

Materials I Need:

Legend:

 = Option 1, Appropriate for 1st – 2nd Grade

 = Option 2, Appropriate for 3rd – 6th Grade

Bolded words in the narrative = key story highlights for correlation with lesson plan activities.

Memory Work:

Luke 3:8a “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.”

Aim Questions:


1. What was John doing, and who came to see him?
2. What were the questions that John was asked, and who asked them?
3. What would you say John’s definition of repentance was?
4. According to John, have you repented of your sin?
5. If you were there, and you asked, “What should I do?” what would John tell you?
6. Where did Jesus go after He had finished being baptized by John? Why?


 **Hook:**


Good Fruit - Bad Fruit (*Discussion*). Students sample good and bad fruit. Bring in bananas that are ripe and some that are spoiled. Dare students to taste each. When you’re in the produce department and you have to choose apples, oranges, bananas, watermelon, etc., what are the things you look for to insure you are buying good fruit? What is it about good fruit that makes it desirable to us? What is it about bad fruit that makes it undesirable? Besides spoiling, what other ways are there that fruit can be bad? What dangers, if any, are there from eating bad fruit?

Lace-em-up (*Game*). Divide students into teams. Give each team one shoe and one new shoelace. Shoes should all have the same number of lacing holes. Have a relay race. The first member of each team will lace the shoe. The second member will unlace it. The third will lace it again and so on. The shoe doesn’t have to be laced perfectly, but the lace must pass through every eyehole. (*Luke 3:16 - But one more powerful than I will come, the things of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.*)

Candy Give-Away (*Object Lesson*). As students arrive for class, give two wrapped candies to the earlier ones. Ask them not to eat any until class begins. Stop giving candy when about half of the students are present. When class begins, give permission to eat the candies. Students will complain that some don’t have any. See if those who have candy can figure out what needs to be done. (*Luke 3:11 - The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same.*)


 **Let's Talk Wheat (Speaker/Discussion).** Interview a wheat farmer or show a picture book about the harvest and processing of wheat. What does wheat look like? What part of the plant is made into the flour we eat? How is this part separated from the rest of the stalk? What is done with the remainder? (Luke 3:17 - His winnowing fork is in His hand to clear His threshing floor and to gather the wheat into His barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.)


 **Let's Talk Fruit (Speaker/Discussion).** Interview a fruit grower or a produce worker, or show a picture book about the harvest of fruit. Discuss the selection process. What happens to the best fruit? What happens to fruit that's not good enough to be eaten in any form? If a grower has trees that don't produce fruit, what does he do?

 **Trix are for Kids (Snack).** Eat Trix cereal. Identify the different fruits. When the Bible talks about fruit in our lives, what does it mean? Read and discuss Galatians 5:22 and Colossians 1:10.



Book: **Presentation Ideas -**

 **John the Baptist Questioned by the Taxgatherers (Illustration/Overhead).** Among the crowd were certain tax collectors that asked John what they must do. His answer is found in Luke 3:13, **BLUK03.GF1.**

 **The Baptism of Jesus (Illustration/Overhead).** "When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized, too. And as He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form like a dove," Luke 3:21, 22, **BLUK03.GF2.**

Bible Adventure -

Suppose you got a telegram from the President of the United States telling you he was going to be in town in three days and was going to stop by your home to visit with you. **How would you react?** If you were like most people, you'd go into a frenzy of cleaning, cooking, and fixing up, taking your whole family right along with you. You'd want everything perfect for the President's visit. The funny thing is, a lot of us don't take that much care with the condition of our hearts. The book of Luke has some things to share with us about the importance God places on our heart condition.

We've already learned some things about John the Baptist from the first chapter of Luke. God sent him to this earth with a special mission. John was to go before the Messiah and prepare the way for Him, telling people that God's way of salvation had come. The Bible tells us that in the fifteenth year of the reign of Rome's Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate was governor of Judah and Herod Antipas ruled over Galilee. These men are not just mentioned in the Bible. You will find their names in other accounts of history. This helps us place the time when John the Baptist was actively doing his work for God. It was in Tiberius' fifteenth year that the Word of the Lord came to John. He then went into all the country surrounding the Jordan River, delivering that Word to the people living there. He fulfilled the words of the prophet Isaiah who wrote of him, "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him'" (Isaiah 40:3). John called the people to repent, turn from their sinful habits and show evidence that they were serious about obeying God. John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham." John told them judgment was ready to fall on those not showing the **fruit of true repentance**. Do those seem like harsh words? Perhaps, but let's look a bit closer to whom John was speaking and discover what his words meant. First, John was looking for **not just an external but an internal change in the hearts of those he baptized**. John's baptism of placing the person's whole body under water was like making a public statement that you were changing your attitudes and actions. It wasn't a little ritual that allowed them to keep on living in the same bad way. That may be why the Pharisees refused to be baptized by John. They prided themselves on **keeping to the letter of the law**. Why should they have to make a public stand? Second, John answered those who said they did not need to repent because **they were children of Abraham**. They thought that was enough and they were safe because they were God's chosen people. But John knew what was really in their hearts, and he warned them that unless their hearts changed, God's fierce judgement would fall on them. The Messiah was coming, and these people needed to

repent of their sin in order to be ready to receive Him. Jesus would be looking for fruit, or evidence, of changes in their hearts, just as we'd prepare ourselves if the President were coming to see us.

Many people were coming to John to be baptized and to ask him questions. Some of these were **tax collectors who were hated by their fellow Jews**. You see, those Jews who wanted to, would put in a bid to gather taxes for the Roman government. Those who won the bid then added their own expenses to the taxes charged each person so that the tax collectors could get really rich. The other Jews resented these collectors because they were working for the Romans, who they felt abused them. The tax collectors responded by collecting more than was fair. John's words to these men were simple and straightforward, "Don't collect any more than you are required to," he told them. This was obvious advice, but the greed in their hearts blinded them from doing the right thing.

Some soldiers, probably Jewish soldiers, asked John how they should produce the fruit of true repentance. Again John's answer was simple and straightforward. He told them to be content with their soldier's pay and to stop taking more money from people than they should. John's words held such truth that the people gathered around wondered if he might be the Messiah. His answer to them is very interesting. He said that someone much more powerful than he was coming, someone so awesome that John felt **he was not even worthy to untie His sandals**. Do you know of whom John was speaking? Yes, Jesus would come with the kind of power and authority that could only belong to God's own Son. John told the people that Jesus would baptize His followers with the Holy Spirit and with fire. He said that those coming to Christ in true repentance would always have God's Holy Spirit living in them. What a promise! If you remember back to our study of the Old Testament prophets, fire was often used as a symbol of God's judgment. Those Jews counting on their own heritage to save them would suffer God's punishment for rejecting His Son. Jesus further illustrates this in Luke 3:17, where He uses the example of **farmers saving wheat and burning the chaff**. John kept on talking to the people, confronting them with their sin and preaching the Good News to them. And what Good News! These people needed to prepare for the coming of the King of Kings.

John scolded more than the heart conditions of the people who came to see him in the wilderness. He also publicly scolded the ruler Herod for the lifestyle he had been living, divorcing his own wife and marrying his brother's wife, who was also divorced. When Herod heard that John was speaking out against him, he had John arrested and thrown into prison.

Before that happened, though, while John was baptizing at the Jordan, who should appear but Jesus, Himself? Jesus wanted John to baptize Him, too. God demonstrated His approval of this decision by **sending the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove** and a voice from heaven saying, "You are my son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." Jesus was submitting to baptism in order to be obedient to God. If the sinless Son of God thought baptism to be so important, what should our attitude be?

Jesus' baptism was the official beginning of His ministry on this earth. The Messiah who was predicted by the Old Testament prophets had appeared. Luke recorded **Jesus' family tree** so that we would be able to see that He came from the family line of King David, just as the Bible had foretold.

Luke next writes about Jesus' temptation in the desert. We will not study that in detail because we studied it in the book of Matthew. The important thing to remember is that Jesus was tempted in every way, just like we are, **BUT HE DID NOT SIN**.

As we have gone through the Old Testament prophets in the past months, did you notice that they all had the same message for the people of Israel? Repent, repent, repent, and repent! The people weren't listening, were they? But now, 400 years after the prophets had spoken, God sent John the Baptist with what message? **REPENT!!** And people listened. They were baptized and changed to a different way of living. All of this was preparation for the "forgiver" who was coming.

Do you know the difference between being sorry and being repentant? The difference is huge. Before we can accept Christ as our Savior, we need to admit we have sinned, and we have to turn away from following the habits that sin has made in our lives. After we become sold-out followers of Jesus, repentance is still necessary. As we walk with God, things still crop up that are unacceptable to Him, and we must deal with them by means of His Word, His Holy Spirit, and our obedience. Are there sinful patterns or habits in my life, with which I have not dealt or have ignored? John would say to stop doing wrong and learn to replace it with right. He would tell me to clean up my house making it fit for the King.



Look:



Jesus' Family Tree (Discussion). People have always been interested in their “roots” or genealogies. You can buy books and even computer software to help you construct your genealogy into a family tree. Do you have an important person, maybe even royalty, in your line of ancestors? Matthew opens his book with Jesus' family tree, taking it as far back as Abraham. Luke, however, traces Jesus' family all the way back to Adam! See Luke 3:23-38. Can you recognize some of the names from our study of the Old Testament?



Wheat and Chaff (Object Lesson/Discussion). Use two or three heads of wheat. We are going to use this wheat to solve the mystery of what John meant in Luke 3:17. In your group, designate one or two people as observers. Observers watch the experiment carefully and tell the recorder what they saw. Have one person be the recorder. They will write a brief step by step account of what happened. Give the heads of wheat to a couple of individuals. Instead of a winnowing fork we can use our hands. Roll the head of wheat in your hands briskly. What happens? Continue the process until you have plenty. According to John, which is called wheat and which is called chaff? Now place the chaff in a metal coffee can. Using long stick matches, light the chaff. What happened? Now taste the wheat. Chew it until it becomes like gum.

Discuss:

1. Read Luke 3:17. What time of year is John talking about?
2. The wheat represents what or whom?
3. The chaff represents what or whom?
4. What happens to the wheat?
5. What happens to the chaff?
6. Look at the verses before 3:17. Who will be the farmer?
7. In one sentence, explain what John meant in Luke 3:17.



Q & A Match-up (Worksheet). The crowd, the soldiers, and the tax collectors all asked John what they should do to produce fruit in keeping with repentance. Match these people with the answer John gave them. If you asked this question, what answer might you hear? Write and draw your answer, **BLUK03.GF3**.



Dove Pop-up (Worksheet). Luke 3:21 tells us that the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove when He was baptized, and a voice from heaven said, “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.” Have the students follow the instructions on the worksheet and see the dove pop-up overhead during Jesus' baptism. An example is available, **BLUK03.GF4**.



I Am Not Worthy (Game). Some of the people were wondering if John were the “Christ,” the Messiah. He told them that the Christ was yet to come and that he, John, was not even worthy to untie the laces of His sandals. Of all the menial tasks a rabbi could expect of his pupils, untying his sandals was considered too low even for a disciple. John picked his words carefully for an audience who knew this; but lacing up sandals is not an issue for us today. Have students think of a menial or disagreeable task. Play a circle memory game. Example: Student #1 says, “I am not worthy to clean his toilet.” Student #2 says, “I am not worthy to clean his toilet or fold his laundry.” Student #3 says, “I am not worthy to clean his toilet, fold his laundry, or take out his garbage.” Continue around the circle.



Fruit in Keeping with Repentance (Worksheet). Color the fruit on **BLUK03.GF5**. Some fruit is already labeled with the “good fruit” that John mentioned. Label the other fruit with some other “good fruit” that needs to be seen in our lives. Cut out the pieces of fruit and glue them to the tree on **BLUK03.GF6**.



Took:

Reminder Rock (Craft). The Jews thought that just because they were children of Abraham, God would favor them. John said that it was not enough to be a child of Abraham. God could make children of Abraham from the stones on the ground. True followers of God turn from their sin and toward God. They repent. Bring in several clean rocks and give to students to paint children of Abraham faces. Then, on the underside, have students write one thing from which they need to repent. Use it as a paperweight and a reminder that it is God's desire for us to turn from sin and follow Him. A variation of this idea is to write the thing the students need to repent of on the back of a pair of feet, **BLUK03.GF7**. Glue the rock onto the feet. Add a pair of craft eyes to the painted face. This can be used alone or mounted on top of the verse card.

Reminder Rock (Discussion Follow-up). The Jews thought that since they were born in to Jewish families, that they would be saved because God had chosen their people to have the temple, to receive God's Law and be the people that the Messiah would come from. You may be like a Jew. You may think that because you are born into a Christian family or because you know the Bible, that that you are favored by God. John the Baptist said that was faulty reasoning. God expects repentance, and sincere obedience.

Discuss:

1. What was wrong with the Jews thinking that because Abraham was their Father, they were favored by God above all other people?
2. What is wrong with children thinking that because their parents are Christian or because they go to church that they are favored by God?
3. What did John tell the Jews?
4. What would John say to you or others who might think that their family's faith will save them?

Good News (Object Lesson/Discussion). Show a newspaper to the class. Discuss the ways that news can travel in the world today. How did news travel in Jesus' day? Luke 3:18 says that John preached the "gospel" to the people. What does that mean? (*Gospel means Good News.*) You might say that John was a "reporter" of the good news about forgiveness in Jesus. If John had been writing his message in a newspaper, what would his headline be? Write ideas on the board. Choose one headline, and write an introductory paragraph for this imaginary article.

Sharing (Game). Use one copy for each student. Cut cards apart and shuffle them well. Distribute the cards, eight to each student. The object of the game is to get rid of all duplicate cards. This can only be done by "sharing" them one at a time with other students. A card can only be given away if the receiving student has no card of this kind (*"The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same."*) The first student with no duplicate cards wins. After 2 or 3 students win, cards can be re-shuffled for another round of play, **BLUK03.GF8**.

Clean-up Time (Discussion). John told the people to prepare the way for the Lord. Pretend that Jesus, Himself, was going to visit our classroom next week. As we straighten up the room, what kind of job will we do? What other things might we do with our classroom to get ready for His visit? (*Maybe display some handwork, etc.*) Knowing that Jesus is much more interested in the condition of our hearts, what might we do in our lives to prepare for a visit from Jesus? Have students think of one specific fruit in their lives that needs to be cultivated during the following week because, guess what, Jesus will be in our classroom next week - as He always is everywhere.

Repent or Be Sorry (Discussion). Ask students for their definitions of repentance and being sorry. Discuss the difference between the two. (*Being sorry means feeling bad about what you did wrong or even feeling sad that you got caught. Repentance is not only feeling bad that you didn't obey God but also changing completely from what you did wrong, turning 180 degrees in the other direction. See 2 Corinthians 7:9-11.*) When Jesus separates the wheat from the chaff on judgment day, which will you be? Are you a good tree or one that will be "cut down?" What "fruit in keeping with repentance" is evident in your life? "Even a child is known by his actions" (*Proverbs 20:11*).

John the Baptist Questioned by the Taxgatherers

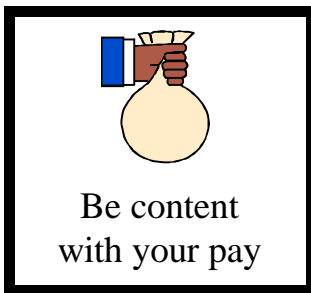
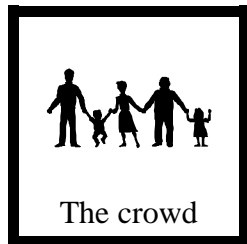


The Baptism of Jesus



Q and A Match-up

John told the crowds that they should produce fruit in keeping with repentance. The crowd, the soldiers, and the tax collectors all asked John, “**What should we do?**” Draw a line to connect these people with the answer John gave them.

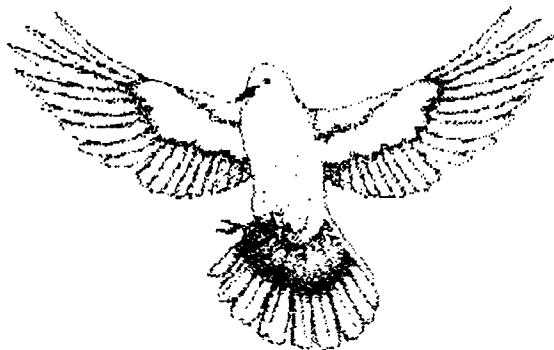


If you asked, “**What should I do?**” what answer might you hear? Write and draw your answer.



As He was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on Him like a dove.

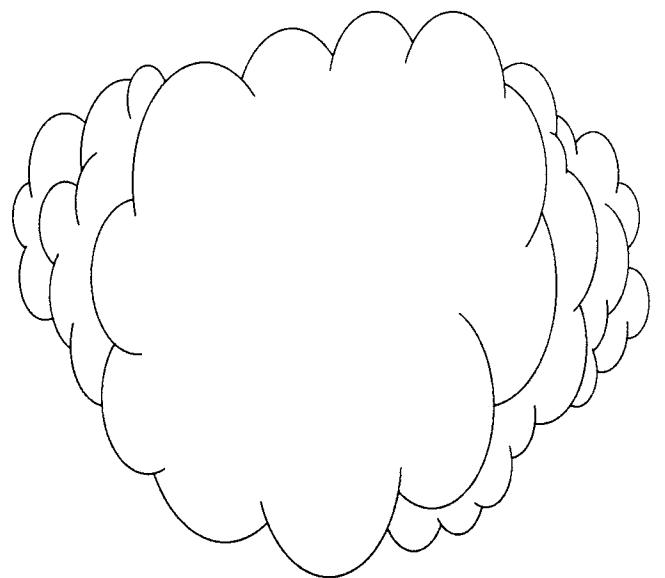
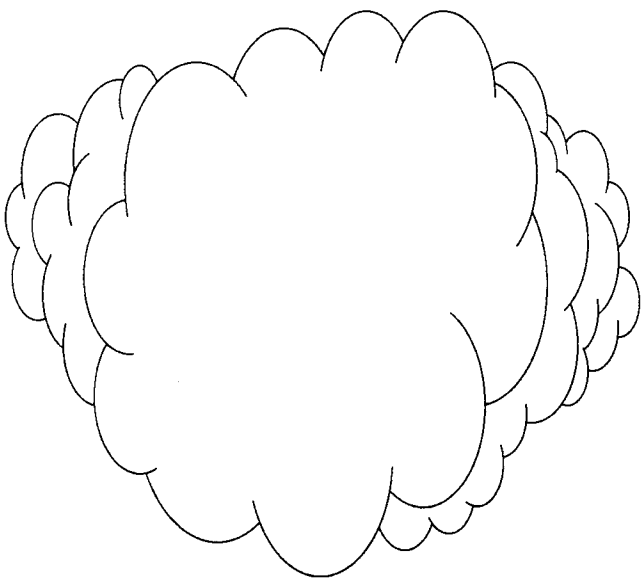
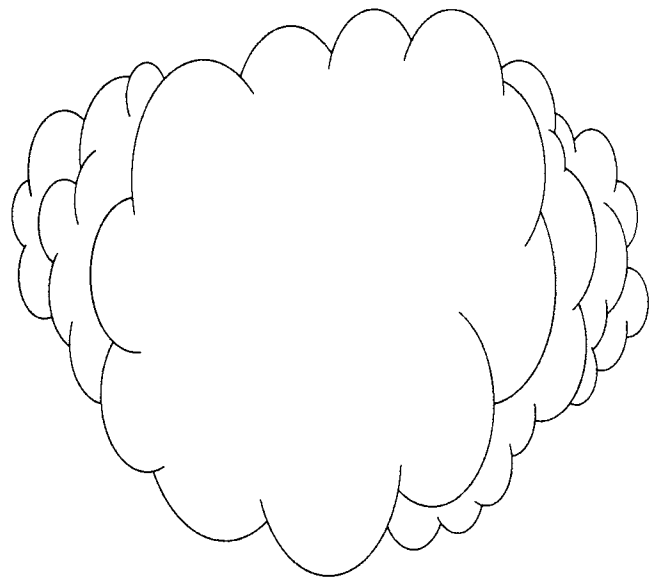
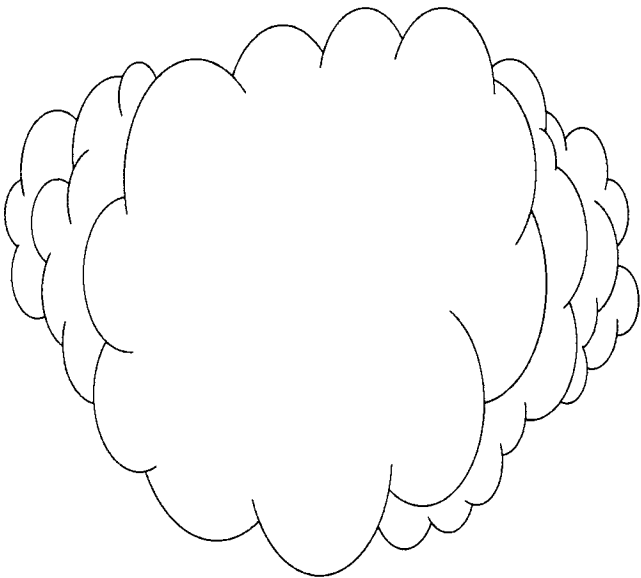
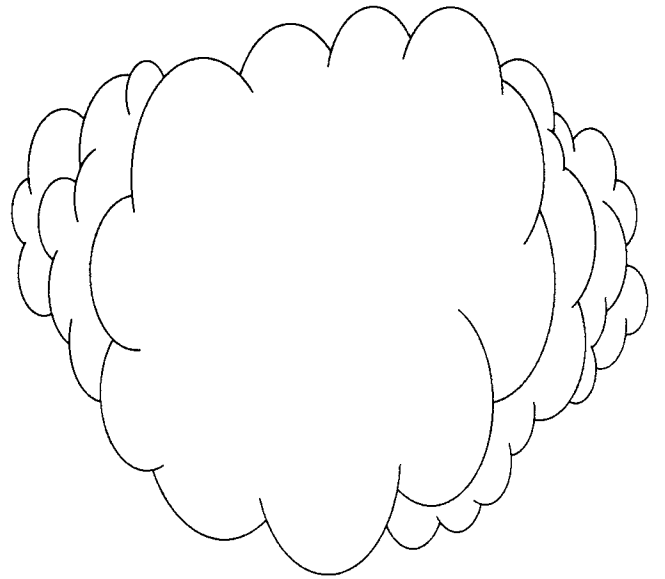
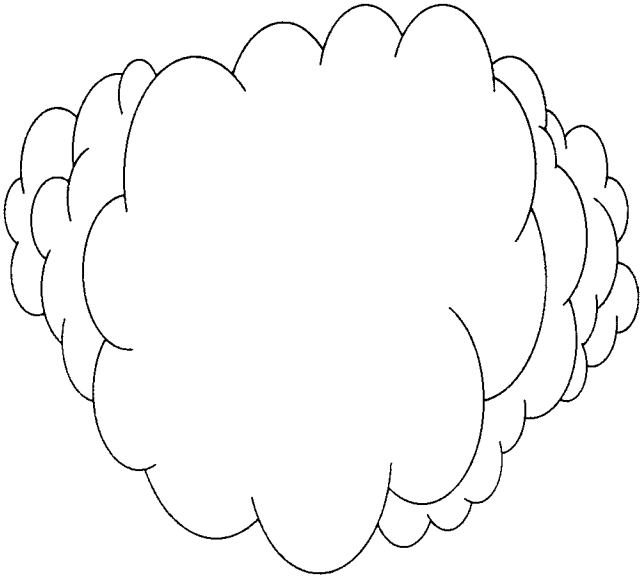
Glue pop-up here.

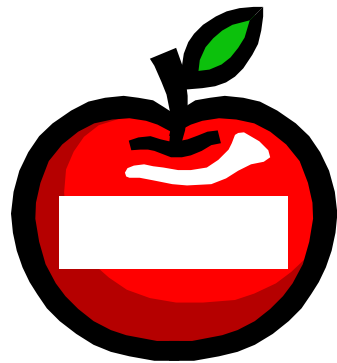
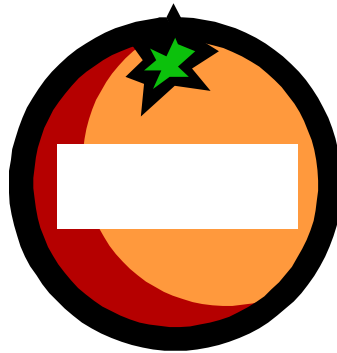
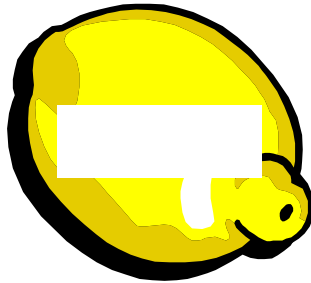
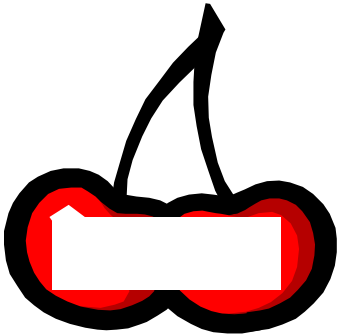
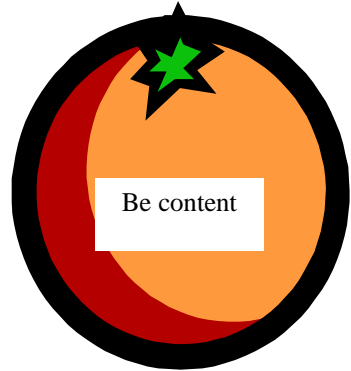


Instructions:

Cut off bottom part of sheet along dotted line. Cut out dove rectangle along the dotted lines. Next fold dove rectangle in half, with picture facing out. Cut out dove but leave edges of wings still attached to page. While leaving dove folded back, fold rest of paper forward. This creates the pop-up. Glue the pop-up where noted. Finally, glue a cloud on top of closed pop-out page.

“You are my Son, whom I love, with you I am well pleased.”





Fruit in Keeping with Repentance

Color the fruit on the attached page. Some fruits are labeled with the “good fruit” that John mentioned. Label the others with some good fruits” that need to be seen in our lives. Cut out the pieces of fruit and glue them to the tree.



Reminder Rock

Cut out the pair of feet and on the back write one thing you need to repent of. Glue the feet onto the bottom of a small rock with the toes sticking out. Paint a “children of Abraham” face on the rock and add a pair of craft eyes. This can be used alone or mounted on top of the X on the verse card after it has been cut out.



X

“Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘we have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.” Luke 3:8

Sharing Game

“The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same.” Luke 3:11

Use as many copies as you have students. Cut cards apart and shuffle them well. Distribute the cards 9 to each student. **The object of the game is to get rid of all duplicate cards.** This can only be done by “sharing” them one at a time with other students. **A card can only be given away if the receiving student has no card of this kind.** The first student with no duplicate cards wins. After 2 or 3 students ‘win’, cards can be re-shuffled for another round of play.

