

The Birthday of John the Baptist

This day commemorates the birth of Jesus' cousin, who according to the Gospels was sent to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah.

It is possible that he belonged to the devout sect of the Essenes, spending much of his early life in the desert. It was John who baptised Jesus in the River Jordan, but his preaching angered the Jewish establishment. This was especially over his opposition to Herod Antipas' divorce in order that he could marry Herodias, then married to his own half-brother. Herodias and her daughter, Salome, persuaded Herod to have John beheaded.



- ① Sit down with the children and show them the series of pictures overleaf. You may wish to lay the sheets out either on a table or the floor, and then read the story.
- ② Ask the children the following questions and discuss them:-
 - What part of the story did you like and why?*
 - What pictures did you like and why?*
 - Zechariah was struck dumb (unable to speak). How would you feel if you could not speak?*
 - John told us to be sorry for things we have done wrong. What things have you done wrong?*
 - How do you say you are sorry?*
 - John baptised people as a sign of forgiveness. Have you ever been to a Baptism/ Christening?*
- ③ Get the children to find out how we learn to speak.
- ④ Ask the children to try to visit a church and find out where Baptism takes place.

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**John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin
and he prepared the way for Jesus.**

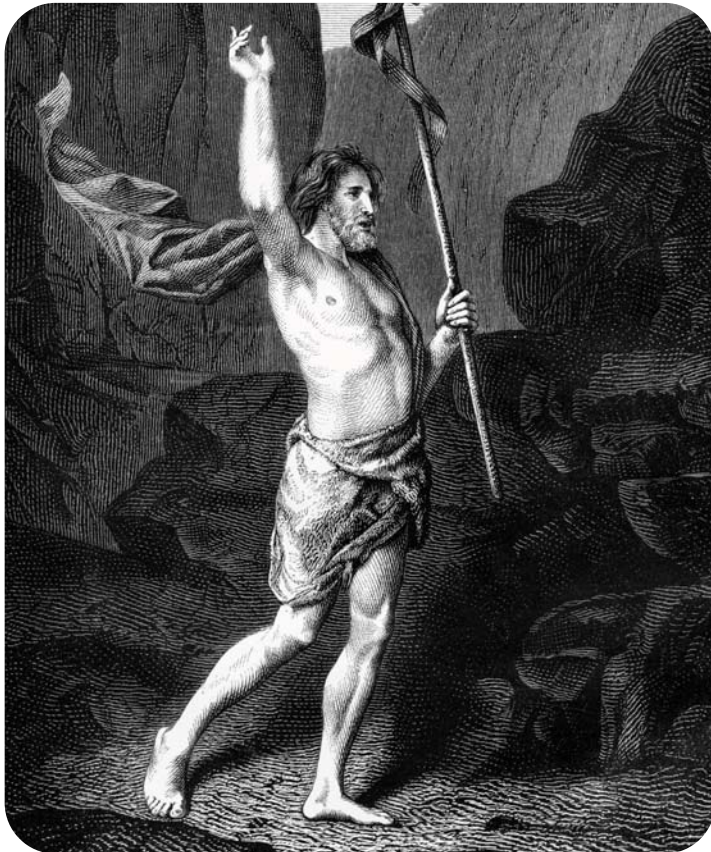
**His Mother was Elizabeth and his
father was Zechariah.**



His father was unable to speak until he was asked to name John. Most people thought he would name him Zechariah using the family name, but Zechariah spoke clearly “His name is John”.

John grew up and lived alone in the desert.

The Bible tells us; ‘The child grew and became powerful in the Spirit. He lived in the wilderness until the day when he was revealed to Israel’.



The Bible describes him 'as a voice crying in the wilderness. He wore clothing of camel's hair and a leather belt'.



John's message was to tell the people to say sorry for all their sins. He invited people to be washed clean in the River Jordan, we call this Baptism.



One day his cousin
Jesus came to the
river to be baptised.
As John baptised
him, so a voice from
heaven was heard,
“This is my Son”.