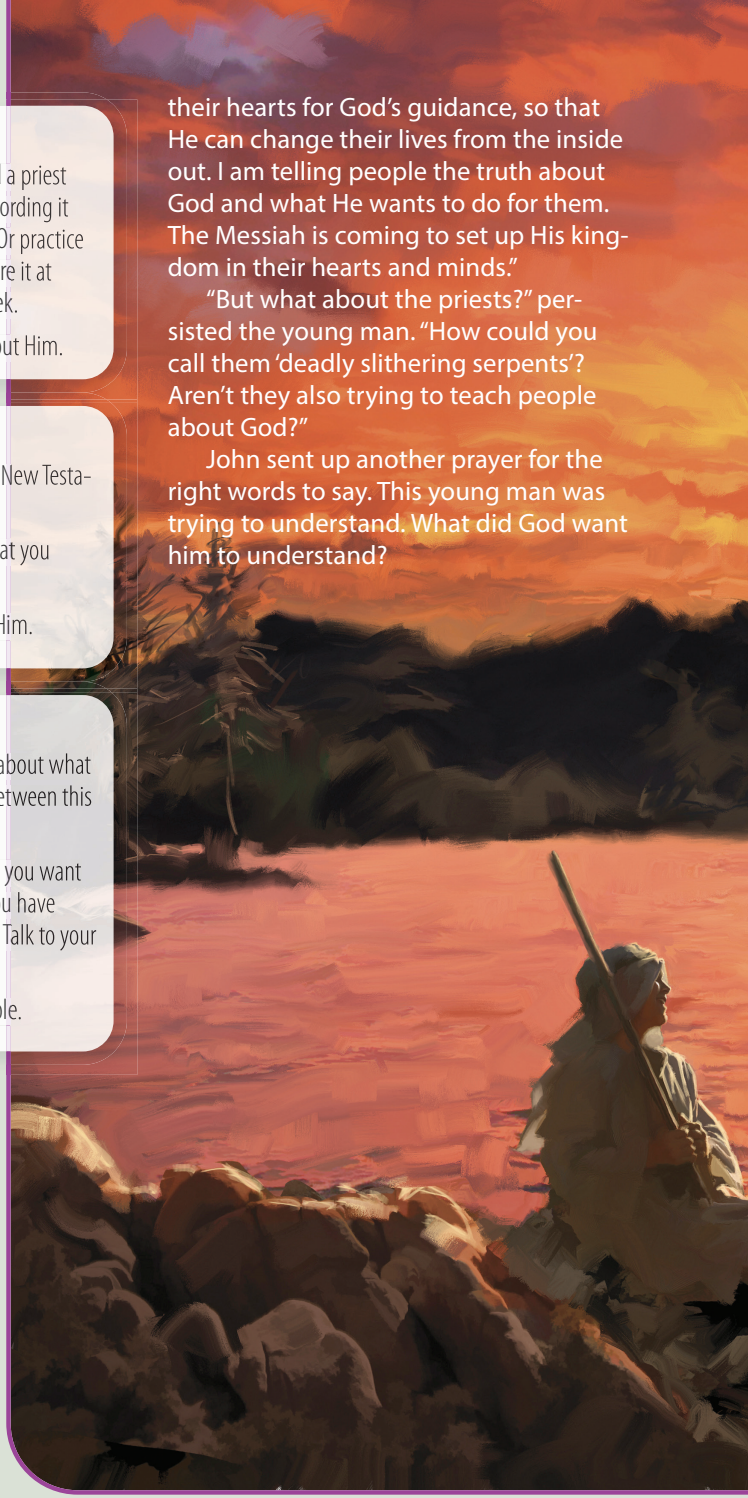
PRAY Ask God to help you follow His example.

Note: Your Bible study journal is found at the back of your Bible study guide. If you need additional space, use a notebook or open a file on your computer. Writing out your thoughts and ideas when you study the Bible helps you gain a deeper understanding of God's Word.

their hearts for God's guidance, so that He can change their lives from the inside out. I am telling people the truth about God and what He wants to do for them. The Messiah is coming to set up His kingdom in their hearts and minds."

"But what about the priests?" persisted the young man. "How could you call them 'deadly slithering serpents'? Aren't they also trying to teach people about God?"

John sent up another prayer for the right words to say. This young man was trying to understand. What did God want him to understand?



John turned to talk face to face. "Not everyone who comes to hear me preach is coming for the right reason. Some people are not really ready to depend on God. Some only want to get out of trouble. God knows who is sincerely wanting to live life God's way. Just working as a preacher or teacher isn't enough to make someone ready for God's kingdom."

John looked at the young man, who was staring past him. John's silent prayer might have been "Father, this is a hard message and yet it is so simple. Speak to his heart. Help him understand how to respond to Your love for him."

The night sounds along the river were the only amen. But John knew that God had heard. The young man stood up, smiled at John, and said simply, "Thanks. See you tomorrow."

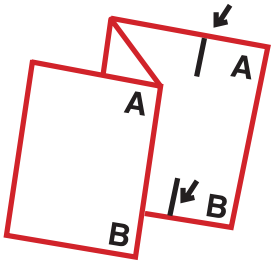


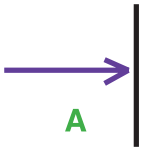
PUZZLE

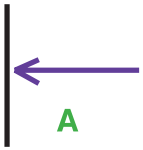
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IF ANYONE LOVES ME, HE WILL OBEY MY TEACHING

Instructions: To reveal God's command concerning baptism, fold A to A and B to B as in the diagram.







JOHN THE BAPTIST
WAS GOD'S
REPRESENTATIVE, WAS SENT
BY GOD TO MANKIND, AND
BAPTIZED MANY PEOPLE.
JESUS ALSO BEGAN
HIS MINISTRY
BY BEING HIMSELF BAPTIZED

