

The Junior Observer

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To whom did the angel Gabriel appear? Why were people shocked that the baby was named John?

Read more about it in Luke 1.

A Good News Story

Zechariah Doubts Gabriel's Message

Catholic News Service

One day, as Zechariah the priest entered the sanctuary of the Lord to burn incense, the angel Gabriel appeared to him.

“Your prayer has been heard,” Gabriel told Zechariah. “Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John.”

Zechariah did not believe what he had heard. He and his wife were very old, and Elizabeth couldn't have children.

Gabriel did not appreciate Zechariah's doubt.

“I was sent to speak to you and to announce to you this good news. But now you will be speechless and unable to talk until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled at their proper time,” he said.

And just as the angel said, Zechariah suddenly could not speak. When he came out of the sanctuary, everyone who had



(CNS)

been waiting for him outside knew he had seen a vision.

Zechariah fulfilled his priestly duties and then returned home. Not long after, Elizabeth became pregnant, just as Gabriel had said.

The time finally came for Elizabeth to have her baby. And just as the angel Gabriel had said, she gave birth to a boy.

On the eighth day, the time came to have the baby circumcised. Those who gathered with Elizabeth and Zechariah

for the circumcision expected the baby to be named after his father, as was the custom.

Elizabeth was very firm.

“No. He will be called John,” she said with certainty.

The people attending the circumcision were shocked.

“There is no one among your relatives who has this name,” they said as they turned to consult with Zechariah.

They made signs to Zechariah, asking him what the baby's name should be. Zechariah then asked for a tablet to write upon.

“John is his name,” Zechariah wrote, and everyone was amazed.

Just then, Zechariah regained his speech and immediately started to praise God.

Those gathered were afraid, and what happened became the talk of Judea.

“What, then, will this child be?” people wondered of John, whom we know by the name John the Baptist.

St. James in Rockford Ends School Year

In science class, St. James eighth graders designed and built houses (top left) and marble roller coasters (bottom left). The slowest coaster won. Seventh graders researched, built and tested toothpick bridges (center left). Students held their annual end-of-the-year school picnic at Sinnissippi Park. Seventh graders (top right) rode their bikes on the bike path and the rest of the students walked. Students, including preschoolers, took part in a sack race (bottom right), and a water fight (center right).



(Photos provided)

BELOW: Seventh graders celebrate passing their U. S. and Illinois constitution tests.

