

WHAT IS MY PURPOSE?

We are created
for God's glory.

KEY PASSAGES

Luke 1:5-7,13-17

Luke 3:3-6

John 1:25-30

KEY VERSE

Philippians 2:13

SPARK THE CONVERSATION

God created all people in His image and for His glory. Last session, preteens learned that God created them to be image bearers—reflections of God to the world. God created each preteen in your group not only to reflect His image, but also to bring Him glory. Throughout this session, preteens will begin examining the Scriptures to learn about God’s purpose for their lives to bring Him glory. By examining the life of John the Baptist, preteens will discover that God created them for a purpose. Just as John came to prepare the way for Jesus, preteens can begin to seek God’s purpose for how their lives can point others to Jesus.

IGNITE PDG

YOU WILL NEED

- Preteen Discipleship Guides (1 per preteen)
- 5-6 index cards listing common household items (e.g. paper towels, scissors, toothbrush)
- Bowl or large container

PREPARE

- Fold the index cards and place them in a bowl or large container.

As preteens arrive, lead them to complete “A Hidden Message” in the Preteen Discipleship Guide (PDG, 14).

Ask: What message did you discover? (I am created for God’s glory.) What does this mean? (Answers may vary. Guide preteens to understand they were created to reflect God and bring glory to Him.)

Explain: I will select an index card and state the purpose of the item written on it. See if you can guess which item I am describing.

Describe one of the item’s purposes and allow for guesses. Add additional clues as needed. Continue for the other items.

Explain: These items are often used around our homes. They have different purposes within the home, but they have a common theme—being used at home. Last session, we learned that **God says all people are made in His image.** This is the common theme of all people, yet how we reflect God to the world can sometimes look different because God also made us each unique. The purpose of scissors is different from

the purpose of a toothbrush, but both are valuable in the home. In a similar way, God's story for your life is different than His story for your friend's life, but both of you are made in His image and for His glory. **We are created for God's glory**, and He made each of us with a plan and purpose in mind.

SHARPEN & STRENGTHEN PDG

YOU WILL NEED

- Bibles (1 per preteen)
- Preteen Discipleship Guides (1 per preteen)

Direct preteens to Sharpen & Strengthen in the Preteen Discipleship Guide (PDG, 15). Encourage preteens to follow along in their guides as you lead the session.

Ask: Have you ever heard of a man named John the Baptist?

Say: John was called "the Baptist" because he baptized people. Let's open our Bibles to Luke 1 to learn about God's plan and purpose for John's life.

Purpose: the reason something is done or created (2 Thessalonians 1:4)

Q CAN I KNOW GOD'S PLAN?

Read Luke 1:5-7 or invite several preteens to read these verses aloud.

Say: John's father was Zechariah. He served as a priest. John's mother was Elizabeth. Notice what Luke wrote about John's parents.

Guide preteens to read verse 6 on their own and fill in the missing words to the verse in their discipleship guides.

Say: The Bible describes Zechariah and Elizabeth as righteous. One day, while serving in the temple, Zechariah was selected to burn incense. An angel appeared to Zechariah, and Zechariah was afraid. Let's discover what the angel told him.

Read Luke 1:13-17 or invite several preteens to read these verses aloud.

Ask: According to these verses, what did the angel say John would do? (Allow for answers.)

Explain: Sometimes, the culture around us believes people can do whatever they want and there is no real plan or purpose. But the Bible teaches us differently. God had a special plan and purpose for John's life before he was even born. John would bring God glory by telling many people about God's truth and pointing them to the promised Messiah.

🔒 WHAT IS MY PURPOSE?

Read Luke 3:3-6 or invite several preteens to read these verses aloud.

Say: Scripture does not provide details about the preteen years of John's life, but we do know that he lived in the wilderness, wore camel-hair clothes, and ate locusts. (See Matthew 3:4.)

Ask: What does Luke 3:3 tell us about what John did? (Allow preteens to read this verse and respond in their discipleship guides.)

Respond: God's word came to John in the wilderness and led him to the Jordan to tell people to repent of their sins.

Continue: Look closely in your Bibles at verses 4-6. These verses refer to the prophecy in Isaiah 40:3-5. God gave this prophecy to the prophet Isaiah many years before John was ever born. John fulfilled this prophecy as God planned for him to do.

Ask: What do these passages teach you about God's plan and purpose for your life? (Allow preteens to respond in their discipleship guides.)

Explain: Years before John or his parents were even born, God had a plan and purpose for John's life. The same is true for us. **We are created for God's glory.** The details of the story He has written for your life will be different from the person sitting next to you, but God has a plan and purpose to work through you to bring Him glory.

Glory: great honor or praise given to God (Psalm 19:1)

Identity: who a person is in relation to what God says is true about him (Ephesians 2:1-10)

🔒 HOW CAN I BRING GOD GLORY?

Say: John obeyed God and began preaching about repentance and baptizing people. As he did, some religious leaders began asking John who he was and by what authority he was preaching and baptizing. They asked if John was the prophet Elijah or the promised Messiah. Let's see how John responded to their questions.

Read John 1:25-28 or invite several preteens to read these verses aloud.

Ask: Who did John say he was? (See John 1:23.)

Explain: John understood God's plan for His life. He came to point people to the Messiah, even though he didn't know who the Messiah was yet. John didn't have all the answers to God's plan for His life, but He believed God and obeyed Him each step of the way. He was faithful to preach about the coming Messiah and trust God's plan for His life.

Continue: As believers this is no easy task. Often times it is difficult to follow God and obey Him when everyone else is living however they want to live. Our hearts can grow envious or jealous of other people, comparing our lives to their lives if we are not careful. Yet, God has the authority to tell us what is true about ourselves. He calls us to trust His plan and purpose for our lives and to obey where He leads us.

Read John 1:29-30.

Ask: What did John say when he saw Jesus coming toward him? (Allow preteens to read this verse and respond in their discipleship guides.)

Explain: God planned for John to point others to Jesus in a very special way. John was the messenger sent to prepare the people for Jesus.

MAKE THE CONNECTION

Explain: God had a special purpose for John before he was even born. Just as God had a plan and purpose for John, He has a plan and purpose for you. Your purpose will not be like John's— to announce the first coming of Jesus to the world. However, your purpose is to bring glory to God by pointing others to Jesus.

Ask: How can you bring glory to God with your life right now? (Invite preteens to respond.)

Continue: Like John, your story is part of God's bigger story to point others to Jesus as you trust and follow Him. His plans for you may not be what you expect, but they are always for His glory and your good. Trust that God is a good Father who loves you and is in control of everything. Choose to follow Him even when you don't know what comes next. He is writing an important story with your life to bring Him glory and point others to know and love Jesus.

KEY VERSE

*For it is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to his good purpose. **Philippians 2:13***

YOU WILL NEED

- Bible
- 20 sticky notes

PREPARE

- Write one word of the key verse on each sticky note.

Call attention to the key verse cards located in the discipleship guide. Suggest preteens keep the cards to review the verses on a regular basis.

Invite a preteen to read Philippians 2:13 aloud from her Bible.

Choose one preteen to be the "messenger." That preteen holds the Bible open to the key verse.

Stick one sticky note on each person's forehead. Preteens will not be able to see what is on their own forehead, but others will. The "messenger" will be in charge of the Bible and will have to use it to line up everyone in the correct order of the verse. Instruct preteens to listen to the "messenger" because she is the only one with the Bible and the only one who can see all the words listed on the foreheads.

When all preteens have been placed in order, lead them to remove the sticky notes from their heads and check their work. Gently correct any mistakes. Say the verse together. Note that the group didn't know what to do on their own. They had to listen to the "messenger" for guidance and direction. Remind preteens that God wants them to look to His Word to guide them.

FIRE IT UP!

CULTURE'S PLAN VS. GOD'S PLAN

YOU WILL NEED

- Bibles (1 per preteen)
- Ruler, marker, poster board, index cards, sticky notes
- Item 5: Culture's Plan vs. God's Plan

PREPARE

- On the poster board, prepare a grid complete with words. (See Item 5: Culture's Plan vs. God's Plan.) Cover the statements with several sticky notes.
- Write the Scripture references from Item 5 on index cards (1 per card).

Say: As we've been studying, there is a big difference between what culture often says a person's purpose is and what God desires. Let's examine ten statements we sometimes hear in our culture. Then we will read Scripture that helps us see what God's purpose is.

Distribute Scripture reference cards. Assist preteens in locating the references in their Bibles. Remove the first set of sticky notes and read aloud the first "Culture's Plan" statement. Discuss the statement and how it applies to preteens' lives.

Ask: Who has a verse that speaks to this statement?

Guide the preteen to read the verse aloud. Continue for additional statements.

Explain: As followers of Jesus, we have a responsibility to understand the way people in our culture think and what shapes their worldview—their beliefs and responses to God, humanity, ethics, and the world around them. It is important that we recognize the differences between what the culture says versus what the Bible tells us is true. These statements in the culture column can influence people to think and act in ways that are different from the Bible. As we study our Bible and learn who God says we are, we are able to recognize what is true about our identities and encourage others in that truth, too.

DISCOVERING GOD'S PLAN FOR MY LIFE **PDG**

YOU WILL NEED

- Bibles (1 per preteen)
- Preteen Discipleship Guides (1 per preteen)
- Item 6: Discovering God's Plan

PREPARE

- Print Item 6: Discovering God's Plan. Reference during the session.

Say: How can you discover God's plan for your life? (Allow preteens to respond.)

Guide preteens to read and discuss "Discovering God's Plan for My Life" in their discipleship guides (PDG, 16). Ask the questions from Item 6: Discovering God's Plan (printable download item with answers) and lead preteens in discussion. Invite preteens to read the suggested verses as they discuss and to fill in the blanks in their discipleship guides.

Preview the week's daily pages and encourage preteens to complete each day's Bible reading and journaling on their own throughout the week. Review and discuss the entries from the previous week. Point out the Family Guide pages for preteens to use at home. Print any pages for preteens without a discipleship guide (Item 3).

BREAK IT DOWN

Conclude: **We are created for God's glory.** God's purpose for our lives is not a mystery. He wants us to know His purpose and bring Him glory. One way to accomplish this is to ask God to help us. Guide preteens in a closing prayer, asking God to help them know His plan and purpose for their lives and live to bring Him glory.

Say: This week you will discover more about God's purpose for your life. God has a purpose for each of us to bring Him glory and point others to Jesus. As you grow and develop, you will learn more about the details of His story for your life that is part of His bigger story for all of creation. As you spend time with God this week, use your daily discipleship pages to study about some of the plans God has for you.