

# GETTING READY FOR JESUS

(based on Luke 1:39-40, 56-60, 80; Luke 3:2-3, 15-18)

Luke 3:2-3, 15-18

John the Baptist

John the Baptist is a typical Advent figure as he too waits for the Messiah. The title 'messiah' comes from the Hebrew word *moshiach* and simply means - the anointed one of God. The Greek word for 'messiah' is Christ, meaning anointed one of God. Annas and Caiaphas, who are mentioned in verse 2, were high priests – Annas from 6-15 AD and Caiaphas from 18-37 AD - the latter during Jesus' adult life and ministry. The people too were waiting and expecting something to happen as we are told in verse 15 – "A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people". John knew he was not the Messiah but does not mention who is. So the writer of the Gospel sets a scene of waiting and hoping. John baptises in the Jordan somewhere around Jericho. Some scholars suggest that this may be a traditional site of covenant renewal before going into the Promised Land and thus a significant and traditional holy site. John baptises with water but the Messiah who is to come will baptise with the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the Christ or messiah that people were waiting and hoping for. The involvement of the Holy Spirit is a characteristic theme in Luke's Gospel.

## YOU WILL NEED:

- a purple cloth
- a length of blue cloth for a river
- sand box (sand in small tray or bowl)
- 8 peg figures, and one peg figure undressed
- small piece of Hessian or fur and a short length of leather for a belt
- a crèche without the baby Jesus in it or an empty crib

*Children are seated in a semi-circle ready to listen to the story. When the children are settled, go to the shelf and carry the materials as you would the Bible. Place these beside you.*

*Begin by rolling the purple cloth in front of you and saying:*

**Purple is the colour for getting ready. Advent is a time for getting ready.**

*Place the empty crèche or crib on the left hand side of the cloth.*

**The season of Advent is the time the Church gets ready to celebrate the mystery of Christmas.**

*Put one or two of the peg figures on the cloth.*

**During Advent we remember the prophets. Prophets are special people who listen to God. They help us get ready for Christmas.**

*Move the figures across the purple cloth towards the empty crib. Place them on the side looking at the crib from a distance.*

**Prophets point the way towards Jesus. They are like lights showing the way.**

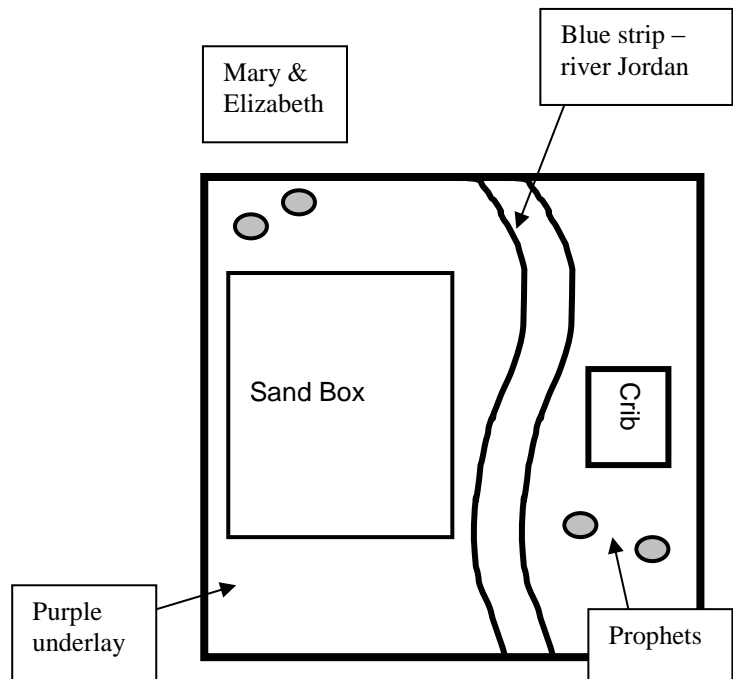
**Let's listen to a story about one of the most important prophets. We will need some other things to help us tell the story.**

*Place the sand box on the cloth on the opposite side to the crib.*

**This is the desert.**

*Slowly run your fingers through the sand as you say:*





**Deserts can be very hot in the daytime and very cold at night. They can be lonely places and places of danger. There is not much water in the desert and sometimes the wind blows the sand around.**

*Place the strip of blue cloth between the sand box and the crib.*

**We also need a river. This is the river Jordan.**

**I think we are ready now.**

**Let's begin.**

*Take Mary and Elizabeth and place to the side of the sand box also looking in the direction of the crib.*

**Just before Jesus was born, his mother Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth.**

**Elizabeth was going to have a baby too.**

*Take plain peg figure and place beside Elizabeth.*  
**Elizabeth called her baby 'John'.**

*Dress figure with Hessian cloth and belt and place in the sand box.*  
**When John grew up he lived in the desert. He wore clothes made of camel's hair, tied with a leather belt.**

*Move John to different parts of the desert as you say:*  
**He ate insects and wild honey. He spent most of the time talking to God.**

*Move John to alongside the river.*  
**When John came out of the desert he went to the river Jordan.**

*Place two figures next to John.*  
**He told people to live good lives and to get ready for Jesus, the Messiah, who was coming soon.**

*Place two more figures near to John.*  
**Lots of people came to the river.**

*Move John into the river with one of the figures.*  
**John baptised them with water.**

*Move John to the other side of the river facing the direction of the crib.*  
**We call him John the Baptist. He told people to listen to Jesus.  
He told people to get ready for Jesus by changing their lives.**

*Sit quietly for a moment and then begin to wonder together.  
Use 'I wonder' from KWL p144.*

*Carefully pack story materials into storage box and put on shelf. Ensure that children are watching so they know how to pack the materials away and where to find them.*