

# Kids' Chronicle

## John comes to ready people for Jesus

BY JOE SARNICOLA

**M**y name is John, but most people call me the Baptizer, because my ministry is one of baptism. I have been asked if I am one of the prophets written about in the Scriptures. I can tell you plainly, I am not.

The Pharisees once sent some of their men to ask whether I was the Messiah that was promised. To that I say, I am a man, nothing more. Yet I am he who was spoken of by Isaiah when he said a voice will proclaim, "Clear the way in the desert for our God."

I am the son of Zechariah, a priest of the order of Abijah. My mother's name is Elizabeth. For a long time, my mother was unable to have children. She continually prayed that God would send her a son or daughter. One day, when my father was burning incense in the temple, an angel appeared before him.

"Do not be afraid," the angel said. "God has seen your faithfulness. Your wife will soon bear a son. He will be full of the Holy Spirit."

"How can this be possible?" my father asked. "I am now old."

The angel answered, "Because you doubted the messenger of God, you will not be able to speak until my prophecy comes true."

And my father remained speechless until I was born and he announced that my name would be John. John means "the grace of the Lord." And, indeed, the Lord has been good to me.

I lead a simple life. My tunic is made of camel hair, and my belt is leather. I eat mostly locusts and wild honey. I travel frequently, and I always have enough for my needs. I know that the kingdom of God is near, and my mission is to baptize in water and announce the coming of the Lamb of God.

I recognized him for who he was when I was baptizing people in the Jordan Riv-



Illustration by Amy Sundstrom

er. He stood in line like any other man, but he was not like any other man. I pointed to him and said, "Look, everyone! There is the man I preach to you about. There is the lamb of God who will save the world from their sins."

When he approached me to be baptized, I could see the depth of God's love in his eyes, and I felt it in the grasp of his hand. When I immersed him in the water and brought him back up, the heavens parted like a curtain. The Holy Spirit came down in the form of a white dove and landed on the shoulder of this man.

When I was young, God told me I would know the Messiah when I saw a dove descend on him. I have seen the dove. I have seen the Son of God. His name is Jesus.

### Q&A

**READ MORE ABOUT IT: John 1**

**Q:** 1. Why did the angel appear to Zechariah?

2. What did John say when he saw Jesus waiting to be baptized?



You can win a \$50 savings bond by writing an essay (100 or fewer words) answering this question:

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Last month's winner was Sheila DePaola, a first-grade student at Henrietta's Crane Elementary School. In response to the question, **Who in your family do you consider an example of a good Christian, and why?** she wrote:

My mom and dad are good Christians because they love me. They also try to be good. They also teach people to learn about Jesus.

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### Bible Accent

Baptism is one of the Sacraments of Initiation. The symbolism of purification by water dates back to the priests of the Old Testament who had to bathe before they offered sacrifices. In the New Testament, John's ministry of baptism is mentioned in all four of the Gospels. John's message was that baptism was a means of repentance and entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

According to the Book of the Acts, the apostles also baptized new members of the Christian community. Today, Catholic children are baptized as babies with the blessing and support of their parents and godparents. The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) program offers baptism for new converts or for those who may not have received the sacraments while they were young. Mark 1:4 says, "Turn away from your sins and be baptized and God will forgive your sins."

### Saint Ita

Diedre, also known as Ita, was born in the middle of the sixth century to aristocratic parents in the county of Waterford, Ireland.

When she became a young woman, a wealthy nobleman wanted to marry her. Diedre was deeply religious and was afraid marriage would interfere with her service to the Lord. She fasted and prayed for several days for an answer. Her father then gave permission for her to join a religious vocation, if that was what she preferred. She did and eventually founded a convent of her own and established a school for boys.

Several miracles are attributed to Diedre, including one that claims she raised a soldier killed in battle from the dead. We honor her on Jan. 15.



### Puzzle

Which of the following statements about John the Baptizer are true?

Answers can be found on page 9

1. Son of Zechariah
2. Baptized Elijah
3. Ate mostly beef and pork
4. Isaiah wrote about him
5. Saw the Lamb of God

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