

International S. S. Lessons.

Adapted from the Westminster Question Book.

The 24 lessons of the first six months of 1896 are a series of pictures, which, taken in succession and filled up by the intervening passages, give a complete view of that wonderful Life, the Life of Christ. Not only the verses of the lesson, but the parts between the lessons are to be studied.

THE FORERUNNER OF CHRIST.

1st Picture, 5 Jan.

Les. Lu. 1 : 5-17. Gol. Text, Lu. 1 : 76.
Mem. vs. 15, 16. Catechism, Q. 39.

HOME READINGS.

M. Isa. 40:1-5; Mal. 4:1-6. *The Forerunner Foretold.*
T. 1 Kgs. 19:17-46. *The Work of Elijah.*
W. Luke 1:1-45. *The Forerunner Announced.*
Th. Luke 1:26-38. *Christ's Birth Promised.*
F. Luke 1:39-56. *Mary's Visit to Elizabeth.*
S. Luke 1:57-66. *The Forerunner's Birth.*
S. Luke 1:67-80. *The Song of Zacharias.*

LESSON OUTLINE.

- I. The Childless Home, vs. 5-7.
- II. The Angel's Announcement, vs. 8-14.
- III. The Honored Child, vs. 15-17.

HINTS AND HELPS IN STUDY.

For hundreds of years God had been telling the Jews in different ways about a coming Redeemer. Among other things he had said he would first send a great preacher, like Elijah, who should warn the people and call them to repentance. Study the prophecies referred to in Home Readings and references. More than seven hundred years had passed since God had first spoken about this, through Isaiah, and about four hundred years since he had said it even more plainly through Malachi. Then suddenly one day an angel Gabriel told Zacharias, in the temple, that a son should be born to him, who would fulfill these prophecies. At first Zacharias could not believe the wonderful message, but the angel convinced him by a sign—he became dumb until John was born. Study the whole first chapter of Luke.

WHAT THE LESSON TEACHES.

1. It is a good thing to be righteous before God.
2. It is when we are at our duty that God's messengers come.
3. It is a high honor to be great in the sight of the Lord.
4. God has a plan for every child's life—a work for it to do.

THE BOY JESUS.

2nd Picture, 12 Jan.

Les. Luke 2:40-52. Gol. Text, Luke 2:52.
Mem. vs. 51, 52. Catechism, Q. 40.

HOME READINGS.

M. Isa. 9:1-7. *The Son Promised.*
T. Isa. 42:1-16. *"A Light of the Gentiles."*
W. Luke 2:1-20. *The Birth of the Son.*
Th. Luke 2:21-39. *Presented in the Temple.*
F. Matt. 2:1-12. *Worshipped by the Wise Men.*
S. Matt. 2:13-23. *Seeking Safety in Egypt.*
S. Luke 2:40-52. *The Boy Jesus.*

LESSON OUTLINE.

- I. At the Passover, vs. 40-45.
- II. In the Temple, vs. 46-49.
- III. At Home, vs. 50-52.

HINTS AND HELPS IN STUDY.

As time went on, the promises of a Messiah, who should save God's people from sin, were repeated more and more clearly, until at last the very place and circumstances of his birth were plainly foretold. Two of these prophecies are found in the Home Readings; there are others which it will be well to look up and study. The story of this coming Saviour was carried wherever the Jews went, and people in many parts of the world were looking for Him.

About six months after John the Baptist was born, Jesus came in the wonderful way described in this second chapter of Luke, and so fulfilled the prophecies. The Bible tells very little about the life of Jesus until He became a man, but we are sure, from what we do know, that He was sinless as child and youth. All that is known of His childhood is given in the Home Readings and the lesson. Try to get all these events well in mind.

WHAT THE LESSON TEACHES.

1. Every child should grow in wisdom and in grace as well as in body.
2. Children should begin young to attend the services of the church.
3. Young people should be eager to learn the things of God's word.
4. Like Jesus, the young may find the Father's business in a quiet home.
5. Jesus gives us an example of obedience to parents.

MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

3rd Picture, 19th Jan.

Les. Lu. 3:15-22. Gol. Text, John 1:29.
Mem. vs. 21-22. Catechism, Q. 41.

HOME READINGS.

M. Mal. 3:1-12. *The Messenger of the Messiah.*
T. Isa. 40:1-11. *The Voice in the Wilderness.*
W. Luke 3:1-22. *The Ministry of John.*
Th. Matt. 3:1-17. *The Baptism of Jesus.*
F. Mark 1:1-11. *Mark's Account of it.*
S. John 1:15-36. *John's Testimony to Jesus.*
S. John 3:23-26. *Sent before the Christ.*

LESSON OUTLINE.

- I. Foretelling the Messiah, vs. 15, 16.
- II. Preaching Repentance, vs. 17-20.
- III. Baptizing Jesus, vs. 21, 22.

HINTS AND HELPS IN STUDY.

Between chapters two and three of Luke's Gospel there are eighteen years of which no record is given in the Bible. Jesus lived all this time at Nazareth. He learned the things that were taught to all Jewish children at that time, and we know that he learned the Scriptures well, for he often quoted them afterward. He became a carpenter, working humbly at his trade in the village. When it was time for him to leave this quiet home and go forth upon his great mission, God put it into the heart of John the Baptist to warn the people that the Messiah was near at hand, and to call upon them to repent and be baptized. One day Jesus came to John and was baptized in the Jordan. Then a wonderful thing happened. The Holy Ghost descended from Heaven like a dove upon Jesus, and God's voice said to him, "Thou art my beloved son; in thee I am well pleased." John heard this, and then knew that Jesus was the promised Messiah.