
Authentic Christianity

Sunday School Lesson from Luke 3:7-18



“They shall now we are Christians by our love” ... It’s one thing to attend church and call ourselves Christians. Truly following Christ, though, means living as He did and demonstrating to others what it means to honor and serve God. John the Baptist (and Jesus!) emphasized that

genuine Christians live out their faith in action as well as word. We are saved by grace alone, but out of gratitude to God, we should also be showing evidence of our character as children of the Lord.

Lesson focus: This lesson looks at the ministry of John the Baptist as a reminder of the importance of demonstrating who we are as Christians. If we want to show others what it means to authentically love and serve Jesus, we should share with and care for others. If we say that we love the Lord, we should live it out! Christianity is about who we are on the inside, not just our outer statements. This lesson also emphasizes ways that we can share with and care for others.

Passage: Luke 3:7-18

Target Audience: Kindergarten-6th grade

Materials Needed: Construction paper; glue; markers or crayons; tape; scissors; decorative supplies; yarn/string; paper bags; popsicle sticks; paper plates; Bibles.

More Teaching Ideas:

- Watch our teaching example of this [children’s sermon lesson](#) and related [Bible craft ideas](#)
- Download a full [Luke 3:7-18 Sunday School Lesson](#). See more [Christmas Bible Lessons](#)
- View all the [Advent and Christmas resources](#) at the [Sunday School Store](#)

Lesson Introduction Activities and Game Ideas

Lesson Opening: This lesson looks at sharing with others and giving to those in need. If following an Advent lectionary, this will take place within the context of Christmas time. Consider opening activities that connect to Christmas, sharing, or John the Baptist!

- Christmas music freeze dance: Dance to some fun holiday music, pausing in a “freeze” motion when the music stops.
- Repentance red light, green light: Play red light/green light with a twist: As students progress with the red light/green light instructions, throw in a “repent” call. If “repent” is the instruction, have students turn around 180 degrees and start heading in the opposite direction.
- Bugs and honey snack! One of the eccentricities John the Baptist is known for is his diet of locusts and honey. Celebrate this with some gummy bug snacks or honey sticks.
- Sharing puzzle: start with four or five simple jigsaw puzzles (depending on the size of your group). Provide a few pieces to each student, and invite them to find others with the same type of puzzle, to team up and share pieces to get the puzzles finished (this might be better suited to older students).
- Reflection mime: we want to be like Jesus, reflecting His love like a mirror...have students pair up and “reflect” one another, with one at a time making motions and the partner copying the motions in pantomime.
- What’s inside? Place several bags with different items inside. Allow students to feel the bags or shake them to listen for what’s inside, but do not let them peek. Have them take guesses at what might be within the bag.

Explain to students that today they will be hearing some words from a strange man named John the Baptist, who came to get people ready for the coming of Jesus. John wanted the people to recognize that they needed a savior. He also wanted people to be authentic. They couldn’t just rely on family connections or outer appearances to be followers of God. Truly loving and serving the Lord means living out faith in connection to others.

Sunday School Lesson (Luke 3:7-18) Authentic Christianity

Bible Lesson: This passage involves some rather harsh-sounding words spoken by John the Baptist. Set the stage for students by explaining a little about who John was and why he came (to prepare for Jesus). You might have older students act out the interactions in these verses, or have someone dramatically read the “John” parts. Or you could simply read or paraphrase for younger students.

He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. 9 Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” -Luke 3:7-9

It doesn't sound too great to call someone a “brood of vipers” ...that's like a pastor calling his congregation a snake pit! Explain that John is here indicating that some people who are coming to him are not being fully authentic in their lives and what they want. They might be saying that they belong to God, but only because they are descendants of Abraham or part of the people of Israel. John wants them to know that it's not enough to claim heritage. If they truly follow God, the people should be acting like it and living it out.

Ask: What does it mean to live out your faith? How could people know you are a Christian just by observing your actions, rather than you telling them?

Have you ever met someone who said they were a Christ-follower, but didn't act like it?

And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?” 11 And he answered them, “Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.” 12 Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” 13 And he said to them, “Collect no more than you are authorized to do.” 14 Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.” -Luke 3:10-14

John went on to explain what it might mean to act on the faith professed. Loving God and truly turning from wrong also involves sharing with those in need. We should not extort or cheat others, but treat them honestly and use what we have wisely.

Ask: What are some ways that we can share with and take care of others in need? Where do we see opportunities to do that?

Go on to emphasize that John the Baptist was always quick to point people to Jesus. When we contrast them directly, John might seem harsh and judgmental, while Jesus is kind and forgiving. But John was the messenger, getting people ready for what Jesus had to say and bring. John recognized that Jesus was more important than he was. He pointed people to Christ for true forgiveness and new life. Doing positive things and helping people are wonderful things for us to do. Good deeds give evidence that our faith is alive and real. However, those things don't "buy" us salvation. Only Jesus can save us with His precious blood.

As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, 16 John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." 18 So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people. -Luke 3:15-18

If we say we love Jesus, we want others to see "spiritual fruit" in us. John was the preparer, Jesus the healer. So we, too, can be preparers, in a sense, pointing to the love and salvation offered in Christ. Remind kids that Jesus is greater and stronger than anything or anyone we can imagine. It's fun to learn about some of these people like John the Baptist, but Jesus is the central figure in the Bible. It's important to share and serve others, but Jesus still does the greatest work of all. What a comforting reminder!

Ask: How can we point others to Jesus? How does treating people well inspire them to come to faith?

Close with prayer, thanking God for changing us on the inside and asking Him for help in living authentically as Christians. Ask the Lord for opportunities to share His love and spread the Gospel with others.

Bible Craft Ideas for Sunday School

Craft: This lesson involves sharing with others and being genuine in faith. Consider for craft inspiration elements of John the Baptist, or of sharing and shining Christ's light for the world.

- Make a special homemade card for a friend or family member.
- Create a "sharing tree": Glue several popsicle sticks together to make a "tree", with branch-like sticks connecting to a larger main stick. Tuck the tree into a cup or small bucket. Make "ornaments" to hang on the branches, with ideas about how to share with others.
- Light shining "lantern": decorate a paper bag. Cut several shapes out of the bag. Set a small flashlight or tea light within to shine through the spaces.
- Repentance plate decoration: Decorate a paper plate with two sides, one of which invites the browser to "turn" the whole plate and recount how repentance means turning and changing hearts on the inside.

Bible Verses or Craft Captions to Consider... (Luke 3:7-18)

- *John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. -Luke 3:16*
- *And he answered them, "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise." -Luke 3:11*
- *Shine the light of Christ!*
- *Share the good news...let your light shine for Jesus!*
- *Sharing tree...I can share with others by....*
- *Share God's love! Help one another!*

Craft one: "Share with Others Tree"

You will need:

- Foam or paper cup, or container
- Scissors
- Popsicle sticks
- Markers and/or crayons
- Construction paper or cardstock
- Stickers and decorations
- Glue or tape
- Paper bag



Procedure:

1. Decorate the outside of the container or cup. Add captions or verses.
2. Create several "ornaments" by stringing cut paper onto pipe cleaners. On each paper, write an idea for how to serve or share with others.
3. Use hot glue to attach several popsicle sticks together into a "tree" shape with "branches".
4. Hang the ornaments on the "tree". Add a crumpled paper bag to the cup, and tuck the "tree" down inside it.

Craft Two: “Let your Light Shine” Lantern

You will need:

- Markers/crayons
- Construction paper or card stock
- Decorations (stickers, etc.)
- Scissors
- Captions/verses
- Paper bag
- Hole punch
- Pipe cleaner or string
- Tape or glue
- Small tea light (battery operated/electric)



Procedure:

1. Decorate the paper bag with verses, captions, and stickers.
2. Trace several shapes in the paper bag (on one or both sides). Carefully cut out the shapes.
3. Place a small flashlight or tea light into the bag.
4. Attach a pipe cleaner or string to hang the lantern or decorate it, if desired. Place in a prominent spot to “shine the light of Christ”!



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This resource was prepared by [Kristin Schmidt](#) (pictured right). She serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO. She has shared her teaching gifts through *Ministry-To-Children* since 2014 and now serves as our lead curriculum writer.



Every week she writes new [Sunday School lessons](#), [Bible crafts](#), and [children's sermons](#).

Kristin has a professional background in elementary and pre-school education. A graduate of Biola University, she holds a Master of Education and will receive the Master of Theology degree from Concordia University, Irvine, California, in May 2020. Kristin grew up in southern California and lived the past 10 years in Georgia. She is a long-distance runner and voracious reader.

My name is Tony Kummer (pictured below). I started Ministry-To-Children.com in 2007 as a free resource for anyone sharing Jesus with kids. It is my personal honor to share these resources with churches around the world.



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May God continue to bless your ministry!

Tony Kummer