



SESSION

1

Prophets foretell the Messiah



MEETING AIM

To explore some of the ancient prophecies and how Jesus fulfilled these.



BIBLE PASSAGE

Isaiah 7:10-14, 9:2-7, Micah 5:2-5



BACKGROUND

The great narrative of the people of God, throughout the Old Testament, is one of separation and exile since the fall of mankind. God brought about his rescue plans to give humanity the chance to come back home, time and time again, yet humans constantly chose to turn their back on God. Through all of this, God was working; the rescue mission to end all rescue missions. At the point where God's people found themselves at the place of exile and lacking leadership, God spoke through his prophets to tell his people that their king was coming. This session helps children to explore the significance of these prophecies to God's people then, and now, and to celebrate Jesus' fulfilment of God's promises.

CIRCLE TIME



As you begin the session, invite the children to sit together in a circle and ask them to talk about what they are most looking forward to about Christmas. Talk about how far away it is and how the children count down to the big day. What events are there that happen in the lead up to Christmas that tell us it is coming? How do our Christmas memories help us to look forward to the next Christmas?

JUST A MINUTE



You will need: stopwatch

Explain to the children that you are going to play a game where they must guess the length of one minute. Tell the group to close their eyes and ensure you have removed access to all technological devices! Indicate when the minute has begun and ask the children

to raise a hand when they think you have reached one minute. Make sure you tell the children when one minute is up, perhaps by using a stopwatch. You could award a small prize to the person who guesses closest to one minute, or perhaps repeat the game again two or three times to allow the children to improve their estimates.

Explain that today we are going to be thinking about the people who were waiting for the first Christmas to come. They had no idea how long it would take, or when or how it would happen!

BIBLE STORY



You will need: Bibles; paper and pens

Depending on the group, you will need to decide how much context to give to this story. They will not need to know every detail of the story of God's people throughout the Old Testament, but it will be helpful to explain that God's people spent many years wandering around and feeling as though they were leader-less.

Explain that God gave his people messages, passed on through his prophets, to speak to the people. Two of these prophets were Isaiah and Micah, and we are going to look at a little of what they said. Help your group to understand some of the chronology. Say that we read these texts already knowing about how and when Jesus came. Some of these words may even sound familiar to us, if we are used to being in church at Christmas time. But the people these words were given to lived many hundreds of years before Jesus was born. They did not know when or how their saviour would come. These words were a promise from God to His people.

Spend some time looking in the Bible at the three texts:

- Isaiah 7:10-14
- Isaiah 9:2-7
- Micah 5:2-5

If you have a large enough group, you may wish to divide into three small groups and look at one passage each. Together with an adult, read the texts and explain any elements that may be harder to understand. Invite the children to take some paper and pens and on each write or draw symbols to describe what was promised to God's people, through these prophecies. Talk about these as you do so, together building up a big picture of the expected Messiah.

CHATTING TOGETHER



Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

- What is your favourite part of these prophecies?
- How do you think the people would have felt, hearing these prophecies?
- How do you feel about these prophecies?
- Does anything surprise you about these words?
- Is there anything you want to ask God about this?

CREATIVE RESPONSE



You will need: candle kits; mouldable wax or tea light holders; glass paints; tea lights

Isaiah told the people that although they walked in a dark world, a light was coming to shine into that darkness. Living after the time that Jesus was on Earth, we can see that light, even when there is still sin and darkness around us.

Invite the children to take a candle and mouldable wax or a tea light holder and glass paints and decorate it with some of the symbols spoken about in the prophecies - things that Jesus would fulfil. You may wish to keep Bibles on hand for the children to refer to as they do this. Allow a free choice about which symbols most speak to the children for them to include on their candles.

Gather the completed candles together, perhaps on a map of the local area, or on a dark surface. Reread the words of Isaiah 9:2-7 as you light the candles.

PRAYER



Pray together as a group, encouraging the children to pray aloud, as they feel able. You may find it helpful to begin a prayer with the words: "Thank you Jesus, that you have come." Encourage the children to continue the prayer, thanking Jesus for the different ways that he fulfilled the prophecies you have explored together.

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