

## **05 – The Birth of John** **Luke 1:57-80**

### **Step 1: Link (review of last week)**

We are reading the story of Jesus in the book of Luke. So far Jesus is just a baby inside his mother, Mary. Last week his mother Mary visited her relative - ? (... Elizabeth) The two women had a special time praising God together. How long did Mary stay with Elizabeth? (... three months)

### **Step 2: Background (circumcision)**

Today we're going to read about the birth of Elizabeth's baby. Elizabeth's baby's name will be - ? (... John) John will finally be born in our story today.

In Israel there was a special ceremony for boys on their eighth day. Abraham held a big party for Isaac on the eighth day. Do you remember the ceremony? (... circumcision) In Israel, baby boys were circumcised on the eighth day. Circumcision is cutting a small piece of skin off of a boy's penis. This was commanded in the law of Moses. Circumcision was the sign that the boy was one of God's people. Circumcision was a sign in Old Testament times. Today the sign of being one of God's people is baptism.

### **Step 3: Key Questions**

- **What was the problem with John's name?** (v.59-63: no one in the family had that name; it was a new name)
- **Where did John get great power?** (v.80: from God's Spirit)

### **Step 4: Read Luke 1:57-80**

### **Step 5: Answer the questions**

### **Step 6: Talk about it**

We see some traditions in this story. On the eighth day, they did what the law of Moses commands (*use words in your translation*).

What did they do? (... circumcised John)

They circumcised John, and what else did they do? (... name him)

So, here are two traditions on the eighth day. One is circumcision. The other is naming the boy at his circumcision.

What was the tradition about choosing a name? (... if they don't know, prompt: what was the problem with John's name?) The tradition was to name the boy

after one of his ancestors. John didn't have an ancestor named John, so there was a problem at his naming. How was the problem solved? (... v. 63,64 *Zechariah wrote the name John and began to talk again.*) Now the sign that Zechariah couldn't talk is used to answer everyone's question about John's name. When Zechariah writes the name John and then is able to speak again, the discussion is over. The people knew that God chose that name for the baby.

Zechariah started to praise God. Why did Zechariah start to praise God? (... v.67: *the Holy Spirit came on him*) Let's re-read his praise. While we read, what verses stand out to you? What verse do you think is wonderful? What verse surprises you? What verse touches your heart – in a good way, or a bad way? After we read, let's tell each other. There is no right answer. This is your opinion, your feeling.

Read Luke 1:68-79.

Can anybody tell about a verse? There is not a right answer. This is your opinion, your feeling. (...)

What verse do you think is wonderful? (...)

What verse surprises you? (...)

What verse touches your heart – in a good way or a bad way? (...)

Do you have any questions about any of these verses? (...)

*(Don't forget to share your own impression!)*

Where did John live? (... v.80 *in the desert*) What kind of a man do you think John was? (... an opinion question. Prompt: what kind of a place is a desert? Why would a man live in the desert? etc.)

**Do you have any questions or comments?**