

A Message of Peace

(Based on Luke 1:68-79)

Many, many years after Jeremiah spoke God's words to the people of Israel, a man named Zechariah was taking his turn as a priest in the temple in Jerusalem. Only priests could go into the holiest places in the temple where they prayed to God. Each day was much like the one before it, until this day.

On this day, Zechariah was doing what he always did when the angel Gabriel appeared before him. It was pretty scary to have a messenger from God standing next to you.

"Don't be afraid," said Gabriel. "You and your wife Elizabeth have prayed for many years for a child. Now you are going to have a son!"

"But we're too old to have babies now," stammered Zechariah.

"God sent me to speak to you about this baby. Believe me, it will happen. However, you don't believe me, so you will be unable to speak until this happens."

Gabriel left, and Zechariah went into the part of the temple where others were waiting. They knew immediately that something had happened.

And Elizabeth did have a baby boy. Everyone came to hear the baby boy's name, expecting it to be Zechariah. But Elizabeth said, "His name is John."

Right away, Zechariah spoke,

*"Bless the Lord God of Israel, who comes to help the people.
 You, child, will be called a prophet of God.
 You will prepare the way for God's messiah.
 You will tell people how to be saved through forgiveness of their sins.
 The light of God will come over us.
 We will be shown the path to peace."*

Zechariah and Elizabeth raised their son to be this prophet of God. The next story about John in the Bible is when he is a grown man, doing just what Zechariah said.



Peace Ornament

Directions: Cut out the double-circle shape, being careful not to cut the circles apart. Fold on the dotted line so that the two circles line up with each other. Glue the circles together. Use a hole punch to punch a hole on the black circle. Put a 12" piece of yarn through the hole and tie it to make a loop for hanging.

