

John the Baptist

Matthew 3: 1-7

Yesterday we heard about the news that Zechariah received from the angel Gabriel about his longed-for son John. Today we are focusing on John, whom we know as John the Baptist, because when he grew up he baptised people who had repented of their sins.

It was thought that before Messiah came there would be someone who prepared the way for him. John was that person. He was born six months before Jesus was, but he spent several years calling the people to repent of their sins, before Jesus started his public ministry.

Watch this clip from about John the Baptist from What's in the Bible

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFuJEeXV7uU>

1. Our eighteenth decoration for the Jesse Tree

In the past when people were baptised, sometimes a shell was used to pour water over their heads, and so a scallop shell has become a symbol of John the Baptist.

A scallop shell is a large shell – it can be as big as 22cm wide, so it would hold a decent amount of water.

Our decoration today is therefore a shell. So there are two ways of doing this – you can either...



- If you have any shells you can use those as a decoration. Tie some thread around the neck of the shell and hang it on the Jesse Tree. Or
- Make a kind of shell out of papier mâché.
Find something spherical (ball) of the right size for your decoration and cover it in cling film to protect it.
First, tear or cut strips from newspapers, comics or magazines – do this beforehand so the paste doesn't dry out.
Mix together the same quantity of plain flour and warm water in a large mixing bowl until well combined. Add extra tap water a little at a time to loosen. You want a smooth, batter-like paste with no lumps. You can sieve the flour first for a super smooth finish.
Cover your work area in more old newspaper. Dip the paper strips in the paste, wipe off the excess on the side of the bowl and stick onto the ball. Use a paintbrush to smooth down the paper and remove any air bubbles or excess paste. Keep doing this to cover the area of the ball that is the shape of a shell, including the neck shape and leave to dry before adding further layers.
This will obviously take a while to dry and so cannot be hung immediately on your Jesse Tree.

2. Make a locust

If we were meeting face-to-face at the moment I might give you some locusts to eat, but as we're not you can make one out of a clothes peg! See the instructions on the other page.

3. Maze

See other page.

Make a locust

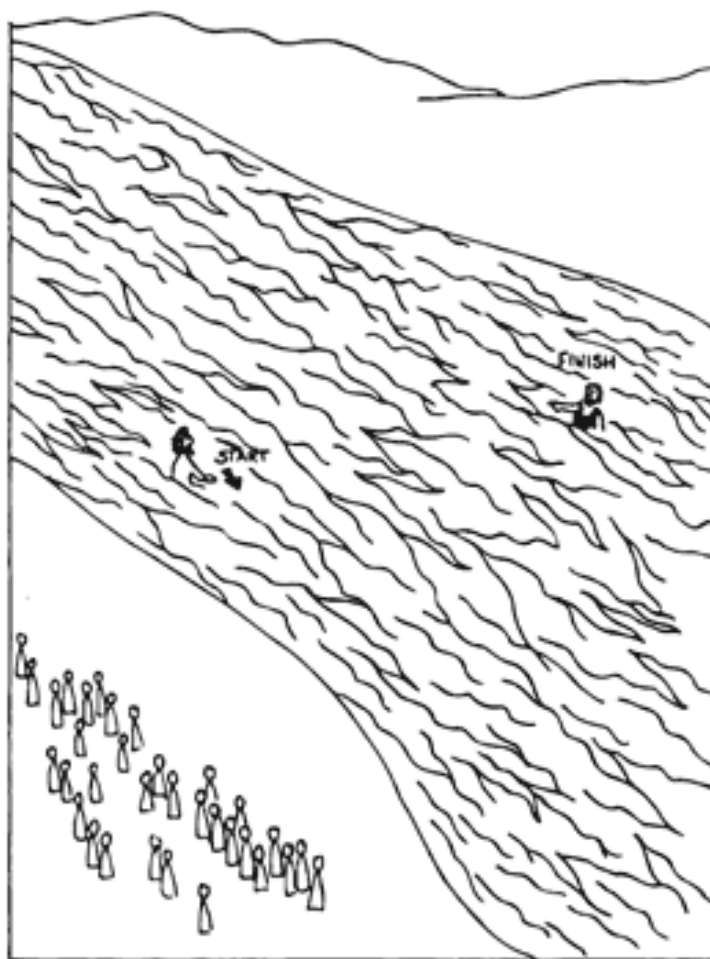


Instructions for Locust

You'll need a peg, pre-cut pipe cleaners for legs and antennae, and if you have them, two googly eyes. You could use buttons if you can't get eyes.

Colour the pegs green, or brown if you want more authentic locusts. Place a piece of clear tape, sticky side up on the table, and press the leg sticks across the tape and then the peg on top of that. Neaten the sticky tape and gently bend the legs, so the locusts stand.

Then, push the shorter antennae pieces through the hole in the peg and twist the ends together around the top, and add the eyes using dots of glue.



Maze

John and Jesus have drifted apart in the river Jordan, help Jesus find his way to John so he can be baptised.