

# The Gathering Growth Guide

## John the Baptist Week 1 // The man behind the beard

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Luke 1

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

## Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

### Message Summary

As the international community celebrates "No Shave November," our church begins a new series that takes a look at one of the greatest bearded men ever – John the Baptist. In Part 1, Paul introduced us to the man behind the beard, and we learned that John was a very unique person used in a very unique way to point people to Jesus. We also learned that we are, too. In fact, we're unique in the same 3 ways that John was:

1. **He was unique in his birth.** Not very many people have a birth announcement like John did: an angel meeting his dad on the job site, a prophecy about how he would turn a generation back to God, being filled with the Holy Spirit **IN THE WOMB!** Outside of the birth of Jesus (John's cousin), this one was the greatest ever, and John's unique birth just pointed to the life that he would live. But John wasn't the only person uniquely made. Psalm 139:13-16 tells us that God has uniquely created each one of us, and when something is one of a kind, its value increases dramatically!
2. **He was unique in his life.** John did some pretty outrageous things that set him apart from anyone else who was living at the time: he grew up in the desert, he lived as a man in the wilderness, he wore camel hair and he ate locusts with wild honey! It was Duck Dynasty meets Bear Grylls!! But his uniqueness in his lifestyle actually enhanced his ministry and message, and ours will, too. Your life will look different than anybody else's because Ephesians 3:10 says that you were crafted by God to do specific works for Him.
3. **He was unique in his purpose.** All of us are called to a common goal – glorifying God by pointing people to Jesus. But each of us are uniquely formed and gifted because each one of us has a unique role to play in that. Not all of us will point others to Jesus in the same way – some sing, some pray, some are extroverts, others are introverts – but all of us had better be pointing!!

### Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- What are some of the unique qualities about yourself that you love? What are some that you wish you could change?
- How have you (if you have) been able to see God use those unique qualities (the good and the bad) in order to draw people closer to Jesus through your life?
- Looking back over your notes from the past week, was there anything that confused you or really caught your attention?
- Do you own anything that is a "one of a kind" collector's item? How does its uniqueness change its value? How does it change the way you treat it?
- As a group, read Psalm 139:13-16 out loud. As you read, take note of which words give you a greater sense of value when you hear them. Which ones were they? How does seeing yourself as unique – as a "one of a kind" masterpiece – change the way you see yourself? How does it help you value your unique role in the church's common goal of pointing people to Jesus?