

Morning Overview

Lesson: *Advent: Hope – the King to Come*

Lesson Objective:

Today marks the first Sunday in Advent and our theme for this morning is Hope. Since Genesis 3, all of humanity has longed and expected the Messiah to come and make things right again. Throughout the Old Testament, we see the expectation for a King to come. Even when things were going right for the Hebrew people, it always ended in disappointment (King David and Solomon). But the promised One, the promised King is on His way! This week, we read about the prophet John the Baptist's birth and the announcement of the coming King. The hope that every person has is in this King to come and rescue us all, and not just rescue us, but make the world right again.

Teaching Summary:

- God's promises do not change despite circumstances, people, and even our inability to believe them. God keeps His promises even when we do not trust Him or follow His commands.
- Nothing is impossible with God.
- Zechariah and Elizabeth were John's parents; Elizabeth is Mary's (Jesus' mother) cousin.
- All of the Old Testament has been waiting for the King to come. The Hebrew people had been waiting for over 400 years to hear from God.
- God speaks to His people through the prophet John. John tells everyone the long-awaited King is on His way!
- Everyone has set their hope on this King to make the world right again – to make it work properly – that all the sad and terrible things, he would make go away.
- Mary, Jesus' mother, was engaged to a man named Joseph. Mary and Joseph were not married and Mary had never been a mother before.
- The angel Gabriel visited Mary and told her that she would be the mother of Jesus. Jesus was the King everyone had been waiting on and He would rule forever.

Scripture: Luke 1:5-38

Story: Vos Child's Story Bible, pages 263-265; The Beginner's Bible, pages 265-271, 299-303; Gospel Story Book Bible, pages 158-159; Jesus Storybook Bible, pages 176-179.

Scripture Memory for Advent: Isaiah 9:6

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Craft: Angel

Supplies: Styrofoam cup, cardstock circle, pipe cleaner, doily, tape, crayons/markers

Instructions: 1. Fold doily in half.

2. Fold points of doily in and crease to form wings. Tape to back of cup.

3. Draw face on circle and tape to front of cup.

4. Twist ends of pipe cleaner together and form a circle for halo.

5. Poke ends of pipe cleaner into small hole in bottom of cup.



Story

Transition

Today, in our story, I'm going to tell you about a messenger. But the messenger wasn't a person like a mailman. He was in fact a messenger that God was using to deliver Good News. This messenger was to tell everyone that a King was coming, but not just any King – THE KING that everyone had been waiting for a very long time. Let's hear the story from our Bibles beginning in Luke, Chapter 1.

The Childless Couple

Long ago there was a priest named Zechariah [**pronunciation:** zeh-kuh-RY-uh]. A priest was a man who used to lead people in worshipping God. Say "Zechariah" with me. It's not a very popular name today. But many years ago it was. The Bible says Zechariah was a very good man. He loved God and lived the way God's law said he should. Zechariah had a wife. Her name was Elizabeth. The Bible says just like Zechariah, Elizabeth was a very good woman. She, too, loved God and lived the way God's law said she should. Zechariah and Elizabeth loved God very much. And they were busy serving God too.

Their life was probably wonderful except for one thing: Zechariah and Elizabeth wanted a baby and they didn't have one. God had not given them a baby even though they had asked Him for one. God always hears our prayers. He had heard Zechariah and Elizabeth, but He doesn't always answer us when we want him to and in the way we want him to. And there was another problem too. You see, Zechariah and Elizabeth weren't very young anymore. They were pretty old. When people are as old as Zechariah and Elizabeth, they can't have babies anymore. Zechariah and Elizabeth were so sad. Now they were old. They would never have a little boy or a little girl. It was very sad.

In the Temple

One day Zechariah was in the temple. Remember I told you he was a priest. On that day it was Zechariah's turn to go into the special place in the Temple to worship God. The priest would burn sweet incense to the Lord in this special place in the Temple. Only the priest could go there. It was a very important job. Outside the Temple many people were praying. But inside, in that special place in the temple, Zechariah was praying and worshipping God. Suddenly something very strange happened! Zechariah had worshipped God many times in the Temple, but nothing like this had ever happened before!

The Angel Brings News

You see, as Zechariah walked toward the altar to worship God, he saw an angel. An angel of the Lord appeared to him. The angel was standing at the right side of the altar next to Zechariah. When Zechariah saw him, he became so scared. Zechariah wasn't scared because the angel looked ugly or anything like that. Zechariah was scared because he had never seen anything like that before. Zechariah had never seen an angel. Right away the angel said words to Zechariah, "Do not be afraid Zechariah. God has heard you when you've prayed to Him. Your wife Elizabeth is going to have a baby boy. She shall give him the name John." Zechariah must have stood in front of that altar like this (open your mouth, eyes big and be surprised!). Then the angel said more about the baby Zechariah and Elizabeth would have, "He will be a joy and delight to you and many will rejoice because he is born." The angel said that John would be great in the sight of the Lord and that he would be filled with the Holy Spirit. Then the angel said that John would grow up and be God's messenger. John would tell people the message about the Lord Jesus, God's own Son. Oh what wonderful news the angel had told Zechariah!

Zechariah Doubts and Cannot Speak

He must have been so happy. But he was a little confused too. Remember I told you that Zechariah and Elizabeth were too old to have a baby. So Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and so is my wife!" Deep down in Zechariah's heart he did not believe what the angel had said. The angel answered Zechariah, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. But now you will not be able to talk until the day my words come true, because you did not believe what I said." All that time, people had been praying and waiting for Zechariah to come outside. It had been a long time since he went

into the Temple to worship God and they were wondering where he was. Finally, out came Zechariah. But the Bible says when Zechariah came outside, he could not speak to the people. He opened his mouth and tried to say words, but nothing came out. Just like the angel had said, Zechariah could not talk. Now Zechariah would have to point at things or write notes so that people could understand him.

The Baby is Born and Given a Name

And just like the angel Gabriel had said, Elizabeth had a baby. Old Elizabeth and Old Zechariah had a baby! And it was a boy baby just like Gabriel had said! God had sent Gabriel with that message. God's word is always true. Elizabeth's neighbors and family were so happy. When the baby was eight days old many people came to see him. And they thought that the baby's name would be Zechariah, just like his father. But Elizabeth said, "No. He is to be called John." Elizabeth remembered what the angel Gabriel had said, "You shall give him the name John" and so Elizabeth was going to do just what the angel said. The people said, "But there is no one in your family named John."

Zechariah Praises God

Zechariah was there. He couldn't talk but quickly Zechariah wrote a note that said, "His name is John." He remembered what Gabriel had said too! And guess what happened. Suddenly, Zechariah could say words again. He could talk! Zechariah praised God in beautiful words that we can find right here in our Bibles. He praised God because he knew his little baby boy John would grow up and tell others that Jesus was coming.

Gabriel Visits Mary

The same angel Gabriel that visited Elizabeth visited her cousin, Mary. God sent him to visit Mary in the city of Nazareth. Mary was going to marry a very nice man, and his name was Joseph. Joseph was from a very special family; if you asked Joseph who in his family was famous, he would say "King David!"

The angel Gabriel found Mary in a garden and said to her, "Greetings, Mary! God is always with you!" Mary was very confused and worried about the angel's greeting. She tried to figure out what he was saying but could not. But Gabriel, seeing that she was worried and confused, said, "Do not be afraid Mary for you have found favor with God. God will give you a baby boy – yes, you will be a mother – and you will name this baby boy, Jesus. He will be great and mighty, and will be called the Son of God. God will give to Jesus a throne just like his relative King David, and Jesus will rule over people from His throne. And Jesus will always rule – it will never come to an end!"

Mary replied back to the angel, "How can this be? I'm not married to Joseph?" Gabriel said to Mary, "God will make it happen! Jesus will be perfect and holy too. Nothing is impossible with God!" The angel Gabriel also told Mary that her cousin, Elizabeth, was going to have a baby boy too. Mary said, "I am a servant of the Lord, let all of this happen just as you have said." After she said this the angel Gabriel left her.

Closing

Everything God had told the angel Gabriel to say came true.

Questions for Review with Younger Children

- What didn't Zechariah and Elizabeth have?
- Who spoke to Zechariah in the temple?
- What happened to Zechariah because he didn't believe the angel?
- What did God give Zechariah and Elizabeth?
- What was the baby's name?

Questions for Review with Older Children

- What was the angel's name?
- Why couldn't Zechariah speak?
- When was he able to speak?