

3

From Prophet to Prisoner

Worship

We praise God for His great love for us.

POWER TEXT

"This is the one about whom it is written: 'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you'" (Matthew 11:10).

KEY REFERENCES

- Matthew 11:1-15
- Luke 7:18-28
- *The Desire of Ages,* chap. 22, pp. 214-225
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 8, pp. 22-24
- student story on page 42 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 3, The Father
- No. 4, The Son
- No. 10, The Experience of Salvation

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** Jesus is the answer when they are confused and have doubts about God.
- **Feel** grateful that Jesus understands their doubts and answers them.
- **Respond** by choosing to give their doubts and their lives to Jesus Christ.

POWERPOINT

We can come to God with our doubts, and He will understand and answer.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

John the Baptist is put in jail because of his preaching. He begins to question whether Jesus is really the promised Messiah. He sends two of his disciples to Jesus to inquire whether He is really the Messiah. Jesus understands John's doubts. He asks John's disciples to go back and tell John how Jesus is fulfilling the prophecies about the Messiah by opening the eyes of the blind, healing the lame, opening the ears of the deaf, and preaching the gospel to the poor. John's doubts are dispelled by this tender response from Jesus.

This is a lesson about worship.

Even though, because of his circumstances, John had doubts, Jesus still had good things to say about him. Jesus will never leave us because we have doubts. He accepts our worship even with our reasonable doubts, because in worshiping Him, we can overcome them.

Teacher Enrichment

"John would not discuss his doubts and anxieties with his companions. He determined to send a message of inquiry to Jesus. This he entrusted to two of his disciples, hoping that an interview with the Saviour would confirm their faith and bring assurance to their brethren. And he longed for some word from Christ spoken directly to himself" (*The Desire of Ages,* p. 216).

"Aside from the joy that John found in his mission, his life had been one of sorrow. His voice had been seldom heard except in the wilderness. His was a lonely lot. And he was not permitted to see the result of his own labors. It was not his privilege to be with Christ and witness the manifestation of divine power attending the greater light" (*The Desire of Ages,* p. 220).

"God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. . . . Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith" (*Steps to Christ,* p. 105).

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson.

Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the Readiness Activity of your choice. »

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	*A. Believe It or Not*	four sets of from one to three currency notes, starting with the lowest denomination.
		B. It's Reflexive	Bibles, doctor's reflex hammer or something similar
* Prayer and Praise	15-20	See page 37. Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, offering plate/basket
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story	Bibles
		Experiencing the Story	Bibles, play microphone and table (optional)
		Exploring the Bible	Bibles, whiteboard or chalkboard, markers or chalk
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Dealing With Doubt*	
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Scenario*	*Steps to Christ* (optional)
* Closing		A. Prayer and Closing Comments B. Reminder to Parents C. Coming Up Next Week	

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:
- ☐ money in several amounts

Believe It or Not

Hold three small bills (notes/coins) behind your back (the smallest paper denomination of your currency). (Adapt this exercise to use items other than money that might be more appropriate in your setting.)

Say: **I have some small bills (notes/coins). I will give them to anyone who will come forward to take them.** Wait to see if anyone will come without having seen them. If no one comes, show them to the class and then make the same offer.

Then do the same with progressively larger amounts of money (the next two highest forms of currency), first hiding them behind your back to see if they'll respond, then showing them to the students. Wait to see if they trust your words.

Debriefing

Ask: **What did you trust when I first told you I had the small bills? Did you trust me when I said I had larger bills? Why or why not? When were you able to stop doubting? What made you want to? Is there anyone who still doubts I have even more money? What, if anything, could I do to make you stop doubting? Our power point today is:**

We can come to God with our doubts, and He will understand and answer.

B

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ doctor's reflex hammer OR something similar

It's Reflexive

Bring a doctor's reflex hammer or other similar implement. Tell the students you want to check their reflexes. While they are seated with their legs dangling (or with one crossed over the other), go around and tap each just below one knee so that the leg kicks out in reflex.

Debriefing

Ask: **What happened when I tapped your leg? How did you feel? Did you have to think about your reaction as you were doing it? Could you control it? Why or why not?** Have two people read Philippians 4:19 (God will meet all our needs) and Isaiah 49:15, 16 (Can a woman forget her child? I have engraved you on My palms).

Ask: **How does your automatic reflex compare with how God responds to your needs? How does it make you feel to know that just as your reflexes are automatic reactions to an outside stimulus so God responds spontaneously to the needs of His children? How will knowing this about God change how you approach Him now?**

We can come to God with our doubts, and He will understand and answer.

Prayer and Praise

Notes

Fellowship
Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs
"In His Time" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 93)
"He's Able" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 100)
"Think About His Love" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 40)

Mission
Say: **Missionaries, though sometimes faced with doubts about their success, put them aside so that they can tell others about Jesus.**

Use *Adventist Mission* magazine for the mission story. You can go to https://am.adventistmission.org/mq-children or go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION.

Offering
YOU NEED:
- ☐ offering plate/basket

Say: **At a time when many people are doubting whether God is real, our offerings are an outward declaration of our belief in God and the spread of His message.**

Prayer
Have each student give one reason for their belief in God. Pray asking God to strengthen our belief in Him as we look for His second coming. Each time, ask a different student to pray. This way you will encourage all students to take a turn and have prayer for their class.

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

2

BIBLE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- Bibles

Introducing the Bible Story

Say: **Today we continue our study of John the Baptist. John zealously preached about the coming of the Messiah. When John baptized Jesus, he was sure about who Jesus was. But when times got hard for him, he found it harder to believe. We'll find out today what John did about the doubts that he began to have.** Ask for student volunteers to each take a verse from Matthew 11:1-3 and read their verse aloud.

We can come to God with our doubts, and He will understand and answer.

YOU NEED:
- Bibles
- play microphone (optional)
- table (optional)

Experiencing the Story

Divide the students into groups with a facilitator. Tell them they are to act as a news team and report what they have observed on location with John the Baptist's disciples in Galilee as they watched Jesus at work. Each group should read John's story in Matthew 11:4-15, each person taking a few verses. Then each group will organize their report, telling what they saw, heard, smelled, tasted, felt, etc. (For those teachers who would like to take more time with this activity, tell the students that they can put together an "evening news" program and report to the rest of the class. Provide a play microphone and a table for the reporter's desk. They should choose one person to play the newscaster/anchor, who will report exactly what happened and another to provide analysis about the relationship between John and Jesus and how John must have felt. Another may want to do "person-on-the-street interviews" with another group member.)

Debriefing

Say: **It must have been hard for John the Baptist to understand why Jesus was performing miracles to help others, but did nothing to rescue him from prison.**

Ask: **What emotions do you think John felt sitting in prison?** (sadness, anger, resentment, puzzlement, fear, feeling left out, jealousy) **What was John's doubt concerning Jesus?** (See Matthew 11:3.) **How did Jesus help to erase John's doubts?** (See verses 4, 5.)

We can come to God with our doubts, and He will understand and answer.

Accommodation for students with special needs

Use the Bibles with tabs so that students who don't know all the books of the Bible may become independent in finding them.

3

APPLYING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ whiteboard or chalkboard
- ☐ markers or chalk

Exploring the Bible

Say: **Let's look at a few texts that tell us how to deal with doubt.** Have various students look up, read, and discuss the texts as you name them or list them where all can see.

Ask: **How did Jesus deal with His disciples' doubts?** Matthew 14:25-31, Peter walking on the water; John 20:26-29, Thomas; Luke 24:36-44, after the Resurrection.

What can be our attitude toward people who doubt? Have someone read Jude 22. (We should be merciful to them.)

What happens when we continue to doubt? Read James 1:6-8. (We confuse ourselves.)

What can happen when we get rid of our doubts? Matthew 21:21, 22; Mark 11:23, 24 (God takes away the doubt, we come to know Him better.)

We can come to God with our doubts, and He will understand and answer.

Accommodation for students with special needs

Use the Bibles with tabs for students who don't know all the books of the Bible so that they can start to become independent in finding the books of the Bible.

Dealing With Doubt

Be prepared to share some doubts you or another teacher have had. Share how God dealt with your doubts.

Ask: **What doubts do people your age have? What do you normally do when you experience doubts?**

Explain that they are not alone in their questions.

Ask: **How can you turn your doubts around in the coming week?** (study the Bible, pray, ask a trusted adult to discuss them with you) Allow time for discussion. Point out that observing Jesus' life can help them as it helped John.

4

SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ *Steps to Christ* (optional)

Scenario

Say: **Juana has doubts about her relationship with God. She talked about some of her doubts to an adult who scolded her for even thinking such things. That only made her feel worse. She keeps asking herself, "Why do I doubt that God loves me? Is it wrong to doubt? Does God still love me even when I doubt and question Him? Does He understand? Will He answer me?"**

Ask: **How would you help answer Juana's questions?**

Encourage and allow plenty of time for discussion. Accept all reasonable answers.

Debriefing

Ask: **What is the difference between doubting and questioning for the purpose of learning and understanding, and doubting just for doubting (unwilling to receive an answer)? Explain.** (Doubt can be used as a reason to keep on sinning. See *Steps to Christ,* p. 111.) **What good might come from your questions?** (For instance, it can help increase faith and trust in God and cause one to search the Scriptures for answers, which will also help strengthen one's mind. See *Steps to Christ,* p. 109.)

We can come to God with our doubts, and He will understand and answer.

Closing

Prayer and comments:

Pray, thanking God for taking our doubts, understanding them, and leading us to find answers, as He did for John the Baptist.

Reminder to parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to guide your children spiritually. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel=1.**

Coming up next week:

Say: **Next week we will study the story of John the Baptist. We worship God when we keep our bodies and minds free from mind-altering substances.**

Notes

Student lesson

From Prophet to Prisoner

Have you ever waited to hear from a friend who had moved to another city? Perhaps you heard about them from others, but waited anxiously to hear from them personally. Did you begin to doubt their friendship?

John lay flat on a cold, hard slab of stone. The only sounds were the pitter-patter of mice feet and the grinding of his own thoughts. Suddenly he sat up. Someone was coming. Was it news? Would he be summoned somewhere? As the footsteps approached, he heard the voice of a good friend, one of his disciples. His heart slowly slid back from his throat to its normal resting place.

"What news do you have for me, friend?" he asked softly. His voice sounded raspy and strange from not being used for so long. "What news is there from the outside world? More important, what news do you bring me of Jesus?"

His friend looked in through the barred window. "Jesus is teaching and preaching in the towns of Galilee, Rabbi. Shall we confront Him? Isn't He trying to take over your work? Please, tell me what to do, and I'll do it."

"No, no," John replied slowly. "Haven't you heard what I've said about this Man? He is the one of whom I spoke when I said that "after me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie" (Mark 1:7). Don't you understand?" He stopped for a moment to rest his weary voice.

"Go and find Jesus. Ask Him this question: 'Are You the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?' Bring His response to me. Then we will know if He is the Messiah."

With that, John motioned for his disciple to leave, slowly lowering himself back down onto the stone slab.

The disciple quickly related all that John had said to the other disciples who were waiting. They set out immediately for Galilee.

As they neared the town where Jesus was, it seemed that everyone they met had a smile on their face. The whole town was talking about Jesus. They found the town crowded with people, including many blind, crippled, and deaf from surrounding towns. All were crowding in to get a glimpse of Jesus, to see His face, to hear His words, and to receive healing from His hands.

John's disciples jostled their way in to the center of town where Jesus was busy at work. "Excuse me, Rabbi, but we have come from John the Baptist. He has sent us to ask You, 'Are You the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?' "

Jesus didn't reply. He simply kept on doing what He was doing. A man with a skin disease known as leprosy approached. Jesus held out His hand to him.

"Lord," the man said, "if you are willing, you can make me clean."

"Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!'" (Matthew 8:2, 3).

The man, finding himself free of the disease that had tormented him for so many years, shouted and jumped for joy. "Glory to the Lord!" he cried.

John's disciples thought that perhaps Jesus had not heard their question. So they repeated it. "Rabbi, John has sent us to ask You, 'Are You the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?'" Still Jesus did not reply. So John's disciples sat down and waited.

All day people came to Jesus to be healed and to listen to His simple yet powerful words. The sun began to sink toward the horizon, and still Jesus worked and taught.

Then, when John's disciples were just about ready to give up and return to John without an answer, Jesus stopped and came toward them. "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor" (Matthew 11:4, 5).

With that, Jesus turned and walked away into the dusk. John's disciples stood quietly for a moment. Such a powerful, yet simple Man. He reminded them of John. They headed out of town to find a place to rest for the night.

The next morning John's disciples set out early. They were anxious to relate to John all that they had seen and heard, and the words that Jesus had given them. Once again John heard the sound of footsteps. He sat up as his loyal friend and disciple came to the bars again. "Well, what words do you bring me from Jesus?" John asked, anxious for the report.

As his friend related to him all that he had seen and heard, John relaxed. "This is the One," he said softly. "Go now and follow Him."

KEY REFERENCES

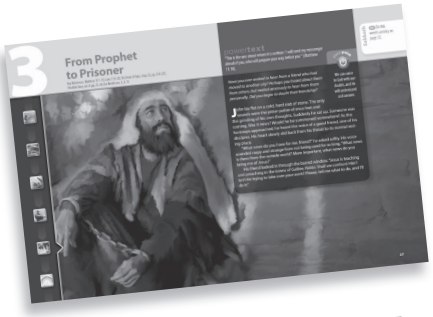
- Matthew 11:1-15
- Luke 7:18-28
- *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 22, pp. 214-225
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 8, pp. 22-24 ("Lonely Prisoner Cheered")
- Our Beliefs, nos. 3, 4, 10

POWER TEXT

"This is the one about whom it is written: 'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you' " (Matthew 11:10).

POWER POINT

We can come to God with our doubts, and He will understand and answer.







Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 32.

Sunday

READ Read Matthew 11:1-5 and this week's story, "From Prophet to Prisoner."

ILLUSTRATE Ask your family to help you make a wall hanging with the power text on it. Hang it where the whole family can enjoy it.

LEARN Begin to learn the power text, Matthew 11:10.

PRAY Ask God to show you what He wants to teach you this week.

Monday

READ Read Matthew 11:6-10.

WRITE Picture that you are one of John's disciples who sees and hears all that Jesus does that day. In your Bible study journal, write a short report for John on what you saw Jesus do and heard Him say.

PRAY Ask God to show you what He is doing for you today.

Tuesday

READ Read Matthew 11:11-15.

THINK Why do you think that though Jesus viewed John the Baptist as the greatest prophet who ever lived, He said that the least person who enters the kingdom of God would be greater than John?

JOURNAL Start keeping a record throughout this week of how God answers your prayers, guides your decision-making, and shows His love through your everyday life.

PRAY Practice beginning each prayer with thanks and praise for what God does for you.

Wednesday

READ Read Luke 7:18-28.

DISCUSS With a friend, discuss how Jesus' miracles affected John's disciples as well as John, who wanted to know whether Jesus was the Messiah.

ROLE-PLAY Role-play the conversation that John and his disciples may have had when they returned with an account of Jesus' ministry. Plan to present it in family worship on Friday or in class on Sabbath.

Thursday

READ Read 1 John 5:14.

THINK Think about a time God surprised you by answering a difficult prayer.

DESCRIBE If you could describe this experience through your senses (create a metaphor for it), what did it look, smell, sound, feel, and taste like? (For example: the experience smelled like the air after rain, felt like floating down a quiet river in an inner tube, tasted like a ripe mango.)

PRAY When you experience God's goodness in response to your prayers, remember to express your gratitude and praise to Him.

Friday

LOOK Find and read the following passages: Psalm 91:4; 1 Corinthians 1:8, 9; 10:13.

COMPARE In your Bible study journal, compare these verses with your own experience of God's faithfulness. Do we have any reason to doubt God's faithfulness?

SHARE Share the verse you like most with your family at worship or at Sabbath School tomorrow.

ROLE-PLAY During worship tonight, role-play with your family the conversation that might have taken place between John and his disciples.