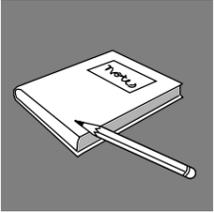




WEEK 2
The Birth of John the Baptist

Preparation:
Read Luke 1:5-27, 57-66, using the Bible Study notes to help you.



The children need to understand that John's birth was an important event. Like Samson, John was dedicated to God from birth (Judges 13:2-5, Luke 1:15) and God would use him to turn the people of Israel back to himself (Luke 1:16-17).

1:5 The priesthood was the body of men who were responsible for the religious life of the people of Israel. They performed the various rites and sacrifices in the temple, as laid down in the Mosaic Law, and taught the people what God required from them in the keeping of the Law. The priests were divided into various groups (or orders) which took it in turn to officiate in the temple. Zechariah was in the order of Abijah.

Elizabeth was a relative of Mary, the mother of Jesus (1:36).

1:7 Childlessness was a great disgrace for a Jewish couple (1:25, Genesis 30:22-23). The text states they were both old, so Elizabeth may have been past the age of childbearing.

1:9 Burning incense was a solemn rite carried out twice a day. Each priestly order was on temple duty for only 2 weeks in each year and many of the priests lived outside Jerusalem for the rest of the year (1:23). The job of incense burning only came round to any individual priest once or twice in a life-time.

1:10 The altar of incense was situated in the Holy Place and stood in front of the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place.

1:15 Cf. Judges 13:2-5, Numbers 6:1-4.

1:17 See Malachi 4:5-6. The Jews of that time were aware that the coming of the Messiah would be preceded by the coming of Elijah.

Lesson Aim:
To understand that John was sent to prepare the people for the ministry of Jesus.

1:20 Zechariah was stricken dumb (and deaf, 1:62) because he did not believe Gabriel's message.

The theme for the next 2 lessons is getting ready - for the birth of John and the birth of Jesus. Start by asking



the children if anyone has a baby in their family. If so, can they remember what they did to get ready for the baby? Discuss how a family gets ready for a new baby - who tells the daddy that the mummy is expecting a baby? What clothes and equipment are needed? Who chooses the baby's name? In today's true story from the Bible we will learn how a family got ready for a new baby. Ask the children to listen carefully so that they can tell you who was expecting a baby, who told the dad about the baby and who chose the baby's name. Tell the story.

After the story go over the answers to the questions and teach the memory verse.





Flannelgraph or pictures of individual characters. You need Zechariah, Elizabeth, angel Gabriel, baby John (see visual aids pages 89-93). Make sure the picture of the priest is accurate regarding dress (a long white tunic with sleeves, a belt made from twined blue, purple and scarlet linen, a white turban). Priests did not wear sandals in the temple.

Visual aids



A picture of the temple layout would be helpful for older children (see *The Illustrated Bible Dictionary* Part 3 p.1530).

Keep the visual aids for week 5 (Preparing the People for the Message).

Instructions

- Slot the mouth pieces into the appropriate figures (a into the angel and z into Zechariah) to make movable mouths (see diagram).
- Glue the altar onto the sheet of coloured paper.
- Staple the 2 figures either side of the altar, making sure that the moving parts move freely. Gabriel's and Zechariah's mouths can be opened and closed.
- Colour if time permits.



3-5s

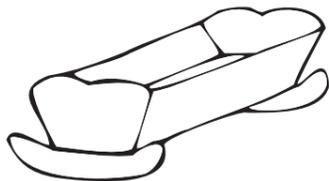
Make a cradle. Each child requires page 13 photocopied on card, gummed paper shapes, cotton wool, a wooden clothes peg and a strip of cloth. Prior to the lesson cut out the cradle pieces and score and fold along the dotted lines.

Activities



Instructions

- Decorate the sides and ends of the cradle with gummed paper shapes.
- Glue the flaps marked **a** to the lines marked **a** on each end piece.
- Glue the flaps marked **b** to the sides of the end pieces to form the sides of the cradle (see diagram).
- Line the base of the cradle with cotton wool.



- Draw a face on the clothes peg and wrap it in a strip of material, securing it with sellotape. Place the baby in the cradle.

5-7s

Each child requires page 14 photocopied and an A4 sheet of coloured paper. Prior to the lesson cut out the pieces from page 14, cut out the hatched area around each mouth and cut the slit below each belt. Place the pieces in an envelope for each child. Write the memory verse along the bottom of the sheet of coloured paper.

7-9s

The aim of this activity is to give the children an understanding of what the priests wore. The robe and hat were made of white linen and the girdle was brightly coloured red, blue and purple. No sandals were worn in the temple. Each child requires page 15 photocopied on card, 2 turban pieces and 2 robe pieces cut from white kitchen towel (see templates on page 12), and a strip of white material approximately 30 x 1 cm for the belt. Prior to the lesson cut out the pieces from page 15 and make a figure for each child as follows:

- Cut out the body, cut out the 2 slits, fold into a tube and glue.
- Cut out the skirt, cut slits along the top where indicated, fold back along the dotted line and glue around the dotted line on the body.
- Cut out the arms and insert them through the slits on the body (see diagram).
- Cut out the feet, fold at the dotted line and glue inside the front of the skirt with the feet sticking out.



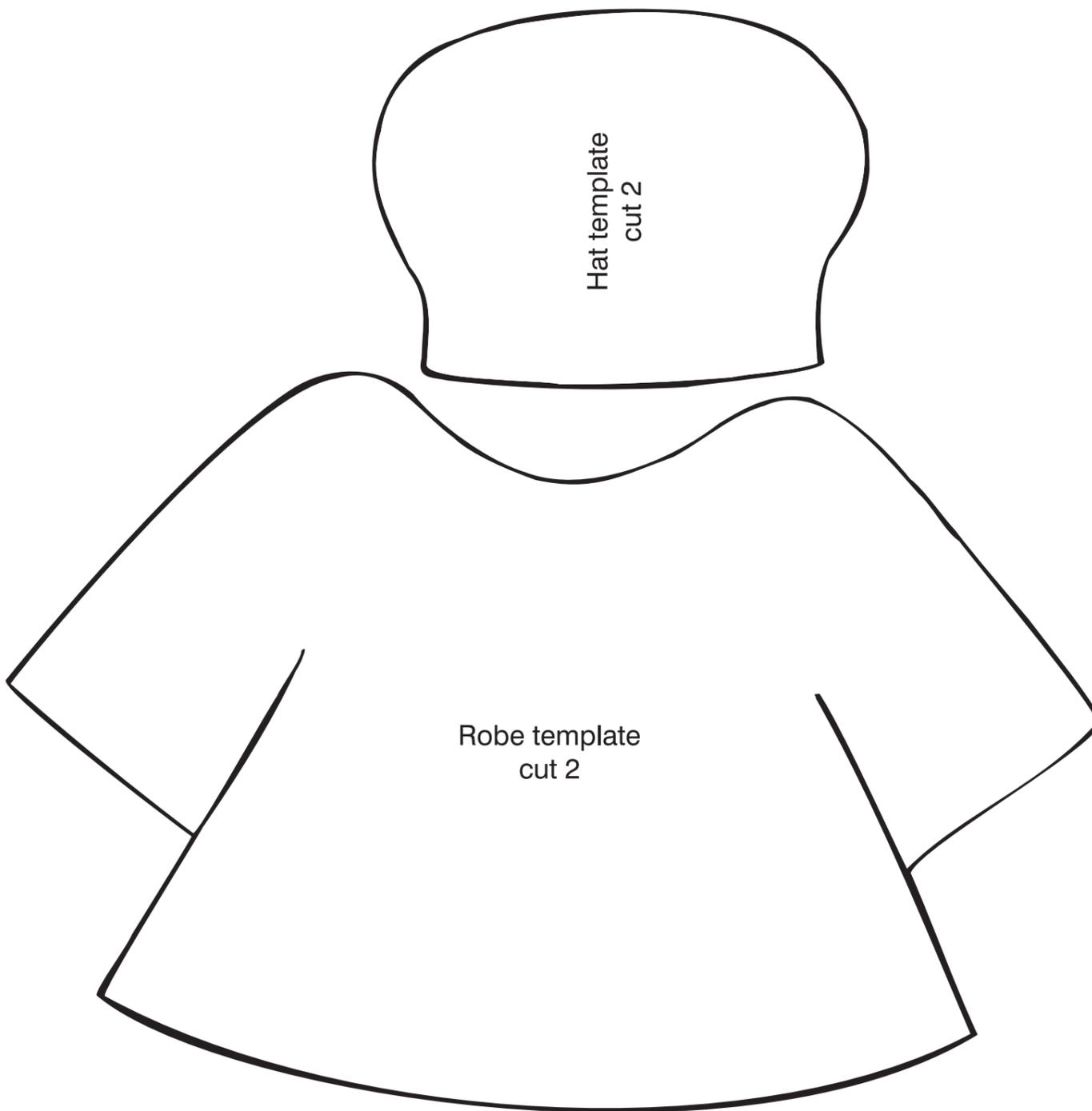
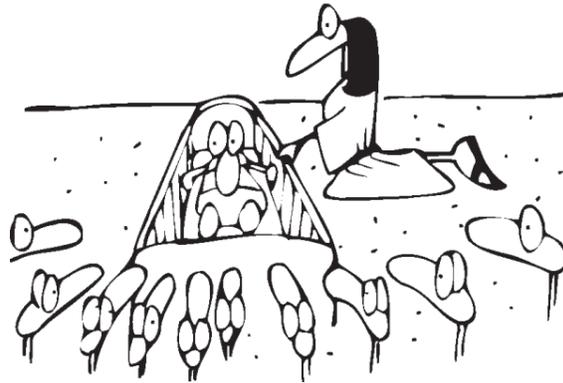
Activity time instructions

- Fold one of the 2 robe pieces in half lengthways and cut along the fold to make 2 backs.
- Put the backs and front together and sellotape along the seams (see diagram). Do not sellotape along the inner arm seams.
- Turn the robe inside out and put it onto the model, sticking the 2 backs together down the middle with sellotape. Staple the inner arm seams together.





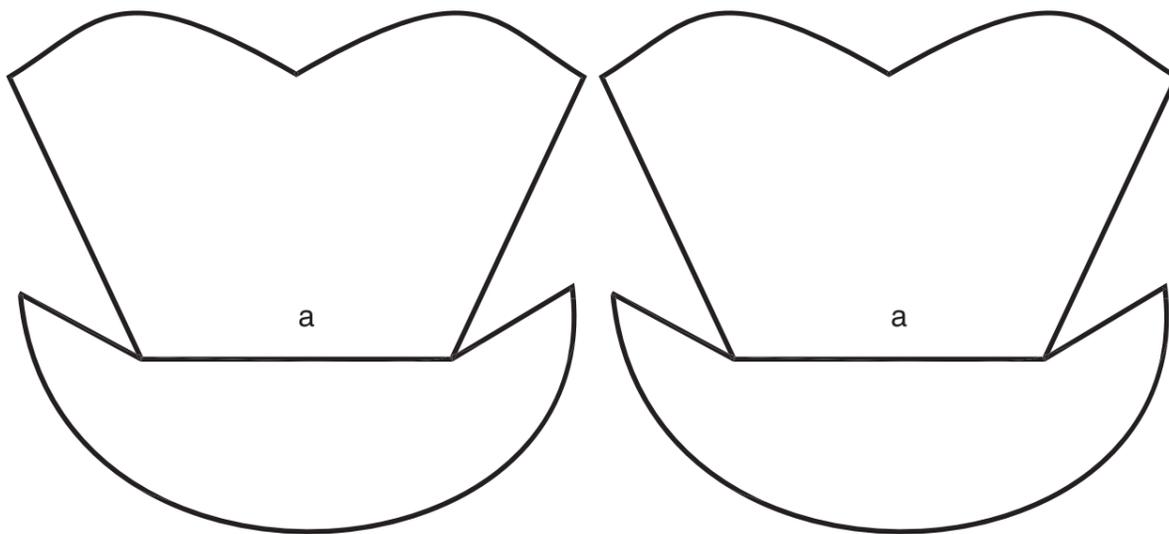
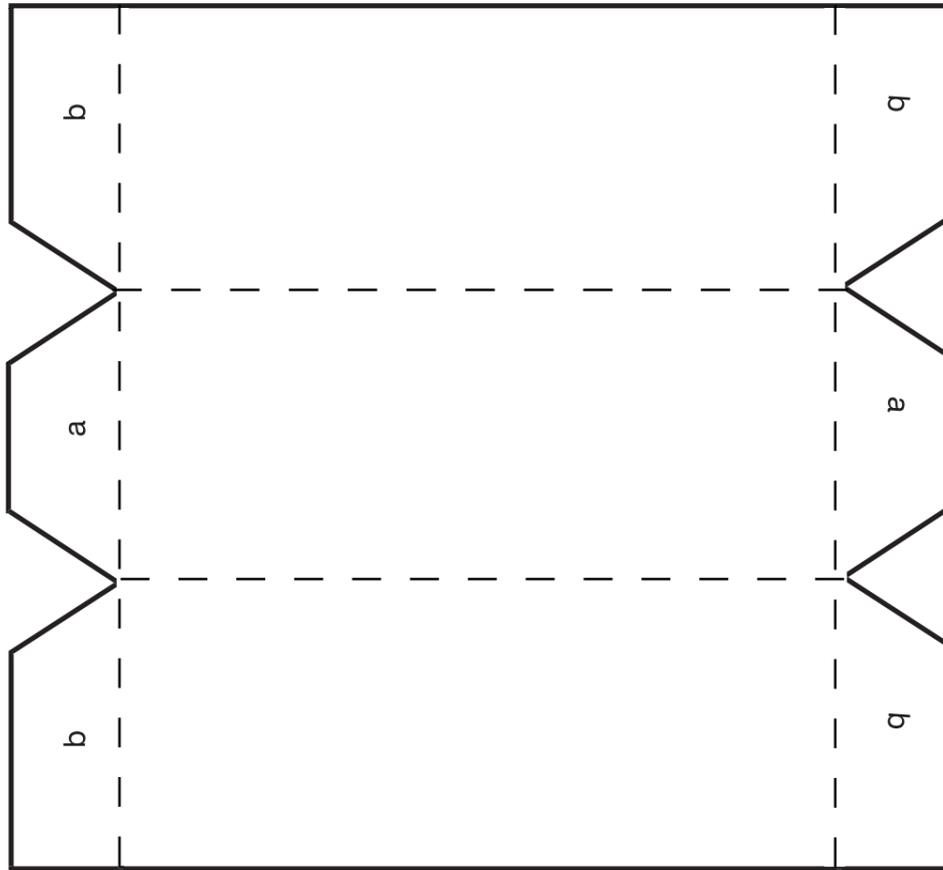
- Put the turban pieces together and sellotape along the seams (see diagram). Turn the hat inside out and put it on the model. 
- Draw a face on the model and glue on cotton wool for hair and beard (see diagram). 
- Colour the belt with red, blue and purple felt tips and tie around the model's waist.





The Birth of John the Baptist

Activity for 3-5s





The Birth of John the Baptist

Activity for 3-5s

