

Youth Teaching Resources

January 19, 2020



Season after Christmas (January 5)

Now Appearing

John 1:1-9, 10-18 – “The Word that Reveals”

Epiphany (January 12-February 23)

Matthew 3:13-17 – “A Son Who Pleases”

John 1:29-42 – “A Lamb Who Leads”

Matthew 4:12-23 – “A Preacher Who Calls

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Find links and videos related to this lesson.

A Lamb Who Leads

John 1:29-42

YOUTH Teaching Guide

by Jeremy Colliver

This youth teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Baptists Today*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Baptists Today* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Baptists Today* so they can prepare before the lesson.

PARENT PREP

If you had to introduce your students to your friends in an elevator, what would you say? How would your students introduce you to their friends? How do you introduce your students to your friends? Do you choose a different way to introduce your students in different ways? Have you ever thought about why you introduce your students the way you do? These aren't things that solely define your students, but they are the first things that you think about. How do you want to think about your students?

TEACHING THE LESSON

Fellowship

As your students enter the room, challenge them to come up with a unique way to introduce themselves to the group. When everyone has arrived, allow everyone to introduce themselves to the group in their unique way. After all introductions have been made, facilitate a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) Why did you choose to introduce yourself the way that you did?
- 2) Which introduction did you enjoy the most?
- 3) What would you change about your introduction after hearing other people's introductions?
- 4) What introductions do you remember from the Bible?
- 5) How would you introduce Jesus to someone in an elevator?

Information

Transition to the next section of the session by reading John 1:29-42. Allow the students to ask any initial questions they have about the text. As you answer their questions, you may want to provide some of the information found in Tony's commentary to answer their questions. When the students have had an opportunity to share their initial thoughts, continue the discussion by facilitating a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) What are the three "testimonies" that John gives in this passage?
- 2) Who are the testimonies from? How does this influence what they are saying?
- 3) How does John introduce Jesus? What does this say about Jesus? What does this say about the relationship between John and Jesus?
- 4) How does Jesus introduce the disciples?
- 5) What does this passage say about us seeking Jesus as Jesus seeks us?

If your group would like to dig deeper in their discussion, share some of the insights that Tony provides in the "Digging Deeper" portion of his commentary. You may want to use some questions like the following to facilitate your discussion:

- 1) How is this story different from the same one in the synoptic gospels?
- 2) How many days are in this passage? Does it really matter? Explain.
- 3) What time is it during the passage? Does it really matter? Explain.

You may also want your group to discuss "The Hardest Question" if they would like to continue their discussion on this passage. Tony poses the following question to consider as "The Hardest Question": Would John the Baptist really have called Jesus the "Son of God"?

Transformation

Conclude your session by showing the clip "Two Things About Yourself" from *Wonder*. If you are unable to show the clip, summarize it to the best of your ability, and then facilitate a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) How does Auggie introduce himself?
- 2) Do you believe the other boy truly wants to know about Auggie or is making fun of him?
- 3) How important is the way you introduce yourself to others?
- 4) What are ways that you introduce yourself to others that aren't direct?
- 5) How do your interactions change as you get to know people better than their introductions?

Close with a prayer thanking God for continuing to introduce God's self to us as we move away from God and come back to God.

Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartledge

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Not like the others—It may seem surprising that the lectionary follows Matthew’s baptism story (last week’s lesson) with the one from John. The purpose is apparently to enrich our understanding of the baptism during the season of Epiphany, which celebrates the appearance and manifestation of Jesus in various ways.

The description of Jesus’ baptism in the Fourth Gospel is one of many differences between it and the other three, known as “Synoptic Gospels” because they are more similar (“synoptic” means “seen together”).

Troy A. Miller offers a helpful reflection on the differences between John and the synoptics:

Do you remember the old Sesame Street game that had four squares and a jingle that went something like, “Which one of these is not like the other, which one just doesn’t belong”? If you played that game with the four Gospels, John’s Gospel would certainly be the one with the lights blinking around it at the end. John records no birth story but has two temple-cleansing stories. He records no parables and identifies Jesus’ miracles as “signs.” He quite often relates not simply *what* Jesus did or taught, but also *why* or *for what reason* he did such things. When compared to the other Gospels, John paints a more divine portrait of Jesus, seemingly not wanting his readers to forget or miss the fact that this earthly Jesus is God’s Son who existed before all time.

(*Feasting on the Word, Year A*, ed. David L. Bartlett and Barbara Brown Taylor, vol. 1 of Accordance electronic ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), paragraph 3327.)

How many days?—John 1:29 begins a sequence of days at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. These are not clearly delineated. Some scholars think there are six days, though others see four. Chapter 1 seems to include four days: (1) Jewish officials question John about his identity [vv. 19-28], (2) Jesus comes to be baptized and John recognizes him as the Messiah [vv. 29-34], (3) John again proclaims Jesus as the Lamb of God and two of his disciples follow Jesus [vv. 35-42], and (4) Jesus goes with the new disciples to Galilee, where he recruits Phillip and Nathaniel [vv. 43-51].

Despite this, 2:1 begins with “On the third day.” This must refer to the third day following Jesus’ baptism, not to the first day mentioned in the book.

Some scholars also read the Fourth Gospel as concluding its account of Jesus’ ministry with a sequence of six days.

Digging Deeper *continued*

What time was it?—The NRSV’s “four o’clock in the afternoon” translates the Greek’s “about the tenth hour,” which is preserved in the King James Version. What does that mean? The Romans reckoned time from midnight, but the writer seems clearly to be following Jewish methods of timekeeping.

The Jewish system considers sundown to be the beginning of a new day: thus, in Genesis 1, the writer says “And there was evening and there was morning, the first day” (Gen. 1:5), and so forth through six days.

In the Jewish system, nighttime hours were divided into four “watches” – sundown to 9:00 p.m., 9:00 p.m. to midnight, midnight to 3:00 a.m., and 3:00 a.m. until sunrise, usually around 6:00 a.m.

Daytime hours were reckoned in accordance with temple activities, beginning with the preparation of the altar for the morning sacrifice at dawn, somewhere around 6:00 a.m. If 6:00 a.m. was the first hour, the tenth hour would be 4:00 p.m.

The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartledge

The Hardest Question is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartledge, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Would John the Baptist really have called Jesus the “Son of God”?

It is thought that the Gospel of John – whose author is anonymous – apparently grew out of a circle of believers typically called “the Johannine Community.” The book was probably written late in the first century, probably during the 90s CE. As such, it reflects beliefs that had developed over time and may attribute some of those developed beliefs to the life and teachings of Jesus.

If that is the case, we might assume that John the baptizer’s early reference to Jesus as the “Son of God” could be a retrojection – a later writer putting words in his mouth, so to speak. But is it surprising to think that John would describe Jesus as the Son of God even this early in his ministry?

John was not the first to speak of someone as God’s son. Israel, in a collective sense, is described as God’s firstborn son in Exodus 4:22, where God reportedly instructed Moses to tell the Pharaoh, “Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son.”

Later, descendants of David who came to the throne were thought of as having been adopted as sons by God. When Nathan relayed God’s promise to David that a descendant of his would rule on the throne of Israel forever, he spoke of when David’s son would take the throne. “I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me” (2 Sam. 7:14).

Coronation hymns in the book of Psalms spoke of the newly crowned king as having been adopted by God: “I will tell of the decree of the LORD: he said to me, ‘You are my son. Today I have begotten you’” (Psalm 2:7).

After the kingdom came to an end and no more sons of David ruled in Jerusalem, a belief emerged that God would fulfill the promise of 2 Samuel 7 by raising up a descendant of David as the one anointed to deliver Israel: both “Messiah” in Hebrew and “Christ” in Greek mean “anointed.”

It is unlikely that John the baptizer shared the same beliefs as the later Johannine community, and he would certainly not have thought of Jesus in Trinitarian terms as propounded in Nicea centuries later. Still, since he believed that Jesus was the anointed Messiah, descended from David but also sent by God, he could also think of him as the son of God, though probably without the capital “S.”