**1. Motivate**

When have you been surprised by a piece of good news?

* won the lottery
* got an A on a test

A video introduction to the lesson is available. View it at <http://tinyurl.com/4xn9k3ev> If you don’t have wi-fi where you teach, it is best to download the video file to your computer from <http://tinyurl.com/57z9d2mh>

* received notice of a raise in pay
* got the promotion/job
* got the loan for the new house
* one of the kids got a big scholarship
* our team won
* found a good price on an airline ticket
* my Amazon shipment was coming a day earlier
* won the Publisher’s Clearinghouse Sweepstakes

**2. Transition**

Here’s the best good news ever – the Gospel!

* Jesus came to deliver the Good News of Salvation for all people.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 John Prepared the Way

Listen for an Old Testament quote.

Luke 3:1-6 (NIV) 1 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar--when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene-- 2 during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert. 3 He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 4 As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. 5 Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. 6 And all mankind will see God's salvation.'"

What purpose does Luke’s identifying political and religious leaders serve in preparing to discuss John’s ministry and to Luke’s Gospel account overall?

* helps us identify fairly closely when John ministered
* also when Jesus was born and then began His ministry

Note the essence of John’s message?

* Prepare for God’s Good News
* The Messiah, the Sent One is coming
* Straighten the roads, make them level … the King is coming
* He is bringing salvation for all people

What purpose did it serve as far as Jesus was concerned?

* caught people’s interest
* raised expectations that something was coming
* like a warmup act at a concert, get people in the mood for something special

What are some ways God prepares a person’s heart to hear about Jesus today?

* may have a season of troubles, trials
* begin to realize something is missing in your life
* find you cannot handle things on your own
* you become aware of the effects of your sinful condition
* brings someone into your life that begins to point you in the right direction

John preached repentance. What is repentance?

* you turn away from your sinful practices
* you reject those actions and attitudes
* you head your life in the opposite direction
* you respond to God’s direction in your life

When we are confronted with a call to repent, why do we tend to accept or reject the invitation strongly?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Accept Strongly | Reject Strongly |
| * tired of current situation
* miserable with the way things are
* want to turn your life around
* looking for a better life
 | * would rather keep the way things are
* like the sinful lifestyle
* believe that repentance would cramp your style
 |

What connection is there between repentance and forgiveness?

* it is necessary for salvation
* however it is not sufficient
* one must also confess their sin
* must also believe in the forgiveness Jesus has made possible
* place your trust in what God promises – forgiveness

3.2 Isaiah Prophesied Jesus’ Purpose

Listen for a prophecy about Jesus.

Luke 4:14-19 (NIV) Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. 15 He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. 16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. 17 The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

What do we learn about Jesus’s own practice as far as synagogue worship is concerned?

* He visited synagogues in the towns where he traveled
* as a traveling rabbi, He was invited to speak, teach
* He would read from the Scriptures and then comment on it

Jesus read from verses that in our Bibles is Isaiah. 61:1, 2. How do these verses summarize Jesus’s mission?

* God’s Spirit was/is upon Him
* Jesus was anointed, chosen
* His task was to preach the Good News of salvation to poor sinners
* He would proclaim the freedom from penalty of sin
* He would give sight to those who are in spiritual blindness
* He would declare freedom from slavery, oppression of sin
* He would tell everyone you can know God’s favor by wiping out the guilt of sin

During this incident, in what ways did Jesus demonstrate the importance of knowing the Scriptures?

* showed He was familiar with the portions of the Old Testament they had
* remember, chapters and verses did not exist
* was able to find the exact prophecy on the scroll
* able to interpret and apply what Scripture said

What was the relationship of the Spirit to the ministry of Jesus?

* Jesus was indwelt by the Holy Spirit
* He was fully human (like us), but was filled, controlled, directed, empowered by the Holy Spirit of God
* miracles He performed, He did in the power of God’s Spirit
* preaching, teaching was by the power of the Holy Spirit
* News Flash – believers today are also indwelt and empowered by the Holy Spirit

In what different ways can we see the Spirit of God on Jesus throughout these events?

* guiding what Jesus said
* giving Him the right place and time to minister in a particular way
* says He is anointed, chosen, appointed to this ministry
* giving Him speaking skills
* remember, He grew up the son of a carpenter
* didn’t take a speech class
* didn’t study theology, sociology, advertising, management, educational methods, hermeneutics (Bible interpretation)

3.3 Jesus Declared Who He Was

Listen for how Jesus shocked the crowd.

Luke 4:20-21 (NIV) Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, 21 and he began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Jesus claimed that that prophecy was fulfilled right there and then. Why might it have been a surprise to those who heard Him?

* this was Nazareth where He had grown up
* they knew Him as the son of Joseph the Carpenter … not as the Son of God
* it was probably hard to realize what Jesus was saying
* they thought of Him as the little kid that used to play in the sawdust and then help dad as he grew older
* now He is claiming to be The Anointed One prophesied in Isaiah

What does the statement mean concerning Jesus’s mission? What are the implications of Jesus proclaiming Himself to be the fulfillment of this prophecy?

* He was plainly implying that He was the one who fulfilled that prophecy
* He was the Anointed One – the Messiah
* He was the One preaching good news
* He was the One proclaiming freedom from the penalty and power of sin
* God is now culminating His salvation plan with the person and ministry of Jesus

How can we as a group continue to carry out the mission of Jesus?

* involved in the spread of the Good News of Salvation
* sharing it personally with those around us
* living a life that shows the Lordship of Christ
* allowing God to display the Fruit of the Spirit through us
* supporting both the local and worldwide ministry of the Church
* sending and going with the Good News

What are some popular, contemporary perceptions about the things Jesus did? Though accurate in some ways, where do they fall short in identifying the true mission of Jesus?

* He was a good teacher, a *great* teacher
* He said some important and significant things
* He traveled around doing acts of kindness

But …

* good teachings would not solve the sin problem for all mankind
* only Jesus’ substitutionary death on the cross would accomplish the forgiveness of sin
* only Jesus’ resurrection from the dead would prove that His primary mission was accomplished
* only the resurrection would give believers New Life, a life that was being freed from the power of sin

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Application

An Assessment.

* If Jesus’s mission is to deliver the good news of salvation for all people, then we must be about the same.
* Take an assessment of your life. Who, by your speech or behavior, you consider to be “off limits” from the message of the gospel?
* If so, pray and repent of those attitudes.

A Mission Statement.

* In consideration of Jesus’s mission, compose a mission statement for your own life.
* While you might take into account your personal gifts, talents, and ambitions, remember that our mission must fall in the shadow of Jesus’s mission.

A Summary.

* How comfortable are you with sharing the good news of Jesus with others?
* Take five minutes and write out a brief summary of the gospel.
* Carry this summary with you for the next week, reading it a few times each day.
* Ask God for an opportunity to verbally share it with someone else.

This message came in two parts from the Southern Baptist headquarters in Tuncipe. They risked their lives to get it to us. Can you help us decode it? Look at the letter under the blank and find it in the bottom row of the key. Most of the letters in the message are there. Match to the letter above which goes in the blank. For the empty cells in the bottom row, you know the letter in the message will be one of the letters above the empty cells. Tech help (and the color page) are available at <http://tinyurl.com/57z9d2mh>

Cryptogram Puzzle