

THE COMING KINGDOM: A SERIES IN MATTHEW

**Week Five — Get Ready for the King****A Note to the Parents/Teachers**

Matthew's account of the Gospel of Jesus has a focus on Jesus' arrival bringing the Kingdom of God into our reality. It is this Kingdom that we want to equip all of Missio, our kids included, to live into. Pray that our kids would see Jesus not just as a baby in a manger nor just as a way out of trouble, but as the King over all heaven and earth. A good king who loves us.

- **Big Idea:** Jesus wants our hearts to be prepared to see him as the King, so we can let go of our own kingdom and enter into his good Kingdom.

Starter• **Evidences of Grace**

Ask kids to share ways they've seen God at work lately. Anything good, big or small, is from God. Take time to thank God together.

- **Imagine:** Have the kids picture swimming around in a pool of mud. For some that may sound really fun! Then talk about how the mud sticks to the skin and they can't see the bugs or even snakes crawling around in there with them. Plus, it stinks and they can't eat or do anything else while they're covered in it.

Ask them what they need to do. Of course, they'll need to first **get out** of the pool of mud, then they need to **get in** a bath of clean water.

This is what John the baptizer's message was all about; turning away from human kingdoms and washing it off, to enter into God's Kingdom.

Sing Together

Story — from Matthew 3:1-12

While Jesus was living in Nazareth, his cousin John, called ‘the Baptizer,’ was preaching in the wilderness of Judea. His message was simple: *“Turn away from your ways. Change your life. God’s kingdom has come near.”*

John and his message were told about long before through a prophet named Isaiah:

*“A voice of one calling in the wilderness,
‘Prepare the way for the Lord’s arrival!
Make the path smooth and straight for him to come!’”*

John dressed like Elijah; clothes of camel hair tied at the waist by a leather strap. He lived on a diet of locusts and wild field honey. People poured out of Jerusalem, Judea, and the Jordanian countryside to hear and see him in action. There at the Jordan River, those who came to confess their sins were baptized, or immersed, into a changed life.

But when John saw that a lot of Pharisees and Sadducees were coming out to see what was going on, he said:

“You brood of snakes! What do you think you’re doing slithering down here to the river? Who warned you to run from the wrath coming your way? You must change your lives and produce the kind of fruit God desires. And don’t think you’re safe by claiming Abraham as your ancestor. God could make descendants of Abraham out of these stones and fulfill His promise to them. What counts is your life. Is it green and flourishing? Otherwise, the ax will chop down the dead branch and it gets thrown into the fire!

“I immerse people into water, getting them ready to turn their old life in for a kingdom life. But the one who comes next is far more powerful than I am. I’m not worthy to carry his sandals. He will immerse people in the Holy Spirit and in fire. He will come and separate those who are willing to leave their kingdom and enter his, from those who do not. Those who turn to him get baptized with the Holy Spirit. But those who hold onto their own little kingdoms, they’re like dead, unusable weeds that get thrown into a fire to be burned.”

[Dialogue Questions — you may use some or all]

- ▶ Why do you think John was washing people in the Jordan River?
- ▶ Why do you think many people wanted to be baptized by him?
- ▶ John was a pretty interesting guy. He wore itchy camel’s hair clothes and ate nothing but bugs and honey. Do you think this had anything to do with his message? Do you think people find the message of God strange or uncomfortable?
- ▶ Why was John so harsh with the Pharisees and Sadducees? What did he want all of them to know?
- ▶ John baptized with water. What type of baptism did he say Jesus would bring? What does it mean to be baptized (immersed) in the Holy Spirit? In fire? Which kind of baptism do you want? Which kind do you think Jesus desires for you?

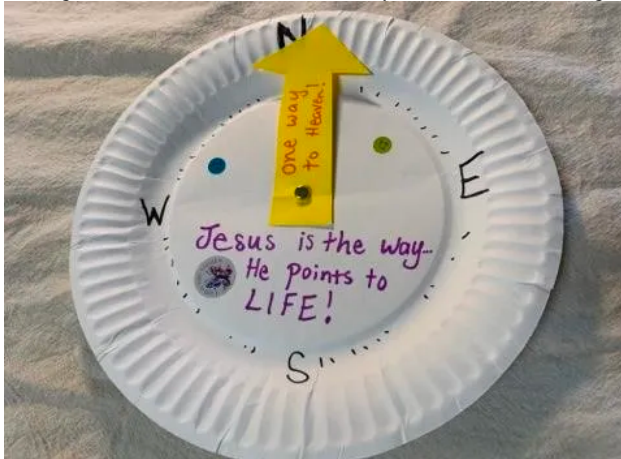
Breakout Time

Pray:

God, thank you for sending people to speak and share about your Kingdom, so that all may know and have the chance to turn to you. Please help us to turn away from our own ways and trust in you more and more. Jesus, you are King of the universe! Amen.

Craft:

- Use the coloring sheet attached
- Using a paper plate, a brad attacher, and some paper you can have the kids build a compass to illustrate pointing or preparing the way. It may look similar to this, but you can decorate the plate however you want:



BLESS Activity

This week, ask your family how you can practice the **Speak** rhythm.

John was used by God to speak about the Kingdom and prepare people to turn away from their own ways and turn toward Jesus. God still desires to use *us* in this way! Who can you speak good news to this week and tell about Jesus? How do you need to hear good news this week?

FOR



FAITHFULNESS WILL SPRING UP FROM HEAVEN'S

SEE, I AM SENDING MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY.