

Zechariah – the man who couldn't speak

Luke 1: 5-25

Nearly 750 years went past and the Israelites were still waiting, waiting for an end to their troubles, waiting for Messiah. When was he going to come? Had God forgotten about them?

Meanwhile an old priest was about to take his turn to burn incense in the Temple, a once-in-a-lifetime experience – he felt so blessed. But he got so much more than he bargained for.

Here's the Superbook version of this story <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJapAoSzkBY>

And these two together <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IC4EZigVXJg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mm-2aEZKh4k>

1. Our eighteenth decoration for the Jesse Tree

Our decoration for today is a tablet of clay and a marker. This is what Zechariah might have used to write his message “His name is John” – he certainly wouldn't have used paper and pen.

The tablet was a bit like the ones that the 10 commandments were written on, but the clay did not harden and was softer so you could rub out what you'd written – so maybe more like plasticine or blue-tack.

So today you'll need some clay or plasticine or blue-tack and you'll need to shape it into a tablet shape and make a hole for threading something to tie it to the Jesse Tree with. Write on it with something not too sharp and not too blunt – a pencil, a knitting needle, a screwdriver, the end of a comb handle – “His name is John!” in big bold and assertive letters. Tie it to the Jesse Tree with a marker.

2. Do we doubt and question God?

Zechariah did not believe what Gabriel said to him and because of that he was unable to speak until after John was born. How long was that? Can you imagine what that would be like?

Sometimes we struggle to believe what God says and we wonder how something can possibly happen.

God *does* understand that we find it hard to believe sometimes. So what do we do?

Speak to God. Tell him about some of the doubts you have. Ask him for his help so you can believe.

Do you remember these two stories?

Matthew 9: 14-32 especially verses 21-24. The father realises that he's struggling to believe and he says to Jesus “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!”

John 20: 24-29 especially verses 27-29 Thomas had not believed the other disciples when they said that Jesus was alive (Would you have done!?). After a week Jesus appeared again and particularly spoke to and showed himself to Thomas, who then made a great declaration of *belief*. “My Lord and my God!”

God is gentle and kind when we struggle with belief and seek his help.

3. Quiz and codebreaker on the other sheet

4. Colour the picture on the other sheet

The next part of our Jesse Tree will be on Friday 18th December

Read each sentence. Choose the words that make the sentence true and circle the letter that goes with each correct answer. When you are finished, write the circled letters on the spaces below to find out what Zechariah did next.

- | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|----------|
| Zechariah was a . . . | priest | P |
| | farmer | F |
| He and his wife Elizabeth were . . . | young | O |
| | old | R |
| The angel said Zechariah and Elizabeth would have a . . . | baby | A |
| | flood | L |
| Zechariah . . . | believed the angel | K |
| | did not believe | I |
| When Zechariah came out of the temple he . . . | was crying | W |
| | could not speak | S |
| Elizabeth . . . | gave birth to a son | E |
| | had a baby girl | M |
| The neighbors thought the baby's name would be . . . | John | O |
| | Zechariah | D |
| Elizabeth said the baby's name would be . . . | Zechariah | N |
| | John | G |
| When asked, Zechariah . . . | wrote, "His name is John" | O |
| | didn't answer | C |
| The neighbors and friends were . . . | filled with awe | D |
| | not interested | Y |

Then Zechariah . . . _ _ _ _ _

