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## Nativity of Saint John the Baptist, A-C, Intermediate - RCLB Lectionary



### Intermediate Session

Isaiah 49:1-6

Luke 1:57-66, 80

### Opening Prayer

Let us pray.

Patient God,

You invite us to live as your children.

Help us respond to your grace in our lives.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

### Opening Life Reflection

Today as we celebrate the birth of John the Baptist we are reminded of the gift of God's grace. Begin today's session by inviting the children to brainstorm the many ways that they hear important news. Write down their responses.

- Why is it necessary to hear important news?
- Have you ever had to give a message to someone?
- What was it like to be a messenger?

Allow time for discussion. John the Baptist cooperated with the grace of God and he fulfilled his mission as a very important messenger. His message was that Jesus was coming.

### Listening to the Word of God

In the Old Testament reading listen to how God's servant is given grace.

Read Isaiah 49:1-6.

Allow for silence.

### Scripture Discussion Starters

- When does the servant receive God's grace?
- What does grace help the servant do?
- How does the servant respond to God's call?

In the gospel reading listen to the story of the birth of John the Baptist.

Read Luke 1:57-66, 80.

Allow for silence.

- Why is John the Baptist named John instead of Zechariah?



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- How does John's father show that he wants his son to be named John?
- How do the neighbors and relatives react?
- How does John grow up?

### **Scripture Background**

Provide 2-3 minutes of background information on the readings.

As early as the fourth century the birth of Jesus was celebrated. Not long afterward, Christians began to mark the day of John the Baptist's birth as well. The Church celebrates the feast of most saints on the day of their death. We celebrate the birth of only two saints: the Blessed Virgin Mary and John the Baptist. We believe that Mary entered the world sinless at her birth and tradition suggests that John the Baptist was also freed from original sin when he "leaped for joy" in his mother's womb upon meeting the Savior.

The Old Testament reading today tells us about the call of a prophet. We hear how a servant of the Lord is called even before his birth. This passage points to a servant who will be a great messenger of God's salvation.

In today's gospel the divine destiny of Jesus is shown in Luke's description of the miraculous events that surround the birth of John the Baptist. The grace of God is evident even before John's birth. God prepares John the Baptist for his role as messenger. He will announce a savior, who is Messiah and Lord.

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### **Questions for Deeper Reflection**

- Why did God send John to be a messenger?
- How did John help people prepare for Jesus?
- How can you be a messenger for God?

[If you are not going to continue with the doctrinal discussion, proceed to the Gospel in Life.]

### **Doctrinal Discussion Starters**

#### **Human Cooperation with Divine Grace**

The birth of John the Baptist reveals how God reaches out to us first. God calls and waits for us to listen and respond. John the Baptist responds to God's call in freedom. This shows how God's grace and human freedom work together to bring about salvation. God reaches out to us in love. That gift of love invites a response.

We believe that grace is the favor of God, freely given to us so that we might respond and become children of God. In baptism we receive the gift of grace and we become part of God's family. We are born anew into Christ and we receive the gift of the Spirit.

- How do you live as a child of God?



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## **Nativity of Saint John the Baptist, A-C, Intermediate - RCLB Lectionary**

- Where do you find the grace of God?
- How can you respond to God's grace in your life?

### **The Gospel in Life**

Write a message of good news to share with your family and friends.

