

LESSON 2

**ELIZABETH AND ZECHARIAH**

LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** God Prepares the Way for Jesus

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 1

**GOD'S BIG STORY:** After centuries of waiting for the King God had promised, Zechariah and Elizabeth have a son who is filled with God's Spirit from a young age and prepares the hearts of God's people for Jesus.

**WORD OF WONDER:** A child will be born to us. A son will be given to us. He will rule over us. And he will be called Wonderful Adviser and Mighty God. He will also be called Father Who Lives Forever and Prince Who Brings Peace. —Isaiah 9:6

**CURIOSITY**

**BELIEF**

**FAITH**

- Welcome Question: What are some of the ways your family prepares, or gets ready, for Christmas?
- Curiosity Questions
- Interactive Game: Winter Prep Relay
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- God's Big Story: Hear It, Watch It, Experience It!
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- In Awe of God's Wonder
- Word of Wonder: Isaiah 9:6
- Word of Wonder Activity
- Discussion Questions for Younger and Older Kids
- Small Group Prayer Time
- Responding in Worship: Call and Response with Song
- Blessing Your Kids



[God With Us Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

### INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** God Prepares the Way for Jesus

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 1

**WORD OF WONDER:** Isaiah 9:6

During Advent and Christmas, I usually spend time thinking about what traditions will help my kids understand who Jesus is. Storybook Bibles. Family devotionals. Songs and carols. Wreaths and candles. What will point them to Jesus? If I'm honest, it all makes me a bit anxious. What if I mess it up or say the wrong thing? Sometimes teaching them about God's big story feels daunting.

Read Luke 1:5–25. The story of Elizabeth and Zechariah—and the promised birth of John the Baptist—shows how God was preparing the way for Jesus. He was getting the world ready. Perhaps God's preparations feel as finished to you as the expected conclusion of the Nativity story, but God is still working. He is still preparing people to meet Jesus. He works through all kinds of things to kindle and nurture a person's faith. He might even work through a dad who sometimes says the wrong thing or a kids' ministry volunteer who feels in over her head.

God invites us to be part of His big story as we follow Jesus day by day, year by year. What does God have in store for you this week? How is He preparing you to know Jesus more? And how might He work in you and through you to nurture another person's faith? God prepares the way for Jesus, from ancient days until kingdom come. God is at work. He hasn't stopped.

—**Michael Rade**

Care & Support Ministry Assistant; Itinerant Preacher  
Contributor to Wonder Ink

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS**

**WHO?**

Zechariah was a descendent of Aaron and a priest of the division of Abijah. Each division served at the temple for about two weeks every year, so Zechariah probably had another occupation while not serving. Zechariah's wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron, the first high priest and brother of Moses.

**WHAT?**

The angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah in the temple to tell him his wife Elizabeth would bear a son, despite her old age. They were to name him John. John would be filled with the Holy Spirit and prepare God's people for the coming Lord.

**WHERE?**

The angel appeared to Zechariah in God's temple in Jerusalem. He appeared on the right side of the altar of incense, which was located in the part of the temple called the holy place. Zechariah and Elizabeth lived somewhere in the hill country of Judea.

**WHEN?**

This story takes place in the time of Herod, king of Judea, close to the end of his rule in 4 BC. Elizabeth became pregnant about six months before the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to tell her she would give birth to Jesus.

**CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY**

Through the birth of John the Baptist, God was preparing the way for Jesus, the everlasting King. John spent his days spiritually preparing people for the appearance of Jesus, who then proclaimed the kingdom of God and defeated the powers of darkness.

### Small Group

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** God Prepares the Way for Jesus

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 1

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### Pre-Service Connection (15–20 min)

**RESOURCES:** [Coloring Page](#), whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils  
Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have play stations with various board games, activities, or use games from the extra Games & Activities Guide to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them!

Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

*Allow quieter kids who don't engage with the board games to color. Involve them in the curiosity questions.*

#### As kids arrive..

Invite them to write/draw the answer to the Welcome Question: on the designated board:

**“What are some of the ways your family prepares, or gets ready, for Christmas?”** Set out sheets of paper and colored pencils.

#### While kids are playing in their opening activity groups..

Pose the following “I’m curious” questions. Say “I’m curious...” before each question and give kids a chance to think about and answer each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

- **Why do you think it’s important to prepare, or get ready, for things like holidays, birthdays, guests, tests, or the weather?**
- **Have you ever felt unprepared for anything? Tell us about it.**

**\*\*NEW!!** Large Group leaders will now lead an opening game or activity 10 minutes before service begins. It is very important that you are with your groups and ready to participate with them!

### Small Group Begins

After the Opening Activity, Large Group Leader will begin small group time by reading the Welcome Question aloud and inviting everyone to open their Bibles and begin.

## Small Group Discussion: Younger Kids 5–8 min

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles (1 per kid), *God's Unlikely Helpers Sheets* (1 per SG)

Show kids how to use the table of contents to find Luke, then invite kids to turn in their Bibles to Luke 1.

Read Luke 1:5–17, 57–59 aloud from an NIV Bible. Then discuss the following:

- Who were Elizabeth and Zechariah?
- Why didn't Zechariah believe the angel?
- How did God keep His promise to Elizabeth and Zechariah?
- When is a time you've had to wait for something important?
- Is it hard or easy to wait for something you really want? Share about it.
- Sometimes God's plans look different than what we want. Does God keep His promises? How do you know?
- God could have just sent Jesus to earth without inviting anyone else to be part of the story. Instead, God worked through Zechariah, Elizabeth, and their son, John, to prepare the way for Jesus. What does this tell us about who God is and what matters to Him?

"God chose Elizabeth, Zechariah, and John to help prepare the way for Jesus. God remembered His promise to send an everlasting King to love and lead all people. God planned and prepared for this King, choosing the perfect time to send Jesus. Let's talk with God together right now!"

## Prayer Time: Younger Kids

Encourage kids to share praises and prayer requests. Sit in a circle and invite kids to pray for the person to their right, either out loud or silently (depending on what the child is most comfortable with). Finish the prayer once each kid has had a chance to pray for his neighbor.

## Notes

**SUPPLIES:** *Notes Page* (back of coloring page)

Use the Notes Page on the back of the coloring sheet throughout the service to help kids stay engaged, remember what they are learning, and so parents can see what their kids are learning each week!

## Small Group Discussion: Older Kids 8–10 min

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles (1 per kid)

Show kids how to use the table of contents to find Luke, then invite kids to turn in their Bibles to Luke 1.

**Turn to Page 3 of this guide and help kids understand the context of this passage.**

**Invite three volunteers to read three sections aloud from Luke 1. The first volunteer can read Luke 1:5–10, the second volunteer can read 1:11–17, and the third volunteer can read 1:57–58. Close out by reading 1:62–66**

- Who were Elizabeth and Zechariah?
- Why didn't Zechariah believe the angel?
- How did God keep His promise to Elizabeth and Zechariah?
- Part of preparation includes planning and waiting. In what ways did God plan and wait to prepare the way for Jesus?
- When is a time you've had to wait for something important? Did you believe it would happen? Why or why not?
- Sometimes God's plans look different than what we want. Does God keep His promises? How do you know?
- God could have just sent Jesus to earth without inviting anyone else to be part of the story. Instead, God worked through Zechariah, Elizabeth, and their son, John, to prepare the way for Jesus. What does this tell us about who God is and what matters to Him?

**"God chose Elizabeth, Zechariah, and John to help prepare the way for Jesus. God remembered His promise to send an everlasting King to love and lead all people. God planned and prepared for this King, choosing the perfect time to send Jesus. Let's talk with God together right now!"**

## Prayer Time: Older Kids

Encourage kids to share praises and prayer requests. Sit in a circle and invite kids pray for the person to their right, either out loud or silently (depending on what the child is most comfortable with). Once everyone has had an opportunity to pray, invite a willing child to offer a closing prayer thanking God for preparing the way for Jesus. (If no one volunteers to close in prayer, go ahead and do so yourself.)

## Notes

**SUPPLIES:** Notes Page (back of coloring page)

Use the Notes Page on the back of the coloring sheet throughout the service to help kids stay engaged, remember what they are learning, and so parents can see what their kids are learning each week!

## WORD OF WONDER

A child will be born to us. A son will be given to us. He will rule over us. And he will be called Wonderful Adviser and Mighty God. He will also be called Father Who Lives Forever and Prince Who Brings Peace.

—Isaiah 9:6 (NirV)

**Leader Tip:** For Younger Kids.

This series Word of Wonder is long! Consider using the PreK Word of Wonder for Kindergarten: A child will be born. He will be the Prince of Peace. —from Isaiah 9:6

## Word of Wonder

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles (1 per kid) **Word of Wonder Poster (1/SG)**, **Word of Wonder PreK Poster (1/Kindergarten group-optional)** Notes Page on back of coloring page

**"The Word of Wonder for the Waiting for the King series is Isaiah 9:6. The prophet Isaiah spoke these words about Jesus hundreds of years before Jesus was born! Today, we've seen how God continued to prepare the way for Jesus through Elizabeth and Zechariah and John. Let's read the Word of Wonder together!"**

Read the verse slowly out loud while the kids follow along. Then read the verse again, leaving out each name or role for Jesus (child, son, Wonderful Adviser/Counselor, etc.). Invite the kids to say the missing words.

**Leader Tip:** For Younger Kids. Rather than leaving out each name, leave out just the last syllable of each role or name and invite kids to finish the words (i.e., "Wonderful Advis--?").

Talk about these questions:

- **How would you choose to announce the coming of Jesus? What words or titles would you use to describe Him?**
- **Choose the name for Jesus from Isaiah 9:6 that you find most interesting. What picture comes to mind when you think about that name?**

**Leader Tip:** Encourage kids to draw what they imagine when they think about one of the names for Jesus listed in Isaiah 9:6 on their notes section.

## Word of Wonder Activity

**SUPPLIES:** colored cardstock (1–2 sheets per small group, different color for each group), scissors (prep only), hole punch (optional), ornament hooks (6 or 12 per small group, optional), Christmas tree (optional), curly ribbon (optional), butcher paper or posterboard (optional), permanent marker (optional), tape (optional)

**RESOURCES:** [Names of Jesus Ornaments Sheets NIV\(1 / SG\)](#)

Ahead of time, print the first page of the Names of Jesus Ornaments Sheets NIV or NIV on colored cardstock, one copy per small group with each set in a different color. For groups with older kids, print both pages of the sheet. Cut apart the ornaments and hole punch the top of each. If you have a Christmas tree in your teaching area, place ornament hooks through the top of the ornaments and hang them on the tree at the kids' height. Otherwise, draw a simple tree on posterboard or butcher paper and tape it to the wall. Then loop curly ribbon through the top of each ornament and tape it to the paper tree.



Read the verse together. Assign a color to each group that matches one of the ornament colors.

**"We have our very own Christmas tree right here!** Point to the Christmas tree (real or drawn). **This tree is decorated with words and phrases our Word of Wonder uses to describe Jesus. Your job is to find all the ornaments in our group's color and take them off the tree. Once your group has all your ornaments, you will put the names of Jesus in order according to our Word of Wonder.** If some groups have 12 ornaments on the tree rather than 6, let them know that only half of the names for Jesus actually appear in Isaiah 9:6. They will need to figure out which ones are in the verse before putting them in order. **Once you have the names in order, practice saying the whole verse as a group.**  
**Ready? Set? Go!"**

Allow time for kids to find their group's ornaments, remove them from the tree, and put them in verse order. Then encourage kids to recite the Word of Wonder together several times, looking at the names on their ornaments for help.



## PAUSE for Large Group time, then continue...

### Responding in Worship: Call and Response with Song

**RESOURCES:** He Made a Way in a Manger/Away in a Manger” from [Waiting for the King Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

**"We all prepare for different things at various times. We prepare for cold weather in winter. We prepare for birthdays or guests coming to visit or tests at school. And for a long time, God Himself prepared the way to send His Son to earth. God worked through Daniel's dream to prepare His people for an everlasting King. Hundreds of years later, God worked through Elizabeth and Zechariah, and then their son—John—to prepare the way for Jesus.**

**At Christmas, we remember when Jesus finally came to earth ... but it's easy to forget Jesus among all the other holiday preparations—the lights, the decorations, the songs and food and gifts. So together, right now, let's spend some time preparing our hearts to remember and celebrate Jesus coming to earth that first Christmas!**

**Leader Tip:** Consider brainstorming with the kids the things that might distract them from Jesus at Christmastime and working those activities into the call and response.

Quietly start playing “He Made a Way in a Manger/Away in a Manger” from the [Waiting for the King Elementary Spotify playlist](#) Invite kids to stand, point up as though to heaven, and repeat the phrase May we remember You! after each sentence you share:

**This Christmas, Jesus ...** (Kids say) May we remember You!

**When we decorate the house, Jesus ...** (Kids say) May we remember You!

**When we bake cookies, Jesus ...** (Kids say) May we remember You!

**When we hear Christmas stories, Jesus ...** (Kids say) May we remember You!

**When we sing Christmas songs, Jesus ...** (Kids say) May we remember You!

**When we watch Christmas movies, Jesus ...** (Kids say) May we remember You!

**When we wake up on Christmas morning, Jesus ...** (Kids say) May we remember You!

**This Christmas, Jesus ...** (Kids say) May we remember You!

After the last sentence, turn up the volume on the music and let your group listen to the words of the song. Finish with a short prayer: **Jesus, this Christmas, may we remember You!**

#### Make It Inclusive!

Remain mindful that the kids in your ministry come from diverse backgrounds and homes. Some kids may have more presents under their Christmas trees than they can count, while others may not even have trees, let alone presents under them. When choosing phrases for the call and response time, be sensitive and keep individual kids in mind. Then throughout the Christmas season, do your best to keep the focus of conversations off material things.