**Live in Community**

 Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**Get Going**

[Jesus] said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.” ([John 20:21](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn20.21))

*The Holy Spirit was given so that we might have power—power to go and make disciples. Some go to the farthest corners of the globe. Some only cross the street in front of their house. Still, God’s people always go. They go to work, school, grocery stores, kids’ soccer games, and family reunions. And wherever they go, they take their witness of Jesus with them. True believers live going and carrying out His mission.*

**Session Overview**

**Embrace Your Role**

**Biblical Encounter:** John the Baptist Points to Jesus ([John 1:19–34](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn1.19-34))

**Outcome:** Embrace your role in Jesus’ mission.

*In this session, we see how God called John the Baptist to clear the path for people to come to Jesus. John was a prophet who preached a message of repentance. Many people thought he was the Messiah because of his message. But when asked who he was, John replied that his role was to show others the Messiah. Like John, each of us has a unique role to fulfill in Jesus’ mission. While we’re all called to point others to Jesus, we each also have unique ways God wants to use us. And we best fulfill those by embracing God’s role for our life.*

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| ***You Will Need*** *• 2 bowls of applesauce, pudding, or something similar* *• 2 spoons* *• 30 plastic or foam cups* *• 4 large cups or bottles of water* *• 2 pencils* *• 2 pieces of paper* *• 2 chairs* *• 1 or 2 tables for the activities* *• Paper towels or two washcloths****Getting Ready*** *• Set up the items at the table(s) where the activities will be completed.* • ***First time leading* Live *for Youth? Look here for the*** [**Facilitator Guide**](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf)**.** |

*To access session content and videos from a computer, visit:* [***BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads***](https://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

**Welcome**

*Take this time to welcome everyone, introduce new students, learn names, and thank everyone for coming. Your friendliness here can create a comfort level that encourages student participation later.*

**Introduction**

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| **QUESTION**What do you think would be the best job in the world? Why? |

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| **QUESTION**What do you think would be the worst job in the world? Why? |

It takes everyone doing their part to make certain things work. Some jobs are more glamorous, get more attention, and are more highly celebrated. Other jobs are obscure, less appreciated, or even barely noticed. But all of these jobs matter in our world. Without the right people doing their part, things like the electrical system, waste disposal, or the Internet would just stop working. Similarly, in God’s kingdom, we each have an important role to play, too. The exciting thing is that in God’s eyes there are no obscure, unappreciated, or barely noticed roles.

**Opening Prayer**

*Prayer thoughts: Ask the Lord for everyone to approach His Word knowing that He has something important to say to us. Also, ask for them to be open to what God wants them to learn and to obey Him no matter what He tells them to do.*

**Group Activity**

**Role Relay**

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| ***You Will Need*** *• 2 bowls of applesauce, pudding, or something similar* *• 2 spoons* *• 30 plastic or foam cups* *• 4 large cups or bottles of water* *• 2 pencils* *• 2 pieces of paper* *• 2 chairs* *• 1 or 2 tables for the activities* *• Paper towels or two washcloths****Getting Ready*** *• Set up the items at the table(s) where the activities will be completed.* |

Before we look at God’s Word today, let’s play a game where everyone has a specific role to play. First, we’ll divide the group into two teams.

• *Have students form two even teams.*

Each team will choose four people to fill some special roles in a relay race. Here are the four activities that will be done.

1. Eat a snack.

2. Make a pyramid using all 15 cups.

3. Drink two cups of water.

4. Write the numbers 1–100.

The four volunteers on each team will line up. After each activity is complete, that player will tag the next person in line. When the four players on a team have completed their assignments and are back in line together, everyone on the team should stand up and say, “Embrace your role!” The team who finishes first wins the game. Let’s play!

• *Let teams choose who will participate in the four activities.*

• *Complete the relay.*

Well done, everyone! During the relay, everyone had a specific role to play. Your team determined ahead of time what each person’s role would be. Knowing and embracing your role is important in life and in Jesus’ mission. Like in our relay, each of us has a part to play in Jesus’ mission. When we serve Him together, we have the best chance of completing our part of His mission. Today we’re going to learn more about this from someone who knew and embraced his role in Jesus’ mission. But first, let’s watch this video.

**Watch**

**Consider What the Bible Says**

*Ensure each student has access to a Bible, preferably the same version.*

Let’s find out more about John. He had a title that went with his name: John the Baptist. That’s because God chose an interesting role for John to play in Jesus’ mission. John’s role was to help point people to Jesus. That included baptizing people as they turned back to God. As we discuss this today, you may want to think about the unique role God has for you. Perhaps we can learn something about that from this interesting person. Let’s take a look.

**John Knew His Role**

Read [John 1:19–23](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn1.19-23).

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| **QUESTION**Why do you think the Jewish leaders wanted to know who John was? |

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| **QUESTION**Do you think they were surprised by his answer? Why or why not? |

These leaders had likely not encountered anyone quite like John before. They knew that there were prophecies about a coming Messiah (which means “anointed one”) who would have a special job from God. That coming Messiah was Jesus. So, John made it clear right away to the Jewish leaders that he was not the Messiah. John told them who he was and, more importantly, who he wasn’t. He knew his role and wasn’t about to claim another.

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| **QUESTION**How would you describe John’s role? |

John’s role was to prepare the way for Jesus’ arrival. It was his job to get people ready to meet the Messiah. So John spent his days helping people get right with God. He was doing this even before he knew exactly who the Messiah would be.

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| **QUESTION**How do you think John’s role was helpful? |

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| **QUESTION**Have you ever thought about what your role is in Jesus’ mission? Why or why not? |

Knowing our role is important. There are so many things Christians can do to serve God. But He’s not calling us to do all of them. We might not be a very good fit in many of them. But when we pray and ask Him to help us know what we can do for Him, He can help make clear the best place of service for us. Let’s see what more we can learn about that.

**John Embraced His Role**

Read [John 1:24–28](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn1.24-28).

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| **QUESTION**How do you think John felt when the leaders asked him what right he had to baptize people? |

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| **QUESTION**How did John respond to them? |

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| **QUESTION**How would you feel if someone questioned your right or your ability to fulfill what God had told you to do for Him? How do you think you would respond to them? |

John seemed to have humility and boldness. He boldly replied to the question about what he had been doing, but he also humbly redirected the focus to the coming Messiah. Up to this point, John had been preaching and baptizing people in and around the Jordan River. That was key in getting people ready for the coming Messiah. John could have made this conversation all about what he had been doing and how his ministry started first. Instead, he made the focus the One he was preparing others to meet. He embraced his call from God and pointed people to the Messiah.

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| **QUESTION**What do you think your role is in Jesus’ mission? |

* *This is a good opportunity to allow a few students to speak out about their passions, their dreams, and how they believe God wants to use them for His mission.*

It’s okay if you aren’t sure what your role is yet. Maybe God has only shown you a piece of what He’s calling you to do. Sometimes He directs us to act and tells us only a small part of His plan. Embracing our role means sticking with it as long as God directs. And as we obey Him, we often get to see and understand more of His plan. If John had not been faithful, he might never have gotten to help introduce the Messiah to the world. But because he stuck it out, we’re still talking about him over two thousand years later!

**Did You Know?**

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| In the New Testament period, ritual immersion in water (the predecessor to water baptism as we know it) was not an action to be completed only once. Instead, the ritual was repeated often, even daily, due to the commands in the Torah for purity. Although most Jews in the land of Israel did not enter the temple daily, the overarching mindset of the people was a desire to be ritually pure whenever possible. As a result, most Jewish settlements in the land of Israel had baptismal tanks, known as *mikvaot* (plural). And some of the wealthiest people had their very own *mikvah* (singular) inside their homes. What made John’s baptism unique was that it focused not only on ritual purity, but also included personal repentance. |

**John Pointed People to Jesus**

In the verses you’re about to read, it’s the next day. John had another encounter with Jesus and told the crowd a little more of this backstory. Pay attention to what God had promised John and how John saw it become reality.

Read [John 1:29–34](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn1.29-34).

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| **QUESTION**What did John do when he saw Jesus? |

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| **QUESTION**What clue did God give John so he would know who the Messiah (Jesus) was? |

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| **QUESTION**Why do you think God waited to reveal who the Messiah was to John? Why not tell John everything right away? |

There are many reasons why God doesn’t show us everything right away. We may question His plan if we knew the entire plan. Sometimes God tells only a part of the plan to test our obedience. We may not follow what He wants us to do if we knew everything about it. Regardless of the reason, our job is to trust and obey Him. The role He has for us in His plan is the perfect fit for our life.

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| **QUESTION**What do you think would have happened if John hadn’t fulfilled his role of pointing people to Jesus? |

Regardless of what our specific role is as we follow Jesus, the shared role of all Christians is to point people to Jesus. So, whether you know your role, are moving into a new one, or are between roles, know that at every moment of your life God has a task for you. And your participation is vital.

**Reflect**

**Embrace your role in Jesus’ mission.**

We saw how God called John the Baptist to make a way for people to come to Jesus. John preached a message of repentance. Many people thought he was the Messiah because of his message. But John knew his role was to point others to Jesus. He was where he was supposed to be, doing what he was supposed to do with a right heart. As his role was needed, he was ready and available to God.

One of our roles in life is much like John’s. We’re called to help others see the real Jesus. Our message is to tell others how Jesus is the real Savior. God created you with the necessary talent, passion, personality, and experiences to fulfill the role He has planned for you. You may or may not know the details of your individual role in Jesus’ mission yet, but now is the time to be available and embrace what God directs you to do in and through your life.

**Listen to God**

Let’s take time to consider how our life demonstrates a real trust in the Bible. These questions are meant to serve as a conversation between you and God. Sharing your responses with the group is completely voluntary.

• *Pause for a few moments of silent reflection after reading the questions. Then ask students if they want to share. Sharing your personal response may also be helpful to the students.*

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| **QUESTION**How has learning about John the Baptist impacted your view of your role in Jesus’ mission? |

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| **QUESTION**What do you believe Jesus wants you to do now? What about in your future? |

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| **QUESTION**Do you think some people give up on following God’s plan for their life? What do you think happens if they do give up? |

**Activate**

John the Baptist had the responsibility of preparing others for Jesus. He pointed people to Jesus and explained that He was the Messiah. No matter the specifics of your role, a similar responsibility is shared by all of us. We should point people to Jesus to help them see Him and know He is the One who has come to change everything.

Let’s go around the room and briefly share one thing each of us can do to point people to Jesus this week. Let’s not just say it. Let’s be accountable to do it as well.

• *Share your response to this. Then ask the students to share.*

**Conclusion**

Jesus has a role for you to play in His mission of changing the world. It’s possible that your role may be connected to the talents you have. Recognizing them can be useful. It’s also wise to listen to those who know us best and may be able to help us discover our role.

Embracing a role is not something we should do casually or half-heartedly. John the Baptist showed us that having the right heart and being faithful to our role is key to fulfilling the reason for being in that role. And rather than getting wrapped up in ego about your role, keep your eyes focused on Jesus. This requires humility, confidence, sacrifice, and so much more.

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| **Salvation Opportunity***Include this if you think there may be some in the group who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus.*John the Baptist wanted everyone to see Jesus for who He really was. He declared that Jesus is “The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” ([John 1:29](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn1.29)). Jesus didn’t just do that for the people in Bible times. He does the very same thing for any person who chooses to follow Him. He is available and willing to forgive our sins and bring us into His family.**Is anyone here that we can pray for who doesn’t have a relationship with Jesus or wants to renew their relationship with Him?***Take a moment to acknowledge those who respond and thank them for their desire to make things right between themselves and God. Pray with them as you close in prayer or after the group time is over. Following group time, talk more about where they are in their walk with God and how you might be able to help.* |

**Prayer**

Jesus, we know we have a role to play in carrying out Your mission. Help us to identify our role. Send people into our life who can help us figure it out. Give us the strength and courage to embrace our role. Help us to have the right heart for the role You have planned for us, too. Amen.

**Dismissal**

Remember, this week you have a role to embrace. That doesn’t start when you’re an adult. It begins now. Choose to point people to Jesus. Find out more about how to embrace your role through the devotions in the Bible Engagement Project app. What you learn there can help you better follow Jesus.