Jesus Eases John's Doubt

Matthew 11:1-6; Luke 7:18-23

November
Week 5

5

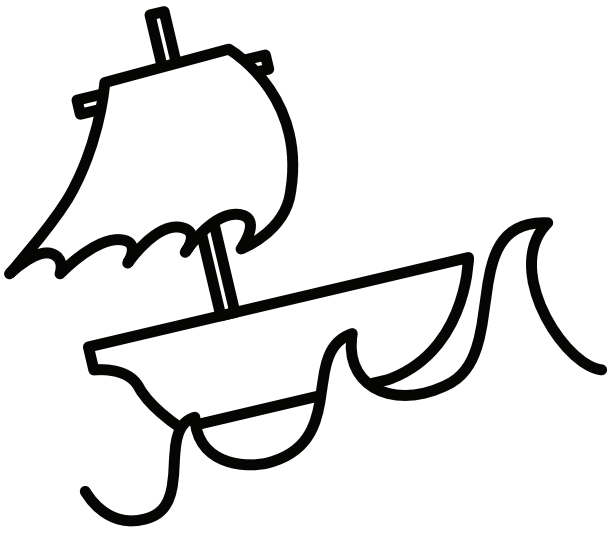
Teacher Background

What Happens: John the Baptist had previously announced that Jesus was the Messiah, or rescuer. But now, John is sitting in prison and wondering if Jesus really is the Messiah. He sends some friends to ask Jesus, and Jesus says they can tell John that he's the *Messiah* because of all the miracles he does.

Why It Matters: A simple way to explain the word *Messiah*, is that Jesus is a rescuer. Kids have problems in their lives that they want to be rescued from. They may wonder, as John did, if Jesus is really going to be *their* Messiah. This lesson will help kids see Jesus has already rescued all of us and has made a way for us to be personal friends with God.

Think About: What problems would you like to be rescued from? How has Jesus already rescued you?

Pray for kids in your group who need to be rescued. Ask Jesus to show them that he loves them and is powerful enough to change their lives.



Point

Jesus is the Messiah.

Key Verse

"Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother!"

Matthew 12:50

QUICK TIP

When your kids share what they're thinking, genuinely listen. Give them your attention. Say, "Tell me more about that" to help them share more. Thank them for sharing. Consistently doing these simple things will form meaningful friendships with kids!

Date:_____

This Lesson **at a Glance**



WHAT HAPPENS	KIDS DISCOVER
CHECK IN Connect about the week.	The importance of friendships at church.
SET THE STAGE Share about a topic related to the lesson.	The connection between their world and the Bible.
EXPERIENCE THE BIBLE Experience things Jesus did to prove he's the Messiah.	Jesus' actions *show* he's the Messiah.
HANDS-ON DISCOVERY Rescue toys from ice.	Jesus rescues us by bringing us closer to God.
PLAY A GAME Play a version of Tag where they rescue others from guards.	Jesus' rescue is real for us today.
PRAY TOGETHER Reflect on Jesus, the Messiah, as they enjoy a Life Savers candy.	They can talk with Jesus about the ways they need to be rescued.

EASY SUPPLIES

- Bible
- ice cube tray
- shallow pans (1 for every 4 kids)
- warm water
- salt
- small toy figures, such as Lego people or green army men (1 per kid)
- cooler with ice packs
- hula hoop
- individually wrapped Life Savers candies (1 per elementary child)
- small resealable bags with a few Cheerios or Froot Loops (1 per preschool child)

CHECK IN (5 MINUTES)

- Thank kids for coming and have kids show their goofiest faces to everyone around them.
- Make announcements and collect offering.
- Celebrate any birthdays by having kids say "Happy birthday" in a funny voice.

ASK: What's something you're excited about that's coming up soon? Share your own quick story first, and then let everyone share! For groups of more than six, have kids share in pairs so everyone has a turn to talk.

SET THE STAGE (5 MINUTES)

SAY: Today we'll learn about a time Jesus helped John the Baptist remember that ➡ Jesus is the Messiah. *Messiah* might not be a word you know. It means Jesus rescues us!

ASK: Tell about a time you needed to be rescued. Share your own quick story first.

SAY: Today we'll learn from the Bible what Jesus did to help John the Baptist—and us—be sure ➡ Jesus is the Messiah. God is always with us and ready to talk to us. One way God talks to us is through the Bible, his special book.

EXPERIENCE THE BIBLE (10 MINUTES)

SUPPLIES
- Bible



TALK ABOUT RESCUE

SAY: Today we're going to learn that ➡ Jesus is the Messiah. The Jewish people had been waiting a long time for the Messiah. They wanted the Messiah to come rescue them from people who were mean to them.

ASK: When you think of rescuers, what kind of people come to mind?

SAY: Let's see what it feels like to need someone to rescue us.

Form pairs—you can be a partner too.

SAY: The older partner in each pair will sit on the floor, knees bent, and hands on lap. Allow time.

SAY: Now try to get up by yourself...but you can't push off the floor with your hands, you can't cross your feet, and you can't get onto your knees.

Allow time for everyone to struggle, and then have their partners give them a hand to help them stand up. Have partners trade places and try again.

ASK: How did you feel when you were trying to stand up?

ASK: Why did you need your partner to rescue you?

SAY: There were all kinds of things the Jewish people needed to be rescued from. Most of all, they needed to be rescued so they could be close to God and know him as a friend.

SAY: They needed a Messiah who would bring them close to God again. Let's look at John the Baptist and see what *he* wanted to be rescued from.

LEARN ABOUT PRISON

SAY: John the Baptist was a follower of Jesus, and he was in prison even though he didn't deserve it. Have everyone hold their fingers in front of their faces, spread out like they're looking through prison bars for a few seconds.

SAY: John the Baptist had walked around *before* Jesus started doing miracles, telling everyone that ➡ Jesus is the Messiah. But in today's story, he wasn't so sure anymore. He sent some people to Jesus with this question.



Read Matthew 11:2-3.

ASK: What do you think Jesus could do to prove to John that ➡ he is the Messiah?

EXAMINE PROOF OF THE MESSIAH

SAY: Even though John was in prison unfairly, Jesus hadn't rescued him. He wasn't free like we are now. No wonder he had questions. But Jesus didn't prove ➡ he is the Messiah by going to rescue John.

Instead, he rescued other people in front of John's friends. Jesus said, "Go back to John and tell him what you have seen and heard." Then he gave examples. Let's act those out. Have everyone stand up.

SAY: ➡ Jesus is the Messiah because he helped people with problems that no one else could. Jesus helped the blind see, the deaf hear, and people who'd never walked before be able to walk! Have kids pick one of the following actions and do it:

- Close eyes and take one small step forward.
- Cover ears tightly and whisper a short, funny story from the week.
- Quickly repeat the standing challenge from earlier.

ASK: Why might people want to be rescued from blindness, deafness, or not being able to walk?

SAY: ➡ Jesus is the Messiah because he cured people with leprosy—a harmful skin disease. Have everyone pretend to scratch their arms while they share why leprosy is something people might want to be rescued from.

SAY: ➡ Jesus is the Messiah because he even raised dead people to life! Have everyone lie down on the ground as they talk about why death is something to be rescued from. Then jump back up.

SAY: Finally, ➡ Jesus is the Messiah because he was preaching good news to poor people. In Jesus' day, poor people had to beg for money. Have everyone stand and hold out hands as if asking for money. Ask why being poor is something people might want to be rescued from. Then have everyone sit back down.

SAY: ➡ Jesus is the Messiah, and he proved it in the caring, amazing things he did! Jesus is our rescuer. Let's think about that more as you rescue some toys!

HANDS-ON DISCOVERY (10 MINUTES)

SUPPLIES

- ice cube tray
- shallow pans (1 for every 4 kids)
- warm water
- salt
- small toy figures, such as Lego people or green army men (1 per kid)
- cooler with ice packs

EASY PREP

- Freeze toy figures in water using the ice cube tray, 1 figure per cube.
- Place the ice cubes in a cooler with ice packs.

QUICK TIP

If you don't have an available faucet with warm water, bring warm water in an insulated mug or thermos.



CELEBRATE SMALL

Kids *love* this fun sensory activity, and having a smaller group allows everyone to have their own ice cube and try their own ideas for freeing the toy figure. This opportunity to engage individually and cooperatively will help the learning stick and not melt away like the ice! Nice!

ATTEMPT TO RESCUE THE ICE PEOPLE

Gather kids around a shallow pan. If you have more than four kids, you'll form groups of four for this experience.

SAY: Jesus is our hero because he saves us from the most dangerous things. I'll show you what I mean.

Put one ice cube per kid in each pan.

SAY: These people got stuck in the ice! How can we rescue them?

Let kids come up with ideas without helping them. Have kids work together to try their ideas.

Kids may or may not come up with ideas that work to completely free the toy figures. If they don't, let them use the salt and/or warm water to work the figures free.

TALK ABOUT IT

SAY: We rescued the people from the ice! Now they're free.

ASK: Why did they need a rescuer?

ASK: Why do *we* need a rescuer?

SAY: Just as you rescued the people from the ice, Jesus rescues us and brings us closer to God. That's because ➥ Jesus is the Messiah—our rescuer.



PLAY A GAME (10 MINUTES)

PLAY A VERSION OF TAG

Choose one child to be the Prisoner. Have him or her stand in the hula hoop.

You'll be the Guard.

Have the other kid(s) be Rescuers and move a good distance from the hula hoop.

Have the Rescuers try to get past the Guard without being tagged and free the Prisoner by touching the Prisoner's hand.

As Guard, you'll try to keep the Prisoner from being freed while trying to tag the Rescuers at the same time.

Rescuers who've been tagged must become Prisoners until another Rescuer frees them. If you have two kids, simply have them swap places for rounds of the game. Offer to swap roles with you, too, and you can become the Prisoner or the Rescuer.

Play for as long as time allows.

TALK ABOUT IT

SAY: In the game, sometimes you were trapped in the hoop and waited to be rescued.

ASK: How did it feel to be trapped in the hoop?

ASK: How did it feel to be rescued?

ASK: How can this game remind you that Jesus is the Messiah who rescues us?

SAY: In this game you were trapped in a pretend way. Jesus is the Messiah, which means he can rescue us and bring us close to God—and that's for *real*!

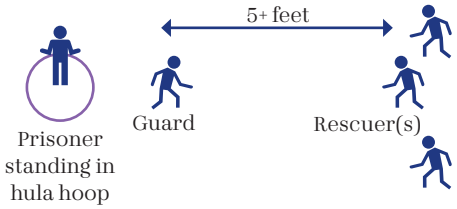


SUPPLIES

- hula hoop

EASY PREP

- Place the hula hoop in the center of the room.



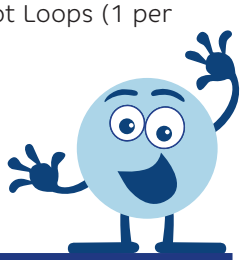
QUICK TIP

Allow younger kids to be the Prisoner first and watch how older kids try to get past the Guard to rescue them. Watching first will provide ideas for how to get past the Guard when it's their turn to rescue.

PRAY TOGETHER (5 MINUTES)

SUPPLIES

- individually wrapped Life Savers candies (1 per elementary child)
- small resealable bags with a few Cheerios or Froot Loops (1 per preschool child)



Celebrate Small

With fewer kids present, you can really dial in and listen as they share important insights into their lives. What do their needs for rescue tell you about their fears and worries? Don't be afraid to use more than five minutes for this reflective prayer time that can help you get to know kids better and inform your prayers for them.

EAT MINDFULLY

SAY: ➡ Jesus is the Messiah—a rescuer. We might say he's a "Life Saver."

Give each child an individually wrapped Life Savers candy, but tell kids not to eat it yet. (For preschoolers, Life Savers are a choking hazard. Instead, distribute bags of Cheerios or Froot Loops.)

SAY: Let's reflect on Jesus, our Life Saver. Have the children close their eyes. **Feel the package on your snack. Jesus was God, *packaged* in a human body so that he could rescue us. As you listen to the noises the package makes and feel the texture of the package, thank Jesus for coming to earth to rescue you.** Allow time.

SAY: Open your snack, and look at the shape. Notice how it looks like a tiny life-saving flotation device—like a floaty ring you might use in a pool. Talk to Jesus about a specific way you want him to throw you a life saver and rescue you. Allow time.

SAY: Now put the snack in your mouth. As you enjoy the flavor, think about what you might enjoy in heaven someday because Jesus rescued you. Thank Jesus for those things. Allow time.

Close in prayer, thanking Jesus for coming to earth to be the Messiah. As children leave, let them know that you're glad they came to church today. Ask them to come back in future weeks.